

**** DECEMBER 2015 **** DECEMBER 2015 ****

ENTERING THE REST

Paul Galligan

Chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews are all about entering the rest. *"Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience"* **Hebrews 4:11.**

Let us be *'diligent'*. The word means: eager, thinking and acting; planning and producing;

seeing a need and promptly doing something about it; inception, action and follow through.

To *'enter'* - means to go into; to go through.

There is a warning: 'lest we fall'. Obedience is all about hearing. God wants us to be obedient people. Disobedience will stop us entering the rest. Not hearing and obeying the voice of God causes us to drop out of the rest.

HOW DO WE ENTER?

We enter the rest through Jesus the Apostle

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" **Heb.3:1.** We have to partake of something. **Hebrews 6:4-5** speaks of:

- being enlightened,
- having tasted the heavenly gift,
- having partaken of the Holy Spirit,
- tasted the good word of God,
- and the powers of the age to come

All of these things speak of the reality of having entered the rest! We can experience these things through Jesus Christ.

We are to consider, think about, Jesus as the Apostle, sent by the Father into the world with an apostolic mission. We are to consider the High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice, took His blood into the tabernacle in heaven above, and continues as our intercessor.

We are to have a confession; we are to speak about Messiah Jesus as Apostle and High Priest. This is the basis of entering the rest. This is the foundation that we are to build on. *"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* **1Cor.3:11.** It is through believing in Jesus and receiving Him into our lives as the Saviour and as the Lord, that He brings us into these foundational experiences and we are to grow in Christ unto maturity, entering the rest more fully as we mature.

Jesus the Apostle builds the house of God in the earth

We have to begin by being built on the right foundation; the foundation that Jesus laid. Moses was faithful in the house of God (**Heb.3:2**), but Jesus is worthy of more glory, because he is the one who built the house (**v.3**). God is the builder of all things; therefore because Jesus built the house, He must be God (**v.4**). Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ is *"a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end"* (**v.5-6**), To truly enter the rest we have to hold fast the hope to the end.

Therefore!

In **Hebrews 3** the Scripture is speaking about Jesus the Apostle building the house. **Verse 7** begins with *"therefore"*. It connects the next verses with what has gone before, and **verses 7-11** are all about entering the rest, quoting from **Psalm 95:7-14**. To hear the voice of God, we need to know Jesus the Apostle and that we belong to Him; that we are founded in Him.

If you will hear His voice

The key is *"Today, if you will hear His voice"* (**Heb.3:7**). We are to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Elijah had to listen for the still small voice (**2Kings 19:12-13**). We are to be willing to hear His voice. It is a decision of the will: 'Lord, I am willing to hear your voice today'. It is not 'if I hear His voice', but it is a decision of my will to tell God 'I will hear your voice'. This means that we are listening; this means we are actively seeking God, reading and studying His word, trusting Him for everything, and *"praying without ceasing"* (**1Thess.5:17**).

Do not harden your hearts

If you hear His voice, *"Do not harden your hearts"* (**v.8**). Do not test God, as the Israelites did, who even though they had evidence, would not believe. God was angry with them. God is longsuffering, but even longsuffering can come to an end. God judged them and said *"They shall not enter My rest"* (**v.11**).

An evil heart of unbelief

"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" **v.12**. Unbelief is caused by a hardened heart which is caused by the deceitfulness of sin (**Heb.3:13**). The result is departing from the living God. God knows what is in the heart of man, and tests the mind (**Jer.17:9-10**). The heart without God is deceitful, but God can sort out our hearts.

Steadfast to the end

We are to be *"partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end"* **Heb.3:14**. If we can speak the word of God into a negative situation it opens a door. If we believe, then we can make a positive confession and that releases hope. In the context the confession is to be of Jesus the Apostle and Jesus the High Priest. The foundation to our entering the rest is to consider and confess Jesus the Apostle *"whose house we are"* (**Heb.3:6**). It is by knowing that we are in the house of God by being partakers of the heavenly

calling, that we can enter the rest. If we fully enter into the house, growing up as sons in the house, we will grow up into the rest.

