

Entering Into God's Rest Hebrews 3,4; Matthew 11:28

While living in Israel in the 1970's I read some of the writings of one of their famous statesmen, Abba Eban. One of his sayings was, "I've met a lot of people who never lost the chance to miss an opportunity." That is kind of how Hebrews 4 begins, "Don't miss your chance! Don't blow your opportunity! Don't do what the children of Israel did (under the old covenant) and live in a 'wilderness' of un-rest all your days!"

Both Hebrews 3 and 4 speak to us about entering into God's rest (note the personal pronouns - "My... His...".) God's rest is His Self-accepting awareness of His own sufficiency... for any contingency. Read Isaiah 43:13; 44:6-8; 46:10 - sense any anxiety? any fear? any dis-ease? Any un-rest in God? God's rest in Himself is His acceptance of Himself - "I AM" (Ex 3:14; Jo 8:58). God's rest in Himself is His awareness of His own sufficiency, His resources for any eventuality (Is 43:13; 44:6-8; Matt 19:26). There is no self-doubt, no self-rejection, no self-hatred in God, is there?

Then wouldn't it stand to reason that God's rest in us would fall upon our trusting acceptance of our new creation selves (II Cor 5:17; Ro 15:7)? Upon our faithful awareness of our new creation sufficiency in Christ? (II Cor 3:5-6; II Pet 1:3,4). God's rest upon the believer's life is His witness upon the life responsively trusting God for all his or her needs... in any contingency! If God's rest is the rest of a completed work (Gen 2:2,3), then wouldn't it be possible to enter into His rest through the completed work of His Son, Jesus Christ the Lord? (See Col 2:9,10) By grace (His activity), through faith (our receptivity) of His saving activity and His indwelling, saving life! (Col 2:6) What cannot save us cannot give us rest.

In the Old Covenant, God's rest was conveyed through a practice - a Sabbath rest (Ex 31:15) - and a place - a Canaan rest (Deut 12:10; Josh 21:44). Both the practice and the place reminded God's children "who" they were and "Whose" they were. Both were seen and temporal - part of an interim arrangement "until" the promised Messiah (Ga 3:19). Sadly, too many Christians are looking for a "practice" (devotional model?) and, or, a "place" (right church?). Too many Christians, as a result, remain rest-less! In the New Covenant, God's rest is conveyed only in and through a Person - Jesus the Messiah. He alone is our Sabbath rest (Matt 12:8). He alone is our (abiding) Place (Jo 15:4,5).

That's why His open invitation to the "weary and heavy-laden" is always "Come to Me!" What is the implication behind that invitation? "You've gone to 'them' - the practices, the places, the programs, the propositions, the professionals. They've done what they're supposed to do - worn you out! Isn't it about time you come to Me? Only that which saves you gives you rest. Come to Me... and I will rest you!"

New Covenant rest is always about devotedness to a Person - never to a practice or a place! "Come to Me and enter into the witness of My rest upon those who trust in My Saving Life for their every need."

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Greetings

How is a poem written? One word, one sentence at a time. How is a clay pot formed? One turn of the wheel, one pressing of the potter's hand at a time. How are dwellings made? One saw cut, one hammer blow, one level adjustment at a time.

We are God's "workmanship" (Eph 2:10 - Greek word is "poema"), the "clay pot" through which His light seeks to shine (II Cor 4:6-7), the "temple" in which His Holy Spirit dwells (I Cor 6:19). Too many believers will be looking for the one big thing that just might transform them into the likeness of Christ this year - the next book with the mystical key, the new retreat with profound teaching, the dynamic church with the glorious worship, the "can't miss" devotional model that brings daily, eye-opening revelation.

It could happen - but don't count on it. Most genuine transformation is "daily". (Prov 8:30; Matt 6:11; Lk 9:23; 19:47; Acts 17:11; II Cor 4:16 - to cite a few!) Perhaps this year we can better learn to recognize the sacrament of every present moment. Bring a will to trust God into the moment, the crisis, the joy, the sorrow - into the "all things" of your life - so your faith may not be static or mechanical, but living and personal. God is an ever "present tense" God - His name is "I AM." There is no time to experience Him and no place to express Him except where we are.

This year, stay out of abiding in a past you cannot change or running out into a future you cannot predict or control. Avoid fantasies and "if onlies" at all costs. Whatever moment you are in, be all in. Love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and those in it with you. Embrace His Way, His Truth, His Life as your supply for that specific moment. You just might find there is a hidden treasure buried in the field of that present moment that will change something about you forever (See Matt 13:44).

CALENDAR

JANUARY

2,9,16,23 First Baptist Church Alachua
11 Alachua Study
25 Ocala Study
28-30 Heritage Community Church,
Fruitland Pak, FL (352-671-4600)

FEBRUARY 25-27 * * 2022 Florida Retreat * *

MARCH 10-13 Grace Life, Baton Rouge, LA

APRIL 22-24 Binghamton, NY

MAY 15-18 Pope Dr. Baptist, Anderson, SC

2022 Florida Retreat

February 25-27 Alachua, Florida

\$50 deposit (per person) due by January 25, 2022



\$320 - couple



\$270 - single (1 per room)

\$165 - single (2 per room)

\$50 - conference fee and Saturday dinner

\$30 - conference fee only

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