

Hebrews Chapter 4

Theme: Entering God's Rest Through Faith in Christ

Section 1: Hebrews 4:1–11 — The Promise of Rest Still Stands:

1 Therefore, since the promise to enter his rest remains, let us beware that none of you be found to have fallen short.

2 For we also have received the good news just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith.

3 For we who have believed enter the rest, in keeping with what he has said, *So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter my rest,"* even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world.

4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: *And on the seventh day God rested from all his works.*

5 Again, in that passage he says, *They will never enter my rest.*

6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience,

7 he again specifies a certain day—today. He specified this speaking through David after such a long time: *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.*

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.

9 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people.

10 For the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his.

11 Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

Greek Word Study:

- **“Rest”** (κατάπαυσις – *katapausis*): A cessation from labor; spiritual rest; Sabbath-like peace in God's presence.
 - **“Beware”** (φοβηθῶμεν – *phobēthōmen*): Be afraid, take caution; a warning urging self-examination.
 - **“Fallen short”** (ὑστερηκέναι – *husterēkenai*): To lack, fail, be behind or left out.
 - **“Disobedience”** (ἀπειθεία – *apeitheia*): Willful refusal to be persuaded; obstinacy.
 - **“Make every effort”** (σπουδάσωμεν – *spoudasōmen*): To be diligent, zealous; not passive striving but eager commitment.
-

Old Testament References:

- **Psalm 95:7–11:** Quoted again to emphasize “Today.”
- **Genesis 2:2:**

“On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.”

- **Joshua 22 and onward:** The land of Canaan was a form of “rest” but not its ultimate fulfillment.
-

Theological and Historical Exegesis:

- **Rest remains:** God’s rest wasn’t completed with Israel’s entry into Canaan. It is available now through Christ.
 - **Creation-Sabbath connection:** God’s rest from creation is a paradigm for spiritual rest—completion and fellowship.
 - **Faithless generation:** Israel heard the promise but failed through unbelief and rebellion.
 - **David’s “Today” (Psalm 95):** Written centuries after Joshua, proving a deeper rest still awaited.
-

Application:

- **Rest is still available**—don’t presume you’ve already entered just because you’re around God’s people.
 - **Faith and obedience** are the pathway into rest.
 - Make every effort—not to *earn* salvation, but to enter into and remain in the reality of Christ's rest.
 - Don’t let cultural busyness crowd out spiritual peace.
-

Section 2: Hebrews 4:12–13 — The Power of God's Word:

12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

13 No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

Greek Word Study:

- “**Living**” (ζῶν – *zōn*): Alive, active, life-giving.
- “**Effective**” (ἐνεργῆς – *energēs*): Active, powerful, at work (root of “energy”).

- “**Sharper**” (τομώτερος – tomōteros): More cutting; keen, decisive.
 - “**Judge**” (κριτικός – kritikos): Discerning, able to evaluate (root of “critic”).
 - “**Exposed**” (τετραχελισμένα – tetrachēlismena): To be laid bare, as with the neck pulled back before judgment or sacrifice.
-

Exegesis:

- The **Word of God** is not static or merely informative—it is **penetrating**, transformative, and exposing.
 - Soul and spirit: likely a way of saying the **deepest aspects of human nature**—the Word reaches what no scalpel can.
 - God’s Word reveals **true motives**—our religious externals can’t hide us.
 - “Exposed” is a surgical and judicial metaphor—everything is open before the divine Judge.
-

Application:

- Read the Word as one under it, not over it.
 - Allow Scripture to examine your heart—not just behavior but motivation.
 - Let the Word bring conviction before God does in judgment.
 - Live transparently before God, knowing nothing is hidden from Him.
-

Section 3: Hebrews 4:14–16 — Our Sympathetic High Priest:

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

16 Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

Greek Word Study:

- “**Passed through**” (διελθούσας – dielēluthota): To travel through; Jesus passed through the heavens (contrast with Aaron entering the earthly veil).
- “**Sympathize**” (συμπαθεῖν – sumpathēsai): To feel with; deep emotional sharing in suffering (from *sym* = with, *pathos* = feeling).
- “**Tempted**” (πειρασθέντα – peirasthenta): Tested or tried, not just seduced to sin.
- “**Boldness**” (παρρησίας – parrēusias): Confidence, freedom of speech.

- “**Throne of grace**” (θρόνον τῆς χάριτος – **thronon tēs charitos**): God’s presence not as judgment, but as the source of unearned favor.
-

Exegesis:

- Jesus as our **great high priest** is central to Hebrews. He is both divine (Son of God) and empathetic (shared our humanity).
 - The priesthood theme will be developed more in chapters 5–10.
 - His **sinless experience of temptation** makes Him uniquely qualified to intercede.
 - Access to God is no longer restricted—we come boldly, not fearfully.
 - The **throne of grace** is a new covenant concept—contrasted with the fearsome presence at Mt. Sinai.
-

Application:

- Jesus understands your struggles—He's not distant or disinterested.
 - Don't hide your weaknesses—bring them to the throne of grace.
 - In times of temptation or failure, don't run away from God—run toward Him.
 - Hold fast to your confession—it will be tested, but Christ is faithful.
-

Group Discussion Questions:

1. What does “God’s rest” mean in this chapter? How is it different from physical rest?
 2. How does the example of Israel's unbelief apply to us today?
 3. In what ways do you experience the Word of God as “living and active” in your life?
 4. What does it mean to you that Jesus sympathizes with your weaknesses?
 5. How can we practically “approach the throne of grace” during our week?
-

Summary & Takeaways

Theme	Key Teaching	Modern Application
God’s Rest	Still available by faith	Trust in Christ daily; don’t harden your heart
God’s Word	Penetrates and judges	Submit to Scripture’s authority and correction
Christ’s Priesthood	Jesus sympathizes and intercedes	Boldly draw near to God for help and mercy