

Moments *for* You

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Theme: Rest



JESUS, OUR REST

The key to understanding how Jesus is our rest is the Hebrew word *sabat*, which means “to rest or stop or cease from work.” After creating the heavens and the earth in six days, God “rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made” (Genesis 2:2). This doesn’t mean that God was tired and needed a rest. We know that God is omnipotent, literally “all-powerful.” He has all the power in the universe, He never tires, and His most arduous expenditure of energy does not diminish His power one bit. So, what does it mean that God rested on the seventh day? Simply that He stopped what He was doing. He ceased from His labors.

God used the example of His resting on the seventh day of Creation to establish the principle of the Sabbath day rest for His people. In Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15, God gave the Israelites the fourth of His Ten Commandments. They were to “remember” the Sabbath day and “keep it holy.” One day out of every seven, they were to rest from their labors and give the same day of rest to their servants and animals.

With the establishment of the Old Testament Law, the Jews were constantly “laboring” to make themselves acceptable to God. Their labors included trying to obey a myriad of rules from the ceremonial law, the Temple law, the civil law, etc. Of course they couldn’t possibly keep all those laws, so God provided an array of sin offerings and sacrifices so they could come to Him for forgiveness and restore fellowship with Him, but only temporarily.

Hebrews 10:1 tells us that the law “Can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the [people] perfect.” Just as the people began their physical labors after a one-day rest, so, too, did they have to continue to offer sacrifices. But these sacrifices were offered in anticipation of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross, who “After He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12). Because of what He did, we no longer have to “labor” in law-keeping in order to be justified in the sight of God. Jesus was sent so that we might rest in God and in what He has provided.

There is no other Sabbath rest besides Jesus. He alone satisfies the requirements of the Law, and He alone provides the sacrifice that atones for sin. He is God’s plan for us to cease from the labor of our own works. We dare not reject this one-and-only way of salvation (John 14:6).

—Condensed from GotQuestions.org

THE REST OF SALVATION

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

ALL ARE INVITED

Who is invited to receive this rest? “All ye that labour.” The good news is to be preached to “every creature” under heaven (Mark 16:15), and in this particular passage it is addressed to all who are laboring and heavy laden.

ARE YOU LABORING FOR SALVATION?

There are many who believe that if they obey the precepts of God’s law they will be saved, and they are laboring to do them. They have been told that the performance of certain rites

and ceremonies will also save them, and they are performing those with great care. The yoke is on their shoulders, and they are laboring diligently. Some are laboring in prayer, some are laboring in sacraments, others in self-denials. They are awakened to feel the need of salvation, and they are eager to save themselves. It is to these laboring souls the Savior addresses His loving words. In effect He tells them, "This is not the way to rest. Your self-imposed labors will end in disappointment. Cease your wearisome exertions and believe in Me, for I will immediately give you rest—the rest which My labors have earned for believers."

HAVE YOU BECOME BURDENED?

Those who are active in working for salvation quickly become burdened. Besides the burden of their self-righteous labor, there comes upon them the awful, tremendous, crushing burden of past sin, and a sense of the wrath of God which is due to that sin. A soul which has to bear the load of its own sin, and the load of divine wrath, is indeed heavy laden.

GOD'S REST IS A GIFT

It is implied, too, that these are *undeserving* of rest, for it is said, "Come unto Me ... and I will *give* you rest." A gift is not of merit but of grace. Wages and reward are for those who earn, but a gift is a matter of charity. You who feel your unworthiness, who have been seeking salvation earnestly, and suffering the weight of sin, Jesus will *freely give* to you what you cannot earn or purchase. He will give it as an act of His own free, rich, sovereign mercy. If you come to Him, He is prepared to give it to you now, for He has promised, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.*"

JESUS SAYS, "COME UNTO ME"

To come is to leave one thing, and to advance to another. Come, then, leave your labors, leave your self-reliant efforts, leave your sins, leave all in which you have trusted, and come to Jesus. Think of Him who bore the load of human sin upon the cross of Calvary. Think of Jesus, the divinely-appointed substitute and sacrifice for guilty man. Then, seeing that He is God's own Son, let faith follow your contemplation. Rely upon Him, put your trust in Him who suffered in your place. Look to Him for the payment of your debt to satisfy the wrath of God.

