

Hebrews 4: 9-11

“There remains then a Sabbath-rest for the people of God (v.9) ...
Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest (v.11).”

Laboring Unto Rest (part 2)

When it comes to *Entering into God's rest*, in my view the most beautiful example in scripture is that of the robber on the cross next to Christ. Defending Christ against the scoffing of the criminal on the other side of Jesus, “the robber said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when you come into Your kingdom,’ and Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today, you will be with Me in Paradise.’” Luke 23:42 In the midst of His own excruciating suffering, Jesus met the heavy need of this criminal. Certainly we know that the criminal entered into heaven when he died later that day, but I cannot help but believe that, in that moment, he had a peace he had never known in his life, a peace that surpassed the anguish he suffered in that moment.

This is one of those big moments in time. However, it is easy to see that entering God's rest applies to every aspect of our lives, and can be experienced in small moments as well.

The moment we give our lives to Christ, we enter into God's rest - the eternal realm of heaven, where we will look fully upon the face of God, where there is no sin, no fear, no worry.

The moment we give our difficulties over to Christ, trusting Him to work on our behalf, we enter into God's rest in that situation - at least until we take them back. Then we go through the process again later, and if you are like me, it is a repetitive process.

The moment we feel God's presence, we enter into His rest - that moment of rest, beyond all comprehension, possessing a supernatural quality. We have nothing we can point to that tells us that all will be well. We just know it to be so, because of God's peace in our hearts.

The moment we seek God's answer, and we see one door open and the other close, we enter His rest. The key here, of course, is to enter God's rest *when* we seek Him. Not when He answers; but sometimes we enter His rest in retrospect too.

The moment we experience one of those *out-of-left-field* solutions, we enter God's rest. His answers are no, and no, and no until, through no effort of our own, He provides from a direction we least expect, and provides the most perfect solution we could never have engineered for ourselves.

Matthew Henry writes – “This promise of spiritual rest is a promise left us by the Lord Jesus Christ in his last will and testament, as a precious legacy. Our business is to see to it that we lay claim to that rest and to freedom from the dominion of sin, Satan, and the flesh which deprives us of the true rest of the soul; and that we enjoy peace with God in his ordinances and providences, and in our own consciences, to have the prospect ... of perfect and everlasting rest in heaven.”

I realize after this study that I miss opportunities to enter into God's rest, not “laying claim” to the opportunities for rest that come upon me each day. These moments that aren't flashy or big,

but are just moments that offer themselves to me when I feel at peace but then distract myself with business. Sometimes entering God's rest does mean a setting aside of the present activity to spend time with the LORD.

But sometimes it can merely be an acknowledgement of Him – no time commitment especially, simply an acknowledgement of Him and His providence and His presence as I go about my day. Just the thought of it refreshes.