

DON'T FORSAKE JESUS

TRUE REST IS FOUND IN HIM

➤ READ PSALM 95

➤ READ HEBREWS 3:7-13

SUMMARY: The Israelites in the desert rejected their “today,” don’t do the same.

Look

- “As the Holy Spirit says” – Again the truth of inspiration is set before us
- “Today” – Entering Canaan was a picture of the eternal rest God holds out for all people. Israel’s refusal to enter the land and God destroying them pictures God’s eternal judgment on all who refuse to believe in him. This was true in David’s day, even though God graciously gave the children of the rebels the land of Canaan. Canaan was only a picture of heaven. The eternal hope of heaven still awaited the Old Testament believer’s in David’s day. That hope still awaits us in the New Testament. It is still “today.” Still the time during which God is pouring out his Spirit and grace.
- “If you hear” – this kind of conditional sentence assumes that people can hear God’s voice
- “Do not harden your hearts” – Hardening is a willful act of rebellion against God. “Such a phenomenon might be called spiritual suicide since it is impossible for the Spirit to work repentance in such hearts while they cling to deliberate unbelief” (The People’s Bible)
- “Rebellion” – what rebellion is being referred to? In Exodus chapter 17, the Israelites complained about not having any water. By doing that they rebelled against the Lord. This was but one example of their constant grumbling. Other examples would include: the golden calf; complaints about food; refusal to take the land when scouts discouraged them.
- “Rest” – The Old Testament contained pictures of the rest God provides in Christ

Discuss

1. The devil tempts all Christians to doubt the goodness of God. All fall victim to this sin at times. Then the devil tries to change the doubt into unbelief, a condition in which we have completely lost our trust in God. When Satan succeeds here, he moves to the final step, the hardening of the heart and a resistance to anything that is of God. According to Hebrews 3:13 how can we help one another overcome sin’s deceitfulness?

2. In what sense is sin deceitful?

➤ **READ HEBREWS 3:14-19**

SUMMARY: The Jewish nation under Moses is an example of disobedience and unbelief and serves as a serious warning.

Look

- “Today” – We cannot assume that there will come another time to believe the gospel or that there is no particular hurry to receive God’s invitation. Each time we hear the gospel we may say to ourselves: “This may be it. This may be the last opportunity that will be given me. Now is the time.”
- “Who were they” – they knew who he was talking about, but it was a way of saying these were not ignorant people of God’s wondrous works or people who didn’t know better. These were people who had no excuse.
- “Unbelief” – Israel’s sin was lack of faith that God would fulfill his promise of rest

Discuss

3. A person can be an unbeliever at the start of life and still be saved. Yet, when can a person not be an unbeliever if he or she is to be saved?

SECTION SUMMARY: This section teaches the cause of revolt against/departure from God and its dire consequences. Yet that seldom begins, at least initially, with an open act of rebellion against God. It usually happens secretly and subtly in the heart with the deception of sin, the heart of people who listen to the voice of temptation rather than God’s voice. That all too readily results in a sense of growing embitterment with God because in and through the congregation he does not provide them with what they want from him. Embitterment in turn leads to mistrust of God’s Word and unbelief in him and his providential presence. This heart of unbelief then falls away from him first secretly by mistrust and then openly by dissociation from the Word of God.

➤ **READ HEBREWS 4:1,2**

SUMMARY: Seek the rest they lost! Three points make this urgent appeal: 1) The promise of entering God's rest still remains; 2) Just as those Israelites heard the good news, so do we; 3) the message they heard was of no value because they did not listen and believe

Look

- *"Let us be careful"* – literally, "let us be fearful"
- *"Combine it with faith"* – also possible, *"But the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united in faith with those who did listen."*

Discuss

4. Sometimes people become complacent and then depend on the forms of Christianity rather than the real substance of faith. Explain.

➤ **READ HEBREWS 4:3-11**

SUMMARY: God wants nothing more than to give us rest in him.

Discuss

5. Work on understanding this section by describing what the writer is referring to each time he uses the word *rest*.
 - a. Verse 3 – "we who have believed entered that rest" _____

 - b. Verse 3 – "never enter my rest" _____

 - c. Verse 4 – "on the seventh day God rested" _____

 - d. Verse 5 – "never enter my rest" _____

 - e. Verse 6 – "some will enter that rest" _____

- f. Verse 8 – “if Joshua had given them rest” _____

- g. Verse 9 – “a Sabbath-rest for the people of God” _____

- h. Verse 10 – “who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work” _____

- i. Verse 11 – “every effort to enter that rest” _____

Look

- “Enter that rest” – Notice that this is in the present tense. We enter the eternal rest now through Christ.
- “His work has been finished since the creation” – Reminding us that his word/promise has been around from the beginning
- “He [God] spoke through David” – an even more emphatic reference to inspiration
- “There remains...Sabbath-rest” – Just because the promise was rejected doesn’t mean it isn’t there
- “Just as God did” – Once again another picture of the rest we have in God and his Savior. Israel did no labor on the Sabbath Day. We rest in the completed work of Christ, ceasing from our works and admiring what he has done for us. The Christian who enters into God’s rest...himself rests from his own works just as God rested.

➤ **READ HEBREWS 4:12,13**

¹² For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

SUMMARY: God’s Word does God’s work.

Look

- “Living and active” – It is alive, indestructible, imperishable and it does things
- “Soul and spirit, joints and marrow” – God’s Word can divide even the indivisible – exposes the most secret parts
- “It judges” – It distinguishes right from wrong, good from evil, faith from

Discuss

6. Agree or disagree: This discussion of the power of God's Word is a comforting one.

Endure

7. In this section of the author's "sermon," he warns against forsaking Christ in what way?
8. If one forsakes Christ, what will they lose?

Whoever gives up rest in Christ will end up like the Israelites who left Egypt with Moses. God wants all to enter his rest and he holds out his invitation Today. Through faith in Christ we have entered that rest, a rest we must hold on to until the end.

Responsive Closing Prayer

L: Dear God, just as you rested after creation,

G: so you promise eternal rest in heaven for all the faithful.

L: So many millions have missed that rest because they have not heard and believed your word. Through your Holy Spirit,

G: keep our faith strong and living.

L: Help us to hear your Word with an open heart and mind. Give us the opportunities to encourage our fellow believers,

G: especially when we notice that they fail to hear and believe your Word or when they slip from a life of love to you.

L: Keep our faith strong

G: to endure the tests of life that will come our way,

L: so that we may finally enter into rest with you in heaven. We pray this in the name of Jesus.

G: Amen.