REPENT AND BELIEVE

Coming to Jesus involves both repentance and faith. Repentance leaves the place where you now stand, and then faith brings you into reliance upon Jesus. If you want rest, you can find it nowhere until you come and lay your burdens down at His dear pierced feet, and find life in looking alone to Him.

—C. H. Spurgeon, adapted

In Christ we have: a **love** that can never be fathomed; a **life** that can never die; a **righteousness** that can never be tarnished; a **peace** that can never be understood; a **rest** that can never be disturbed; a **joy** that can never be diminished; a **hope** that can never be disappointed; a **glory** that can never be clouded; a **light** that can never be darkened; a **happiness** that can never be interrupted; a **strength** that can never be weakened; a **purity** that can never be defiled; a **beauty** that can never be marred; a **wisdom** that can never be baffled; and **resources** that can never be exhausted.

—Unknown

ENTERING GOD'S REST

"They could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 3:19-4:1).

Chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews contain one of the most solemn warnings for which this letter is famous. The writer urges his readers to make sure that they have truly believed the gospel, that they are genuine believers. "Take heed, brethren," he urges them, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

It happens all too often that people drift into church membership without any personal experience of the Savior, or are swept into a profession of faith on the wave of some emotional or ecstatic experience without having been genuinely born again. As time passes by, and the fervor dies away, they come to realize that Christ and His word and His work mean little or nothing to them. Because they have never had any personal experience of regeneration, they are not true believers. But instead of being alarmed, owning up, seeking the Savior and personally receiving Him, they allow this sin of unbelief to deceive them into thinking that as long as they keep up external experiences of being decent and religious, their lack of personal experience of Christ and salvation does not matter. Eventually their unbelief so hardens their hearts that no preaching of the gospel could ever awaken them to their peril or lead them to repentance and faith in the Savior. What a tragedy!

By contrast, "We which have believed do enter into rest" (Hebrews 4:3). There is no doubt about it. God says that if a person has once

believed—truly and genuinely—that person enters in. This is one of God's glorious affirmations of unvarying and unbreakable certainties. "We which have believed do enter into rest." We can be as sure about it as we can about this other promise: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36).

With that we come to the all-important question: have we personally believed the gospel? Are we really believers? Or are we merely temporary fellow-travelers among the genuine people of God? Has this put doubts or fear into your mind? There is no need to fear, for we have a high priest, Jesus, now passed through the heavens, but who once lived in our world. He knows the weakness of His people, and bids us come to Him (Hebrews 4:14-16). Do we feel uncertain and insecure? Then let us come boldly.

"But," you say, "I have sinned today: see all my weakness and my broken resolutions. I want to be a Christian, but I have been a miserable failure. How dare I come to Jesus?" Come boldly in spite of it all. Come and stand at His mercy seat. We richly deserve His judgment, but when you come boldly to Him you will find His mercy for all past mistakes and His grace to bring you through every difficulty and land you safe in your eternal inheritance. Believe Him and rest on Him, learning to never trust your own efforts, and you shall find rest of heart now, and enter that great rest above.

—Condensed from *An Unshakable Kingdom* by David Gooding

It is by believing that we enter into rest. It is by obeying God and surrendering to His will that the rest enters into us. —Warren W. Wiersbe

LEARNING TO REST

*“Bear not a single care thyself,
One is too much for thee;
The work is Mine, and Mine alone;
Thy work—to rest in Me.”*

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was one of the most widely used missionaries in China’s history. Inland China opened to the Gospel largely as an outcome of his life. During his 51 years of service there, his China Inland Mission established 20 mission stations and brought 849 missionaries to the field who depended upon God for the supply of all their needs without promise of salary. Over 700 Chinese workers were trained, four million dollars were raised by faith, and a witnessing Chinese church of 125,000 was developed. It has been said at least 35,000 were his own converts and that he baptized some 50,000.

