

RESTING IN THE WORD

Hebrews 4

The Promise of Rest

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

The Word Discovers Our Condition

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Our Compassionate High Priest

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

On this day we are recognizing it as Resurrection Sunday, of what is referred to, even in the world, as Easter Sunday, although some even bristle at calling it Easter. Cadbury, the makers of chocolate treats, most notably Easter bunnies and eggs, that you see dominating the entry displays in all of the stores, came under criticism recently when they began marketing and selling what they called "gesture eggs". What that was meant to imply is anyone's guess but I

will say that it doesn't really matter, does it? After all, we as Christians are celebrating Christ Jesus, dying on a cross for our sins, and then raising from the dead on the third day, conquering death, overcoming evil and sin, so that we too can overcome death and evil and sin and to also be reconciled to God to have a relationship with Him, as a child of God, all because we have put our faith in Christ. What someone calls a chocolate treat seems highly insignificant, unless of course they come out and advertise that those treats were blessed by Satan himself or something like that. Of course I tend to use over-the-top examples but hopefully it makes a point. Whatever one's tradition may be in how they celebrate Resurrection Sunday or Easter, whether having children look for "Easter" eggs or whether one gathers together with loved ones for an "Easter dinner, what really matters is in not neglecting our celebrating our new life in Christ and knowing Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Unfortunately, not everyone has the same perspective or world-view of what is called "Easter". Some would claim that it is a pagan holiday and tradition in honor of the false goddess Ishtar. Nevertheless, how one views this day, that is referred to as Resurrection Sunday or Easter, is ultimately demonstrated by how one lives each and every day of their lives whether living according to the ways and traditions of the world or whether one is living their lives unto the Lord, in the hope of entering God's perfect rest, that is established through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus. That entering of God's rest, His perfect rest, as He is perfect in all His Ways (**2 Samuel 22:31**) and Works (**Deuteronomy 32:4**), is for us to put our unwavering trust in Him. James, the brother of our Lord and Savior Jesus, said, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (**James 1:2-8**)

That doesn't sound like rest though does it? "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them [the Jews]; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; and again in this

place: "They shall not enter My rest." (**Hebrews 4:1-3**) The ultimate of that promise awaits us on the other side of this lifetime yet God's rest is always calling for us, to enter His rest, spiritually. Entering God's rest is not just a suggested ideal for His people. It is what God intends to work in each of us according to His plan and purpose and also according to who HE IS.

"Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the **Word of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." We are told to be diligent to enter God's rest. How is that possible? It is there for us in **His Word**. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." As we know the Word of God has a two-fold meaning for us, as God's Word tells us. First, it is the spoken Word that has become for us the written Word, also known to us as the Holy Bible, and it is also referred to as the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul told Timothy, and is also then telling us, through God's Word, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Once again, can one be more complete than "complete"? Can one be more equipped than "thoroughly equipped"? Of course those are rhetorical questions not meant to be answered yes or not but to have us recognize that God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, that were given by inspiration by God, are His instruction manual, His love letters, so to speak, to His people, so that we can learn to know Him, trust Him, and honor Him as our God, Lord, and Savior, and also our Heavenly Father who loves us enough to have His only begotten Son die on a cross for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself. (**John 3:16-17**)

Christ Jesus then, is the second meaning to the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (**John 1:1-5**) "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of

man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (**John 1:10-14**) It is important for us to understand that Christ Jesus IS the Word of God and as we believe on Him and receive Him, He then dwells in us and begins working in us, transforming us into the character of Christ, the heart of God, as we are obedient children of God. That is where Jesus stated, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**)

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Many have probably wondered, as I have, what exactly that means. Ok, so the Word of God begins working in us making us to be like Christ Jesus, right? YES, YES, and AMEN! There is two key things mentioned in this verse and then the next verse that explains the mystery of the working of God's Word is those who have believed on and received Christ Jesus. I heard this explained by a tv preacher the other day, and I was like, "Wow, I never saw that before!" Once again, it doesn't matter how many times you have read the Bible, God will continue to teach you and minister to you in ways you had never imagined. "[P]iercing even to the division of soul and spirit." The soul is meant to mean here, the heart and mind of man. The contrast is the spirit of man that was once dead but has now come alive in Christ Jesus.

"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:1-10**) That is the separating of the soul and spirit. Once we lived according to the desires of the flesh but in Christ, to enter God's rest, we are now living according to the spirit, our spirit that has become alive in Christ and the Spirit of Christ that is working in us!

Not only then does the Word of God separate the soul from the spirit, distinguishing the two as opposed to each other, but then the next verse says this, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Listen to this, it is critical to our understanding. That word "open", also translated to mean "laid bare", is the Greek word "trachelizo". The "trach" part can clue someone in to an idea of the word. "trach" being a part of the word "trachea", the throat. Here's what is said to be the definition of trachelizo. It means, "to seize by the throat or neck, that is, to expose the gullet of a victim for killing, to lay bare, open".¹

The application to this is spiritual not carnal or physical. That is, we are being led by God, through the working of the Word of God, that dwells in us, and then ministers to us, through the working of the Holy Spirit and God's written Word, to get us to the place of surrenderedness to God that we can say as Paul did, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (**Galatians 2:20**) That is, putting to death the deeds of the body that is contrary to the character of God, as He works in us the fruit of the Spirit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) That is all so we can abide by the great commandment of God that Jesus spoke of, and the second like unto it, to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to love others as ourselves, which encompasses the fullness of the doctrine of Christ, which then leads us into the perfect rest of God in Christ.

Praise the Lord, He is Risen indeed! Let us hold on to the promise of entering God's perfect and eternal rest, of which we get the most of what is possible of that, in this lifetime, as we surrender to the will of God in Christ Jesus.

1 Strong's Exhaustive Concordance