A great deception

There is a great deception still being spread across the church that puts all good things that God has promised off until the saints have entered into 'heaven'. There are very few who consider seriously the word of God as it is written. The rest is not equal to 'the eternal rest' for the departing soul, but it is a working reality that we are to enter into.

James says, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"* James 1:17. God gives His good gifts to His people to enable them to live in the rest. Living in the rest is living fully for God in His kingdom in this present age.

Today is now

"Today!" This is speaking of a present reality (Heb.3:15). *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* 2Corinthians 6:2. We have to hear from God today. The great victory of yesterday cannot sustain us today. We need to hear from God TODAY. Repenting, obeying, and not hardening our heart is all based on hearing the word. When you hear do not rebel (v.16). The wages of sin is death and those who do not obey will not enter the rest (v.17-18). For the Israelites unbelief led to disobedience and the result was that they did not enter the rest.

Hearing, believing and obeying is the way to enter the rest!

THE PROMISE OF ENTERING THE REST

There is a promise of entering the rest. *"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it"* Heb.4:1. The rest is available; someone has to enter. God has never closed the door. Even when God put the man and the woman out of the garden *"He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life"* Gen.3:24. There was a sanctuary where man could come back to God; where man could hear the voice of God and be instructed in His ways; where man could be in the presence of God.

Obeying the gospel

The gospel was preached to the Israelites. It was a gospel of deliverance! It was the gospel of God, that He is King in all the earth! Always was! Always is! And always will be King of all the earth! We also have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, that He is King and that He delivers us. We need to believe and to obey. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 says that there is vengeance on those *"who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"*.

The day of rest

The promise for those who believe is that they do enter the rest. All that was necessary for us to enter the rest was finished from the foundation of the world (Heb.4:3).

Hebrews 4:4-5 speak of *"the seventh day"*. This is a reference to creation. *"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the*

morning were the sixth day" Gen.1:31. Each of the days of creation from the first day to the sixth day had an evening and a morning. But on the seventh day God ended his work. *"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" Gen.2:2.* God *"blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work" (v.3).*

The seventh day was an eternal day; there is no mention of a morning or an evening. God entered His rest and wanted Adam and Eve to enter into that rest and enjoy it with Him. This is the foundation of the seventh day, a day of rest. It is the day when God rested from all His works.

There remains a day of rest

Adam and Eve failed to remain in the rest because they disobeyed God. Before they disobeyed God there is a wonderful picture in the Scripture of God placing them in a perfectly prepared garden, where they could fellowship with God openly and enjoy the life that flowed from the tree of life. This all changed when they fell from grace; they stopped believing God; they disobeyed His word and they had to leave the garden.

Israel failed to enter the rest through Joshua. However *"it remains that some must enter it" (Heb.4:6).* We must not be like our forefathers. Do not follow their pattern: *"Do not harden your hearts"*. God has designated a day, and it is *"Today" (v.7).*

Entering the promised land

Entering the promised land was meant to be entering the rest. It is not easy to imagine what would have happened if the people of God had obeyed the voice of God in the instructions that Moses gave them and had entered the land at Beersheba. One supposes that it would have not have been a conquest, but simply going in to inherit.

Much of the church today is unaware that there is an inheritance and most are led to believe that going to heaven is the only inheritance. And yet, my brethren, you will not need an inheritance in heaven. The inheritance is *"reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pet.1:4-5).* We are to receive the inheritance in the earth as sons who have come to the age of maturity. This is all part of understanding *"entering the rest"*.

Ceasing from your own works

Rest comes through faith, not through fighting. Become a person of faith where you can hear the word of God for yourself today.

There is a rest for the people of God, entered through faith, that is through hearing and obeying. To enter the rest we need to cease from our own works and listen for the voice of God (Heb.4:9-10). **Ephesians 2:10** gives a wonderful description of the believers living in the rest. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*

We enter through the word of God

Therefore we are to be *"diligent to enter the rest" (v.11).* Press into the word of truth (2Tim.2:15). It is the word of God that will deliver us, *"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"
Heb.4:12.

