

Bible Study: Tues., Dec. 27, 2022

What Does God Mean by “Entering into His Rest”?

- I. In the aftermath of Christmas, it’s like Debbie’s body says to her, “Okay, now, I’ve carried you through that marathon. I’ve walked you through every joy and every imagined commitment of the holiday season. I would still tell you that baking lemon meringue, pumpkin and chocolate pies for dinner, knowing that Terry was bringing a German chocolate cake was still a little much. Nevertheless we did it. We did it all. Now, please, can we rest?”**

And, boy, that’s a big subject. What your body asks for — at least what my body asks for most of the time is the cessation of activity, especially the slowing down of my mind. To my body, that’s the meaning of rest. Rest to me means the cessation of strenuous activity and the quieting of my mind...and, in that sense, I’m not good at rest at all. Anybody who knows me well will tell you that I really struggle to slow down.

But is that — the cessation of strenuous activity and the quieting of your mind — is that what God means when He talks about “rest”?

II. Context

We talked last week about how our purpose in life, the primary, number one reason for which God made us is to for us to be conformed to His divine image. We put it this way — Our God became us so that we might become Him. Our God, the second-person of the Trinity took on human flesh through the body of a teenage Jewish teen-age girl, and He walked for 33 years upon the Earth. He became us. He submitted Himself to our circumstances, our joys, our pain, our struggles, our limitations...all the way to the cross. Then, at the cross, He carried you and me all the way through death with Him, continuing into the resurrection, raising us up together to share eternal life in partnership with Him. Our God became us that we might become Him.

We talked again last week about our response to that truth. Our response means that we ask ourselves, “Okay, if God created me for the purpose of being conformed to His image, then what do I do? What’s my responsibility?” And the first answer is simply surrender. Submit your body and soul — that is your mind, your will and your emotions to His guidance and leadership. You certainly can’t do it; you don’t have the strength, knowledge or wisdom to conform your life to His image. You have to surrender to Him. What uurrender means is that you sublimate your life to His, you decide that what He wants today is more important and profitable than what you want. So you let Him define your day. I

could say, you let Him set your agenda for the day, but that's not really true either. You don't have an agenda. You just follow Him. You align your footsteps with His footsteps, and you walk through the day He set for you.

So "to surrender" is to submit your body and soul — your mind, will and emotions to His purpose. You give Him your life in that you allow Him to choose the destination, the route you're going to take, and the pace at which you will travel. That's what the Scripture means when it says, "*The righteous shall live by faith.*"

Rom. 1:17. - For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Gal. 3:11— Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith."

Gal. 2:20 — I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Heb. 10:38 — And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back."

III. So What Is Biblical Rest?

Biblical rest is not the cessation of strenuous work and the quieting of your mind, ...although it can be those things at times.

Biblical rest is Spirit-ordained, Spirit-led activity. Biblical rest is when you are walking surrendered to the Father and in partnership with Him. You do what He says, and you walk in the confidence that, whatever the outcome, He has your back. Biblical rest is a place where the supernatural is commonplace and lies at your fingertips, where all things are possible and God takes responsibility for the outcome.

IV. What God Says about Rest...

Heb. 3:7-11 (Quoting Ps. 95:7-11) —

*So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion,
during the time of testing in the wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested and tried me,
though for forty years they saw what I did.
10 That is why I was angry with that generation;
I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray,
and they have not known my ways.'*

*11 So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'* ”

12 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful (poneros), unbelieving (faithless) heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. 14 We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. 15 As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.”

Poneros: full of labours, annoyances, hardships, pressed and harassed by labours

16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Heb. 4:6-13 —

Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, 7 God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”[d]

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is alive 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.

V. Summary

- A. Our purpose in life is to be conformed to the image of our Creator.**
- B. Since we cannot do that by ourselves, our responsibility is to surrender to God in such a way that He establishes our destination, the route and the pace. That surrender is the physical manifestation of faith as the Bible says five**

times, “The just shall live by faith.”

- C. On a day-to-day basis that means we “rest.” A good definition of Biblical “rest” is Spirit-led activity in which we participate, acting on the foundation of His direction, His authority, His power and His responsibility.

VI. Prayer for Me?

The image of the dog and his owner.