



Lesson 63 – The Promise of Rest

What is rest

Webster's would say it is repose (to lie whether in rest or death), sleep; specifically a bodily state characterized by minimal functional and metabolic activities; 2) freedom from activity or labor; a state of motionlessness or inactivity; the repose of death; 3) a place of resting or lodging; 4) peace of mind or spirit. Others might say it is quiet time or a period of relaxing. Let's see what the bible says of rest, for example in:

Psalm 37:7

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;

Psalm 94:12-13

Blessed is the man who You instruct, O Lord, and teach out of Your law, that You may give him rest from the days of adversity.

Isaiah 14:3

It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve,

When the bible speaks of rest I think in most instances it means you are given peace or relief from some type of burden. The verses above tell us that we are given rest from the burdens of sorrow, fear and bondage. **They also explain that we receive this rest (peace & relief) from the Lord as a result of our obedience to His instruction and His law.** But let's go back to the beginning so we can have a more complete understanding of rest.

The Beginnings of Rest

Genesis 3:1-24

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. 8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the

Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" 12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13 And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." 14 So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." 16 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. 22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and 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.

It sounded to me like the garden was a pretty restful place before sin was introduced. Sustenance was readily available. No labor was involved other than the ease of picking. And there was no knowledge of evil because there had been no evil present up to that point. So that means there was no sorrow, no fear and no bondage. It was a restful place. **But disobedience opened the door to the enemy and man was driven from the garden.** We lost the "rest" of the Lord.

Old Testament Examples

Let's look at some other examples of man's rest being affected by disobedience:

Moses came down from the mountain and found that the people had grown tired of waiting so they made a golden calf. **They were disobedient and lacked faith;** and as a result the Lord plagued the Israelites (Exodus 32:35). Their rest was affected by their lack of faith and disobedience just as with Eve. Because of their actions Adam and Eve were removed from the garden (their place of rest) and the Israelites were given a plague.

Once again, the Israelites were disobedient but this time the Lord gave a death sentence to the rebels when He said, *"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation. The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. (Numbers 14:27,29,30)*

On another occasion the people had become disobedient. They had begun to pester Moses. This caused Moses to grow angry so he struck the rock as opposed to speaking over it and,

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them"(Numbers 20:12).

From all these examples you can see how man's rest had been affected by his disobedience and his lack of faith. He was given plagues, people dropped dead and Moses was not allowed into the "promised land".

Faith & Rest

These same stories of Moses and the Israelites were spoken of by Paul in **Hebrews 3:7-11** when he said, *Therefore as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"*

So Paul spoke of their rebellion but he also went on to emphasized their **lack of faith**. When he continued with this, *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of **unbelief** in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: "today, if you will hear His voice, **do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion." For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? **And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of their unbelief.***

But it wasn't always bad news because sometime after Moses' death Joshua commended his brethren for keeping the commandments and receiving rest. Evidently, they had turned their lives around (And you should notice, as you read these verses from the book of Joshua, that they kept the commandments through faith.). **Joshua 1:13** *"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God **is giving you rest** and is giving you this land.'"* Joshua reminded them of the promise.

And the story continues a little further in **Joshua 22:1-4a, 5** *Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, and said to them: "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. **You** have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but **have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brethren**, as He promised them; But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." The Lord made it very clear that our rest is tied to our faith and obedience.*

It is a Promise for Us as well

All the verses above, particularly those from **Joshua**, teach us of the connection between obedience, faith and rest. Jesus adds to this teaching when He said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn*

from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11: 28-30) Jesus said, follow my example, you will find rest through my example. He said, I’m gentle and humble or in other words, I’m following the Father’s will not mine. Remember Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He kept the Lord’s commandments. He was without sin. He was and is our example. This “promise of rest” He gives is just as much for us as it was for His first disciples. We need to step out in faith as He is calling us to “*Come*” to Him. He is talking about relationship here.

At another time Jesus said, “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*”(Matthew 5:5) With this verse He again is emphasizing following after the Lord’s will and not your own but He also gives a promise with this when He said, “*for they shall inherit the earth.*” This is a way of “promising rest” just as He did in Matt 11.

Falling Short

This “promise of rest” is spoken of again in **Hebrews 4:1** but this time by Paul when he said; *Therefore, since a **promise remains of entering His rest**, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.* Here Paul is warning us not to fall short. From this statement we understand that we can lose the “promise of rest” if we are rebellious like the Israelites were. Of course our “promise of rest” comes through Christ Jesus, therefore, if we refuse to accept the way of salvation through Christ Jesus we fall short of our “promise of rest.”

Paul also says this for believers (persons not lacking faith) in **4:3** ***For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said.*** And he goes on to say in verses **11-13** *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.* Consequently we should strive to be holy as He is holy.

Applying What We’ve Learned

Over the course of our studies we have learned that those things that occurred in the physical, worldly realm back in “old testament” times are lessons we are to apply to our spiritual life. Consequently, when we look at the accounts we have just read, we can gather that we are to hold strong to our faith, we are to seek out a relationship with the Lord and we are to follow after His will which would include righteously following after His commandments and seeking His guidance by comparing spiritual to spiritual (See THH website for comparing spiritual to spiritual). It is through these steps we will receive this “promise of rest”.

Summary

The Lord has “promised” us rest. We know that He has always looked upon rest as important; after all He did create the Sabbath day as a day of rest (Genesis 2:2) and He hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-18). I believe this promise of rest isn’t just a promise about eternity but it is also a promise for the here and now. As we can see here.

From January 9th of God Calling:

Be calm, no matter what may befall you. Rest in Me. Be patient, and let patience have her perfect work. Never think things overwhelming. How can you be overwhelmed when I am with you?

Do not feel the strain of life. There is no strain for My children. Do you not see I am a Master Instrument-maker? Have I not fashioned each part? Do I not know just what it can bear without a strain? Would I, the maker of so delicate an instrument, ask of it anything that could destroy or strain?

No! The strain is only when you are serving another master, the world, fame, the good opinion of men – or carrying two days' burden on the one day. Remember that it must not be.

In those words He reminds us of our relationship and trust in Him. Finally, remember these words from the Lord:

Exodus 33:14

"My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

May God Bless and Keep You,
Cindy

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