The truth of the word is what we need to hear. Our relationship with the word of God brings us into the rest. We are to become holy brethren who have allowed the word of God to separate us from the things of the world. Let the word of God be living and powerful in you.

THE THRONE OF GRACE

Jesus the High Priest brings us into the rest

We need a confession of the High Priest who is in heavenly places (**Heb.4:14**). This High Priest was God in the flesh; He was without sin (**v.15**). The foundation is for us to be established on Jesus the Apostle. Now we need the understanding of the High Priest, who has gone before us making a way for us to come to the throne of God. *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* **Heb.4:16**.

The High Priest brings us to the throne of grace

The throne of God is a throne of grace for the believer. His grace is readily available to the one *"who comes to God and believes that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (**Heb.11:6**). The grace of God is accessed through faith, by hearing and obeying. But this involves diligence. We are to *"be diligent to enter the rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience"* (**Heb.4:11**).

The apostle Paul experienced this grace in such a powerful way that he was able to say, *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak then I am strong"* **2Corinthians 12:10**. Jesus had told Paul, after Paul had diligently sought the Lord, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness"* (**2Cor.12:9**). Paul was able to access the grace; Paul was able to come to the throne of grace; Paul was able to enter the rest, trusting God for everything.

The rest equals grace. We are to cease from our own labours and trust in God, even in the midst of troubles. Come boldly to the throne of grace. Press into the word of God and keep being founded and grounded in the word.

As we do this we need to hold fast our confession of Jesus Christ the High Priest. As High Priest He brings us to the throne of grace. As High Priest, He freely ministers grace to us: grace to heal, grace to forgive, grace that releases us fully from our own works and to fully inherit His kingdom, which is His grace outworked through His enabling us to live in His kingdom.

Believe and Obey, this is the way to enter and remain in the rest.

+++++

A SEASON OF FASTING

We submit to you that all related brethren and groups should consider doing a 21 day fast. Beginning on January 25th, and finishing on February 14th 2016.

I am sure all of us have done some fasting in our Christian life, but how many of us have been part of a planned corporate fast? We believe that it is time for us all to plan and be part of this fast in many nations.

Individually each person is free to decide what they are going to fast from.

The fast can be:

- water only;
- water plus juices and maybe a meat or vegetable broth each day;
- fasting from certain foods and drinks [beverages];
- varied and including some days of full fasting on water only and the rest of the days on a partial fast.

If people have a medical problem, they may need to consult their health care advisor as to how to proceed.

It is important that if you believe you are to be part of this corporate fast that you should **decide soon and plan**. We are recommending that each person taking part in the fast, should **have a personal journal** to write down their personal plans, as well as their participation in the corporate fast and taking on the corporate goals set down for the fast. During the fast keep the journal so that you have a record of how God has visited you and answered you, both individually and corporately.

***In general closeness with the Lord is our goal,
and fasting is the method to reach our goal.***

We will be **releasing some teaching** during the January school here in Toowoomba on fasting and looking at the various fasts in the Scriptures. This is an amazing study that is opening up to us. We will forward copies of those teaching notes as soon as they are prepared.

Before and during the 21 day fast, we will be **forwarding to you prayer goals and focuses** for all of us to be seeking God for, but of course you will also have your own goals and focus.

During the 21 day fast we will be setting **special times of prayer and worship and Scripture reading** at Shiloh Centre here in Toowoomba. We encourage you in regional house churches and in your various places in the nations to also plan the time carefully and have special times of corporate prayer, worship and Scripture reading.

As we have shared about this proposal locally in some groups, there has been a very positive response. A number of brethren have expressed their keenness and some excitement at the very idea.

This fast is totally voluntary, and even if you are unable for whatever reasons to participate in the actual fast, please commit to being involved in the times of prayer and worship to support this special time.