As a young man, Hudson’s heart was burdened for China. In that great, waiting land, a million souls a month were dying—dying without God and without hope into eternity. This was burned into his soul. A decision had to be made and he knew it, for the conflict could no longer be endured.

Entering the mission field, Hudson Taylor dealt with difficulties, inward and outward, great and small, but in them all joy flowed unhindered from the presence of the Lord Himself. He learned that, for him, only one life was possible—just that blessed life of resting and rejoicing in the Lord under all circumstances. Listen as he describes how he came to find rest in the promises of God:

“In great spiritual agony, I wandered out on the sands alone. And there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service. I told Him that all

the responsibility as to the issues and consequences must rest with Him. As His servant, my part was to obey and to follow Him, while His was to direct, care for and guide me and those who might labor with me. At once peace flowed into my burdened heart.

“If God should place me in great perplexity, must He not give me much guidance? Or if He put me in positions of great difficulty, must He not give me much grace? Or in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? His resources are mine—for He is mine, and is with me and dwells in me.

“I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize this—He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me. In the easiest position He must give me His grace, and in the most difficult circumstance His grace is sufficient. No matter how intricate my path, how difficult my service, how sad my bereavement, how far away my loved ones, how helpless I am, how deep are my soul-yearnings—Jesus can more than meet them all.

“The sweetest part is the rest which full identification with Christ brings. To let my loving Savior work in me His will, my sanctification, is what I would live for by His grace. Abiding, not striving nor struggling. Looking off unto Him, trusting Him for present power. Resting in the love of an almighty Savior, in the joy of a complete salvation. Christ lives in me, and ‘The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20).”

—Adapted from *Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret*

COME TO JESUS

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

COME

To come means to believe (Acts 16:31); to receive (John 1:12); to eat (John 6:35); to drink (John 7:37); to look (Isaiah 45:22); to confess (1 John 4:2); to hear (John 5:24-25); to enter a door (John 10:9); to open a door (Revelation 3:20); to touch the hem of His garment (Matthew 9:20-21); and to accept the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

UNTO ME

The object of faith is not a church, or a creed, or a clergyman, but the living Christ. Salvation is in a Person and His name is Jesus. Those who have Jesus are as saved as God can make them.

ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN

In order to truly come to Jesus, a person must be willing to admit that he is burdened with the weight of sin. Only those who acknowledge they are lost can be saved. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is preceded by repentance toward God.

AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST

Notice that rest here is a gift; it is unearned and unmerited. This is the rest of salvation that comes from realizing that Christ finished the work of redemption on Calvary’s cross. It is the rest of conscience that follows the realization that the penalty of one’s sins has been paid once for all and that God will not demand payment twice.

In verses 29 and 30 the invitation

changes from salvation to service.

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU

This means to enter into submission to His will, to turn over control of one’s life to Him (Romans 12:1-2).

AND LEARN OF ME

As we acknowledge His lordship in every area of our lives, He trains us in His ways.

FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART

In contrast to the Pharisees who were harsh and proud, the true Teacher is meek and lowly. Those who take His yoke will learn to take the lowest place.

AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS

Here it is not the rest of conscience but the rest of heart that is found by taking the lowly place before God and man. It is the rest that one experiences in the service of Christ when he stops trying to elevate himself.

FOR MY YOKE IS EASY

Once again there is a striking contrast with the Pharisees. Jesus said of them, “They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Matthew 23:4). Jesus’ yoke is easy; it does not chafe. Someone has suggested that if Jesus had a sign outside His carpenter’s shop, it probably would have read, “My yokes fit well.”

AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT

This does not mean that there are no problems, trials, labor, or heartaches in the Christian life. But it does mean that we do not have to bear them alone. We are yoked with One who gives sufficient grace for every time of need. To serve Him is not bondage, but perfect freedom.

—Condensed from *Matthew: Behold Your King* by William MacDonald

THE PATTERN OF REST

“On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work” (Genesis 2:2-3).

The week of creation ended with a day of rest for the Lord. We never read of God resting again in all of Scripture, but to the contrary, God is laboring for the redemption and restoration of man throughout the biblical account until final rest is again achieved in Revelation 21 and 22. The Lord Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). The Son finished His laboring on earth at Calvary, but in heaven He continues even now to make intercession for the Church. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is laboring to convict the world of sin and to win a bride for the Son. God is still working today!

The question may arise whether a Christian should observe the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. For Israel, the sabbath became a strict observance with the giving of the law at Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11). But for Christians, it is worth noting that the Lord Jesus reaffirmed *all* of the Ten Commandments *except* “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

The Apostle Paul strictly forbids Christians from legislating special days, feast days, or sabbath days and forcing their personal convictions on others (Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:5). His instruction is, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” about such things.

Individual believers can worship God any time and anywhere as believer priests (John 4:23-24). The early church did not gather on Saturday,

but Sunday—Christ’s resurrection day (1 Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:7). This is why John refers to Sunday as the Lord’s day (Revelation 1:10).

God has displayed a pattern in which we should rest one day in seven. It seems wise to follow this pattern, and that of the early church, which dedicated the first day of the week for corporate worship and service. We continue doing this on earth until the church enters God’s final gift of rest in glory.

—Condensed from *Seeds of Destiny* by Warren Henderson

THE DESERT REST

Jesus “said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31).

We live in times of rush and turmoil; we are so actively engaged in a hundred and one things; we are “cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40); we address meetings and attend meetings; we rush here and there with the inevitable result that often the noise about us and the restlessness of our spirits within prevent our hearing His voice.

We become tired spiritually as well as physically; we lose our freshness. We need a holiday. For if we persistently rush on, even in zealous service for the Lord, and neglect the quiet of communion with Him, we quickly dry up spiritually. We need to be refreshed.

And how gracious is our Lord! If we will not take time to hear His voice when we are strong and active, He may in His great interest in us and yearning for the affections of our hearts, gently take us aside out of the rush and bustle of life into “a desert place.”

How many saints, tired and worn out, have thanked Him for laying them aside in sickness in order that they might “rest a while,” and while resting enjoy quiet communion with Him to an extent that would have been impossible otherwise. Oh, the joy of resting with Him and in Him. Blessed rest of weary souls!

—Norman Campbell, condensed. From Uplook Articles at uplook.org

Come apart and rest a while, or you may just plain come apart.

—Vance Havner

MUSIC IN A REST

There is no music in a rest, but there is the *making of music* in it. Our life’s melody is broken off here and there by “rests,” and we foolishly think we have come to the end of the tune. God writes the music of our lives, and the rests are not to be slurred over, lest we destroy the melody. If we say to ourselves, “There is no music in a rest,” let us not forget that music can never be complete without the rests.

—Adapted

SHARPENING MY AX

One man challenged another to an all-day wood chopping contest.

The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had.

“I don’t get it,” he said. “Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did.” “But you didn’t notice,” said the winning woodsman, “that I was sharpening my ax when I sat down to rest.”

—Unknown

REST FROM LABOR

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours” (Revelation 14:13).

The Bible speaks of death, for a Christian, as a *rest from labor*. It is as if the Lord of the harvest says to the weary laborer, “You have been faithful in your task, come and sit in the sheltered porch of My palace and rest from your labors—enter now into the joy of your Lord.”

Some of God’s saints accomplish more in a few years than others do in a lifetime. The Bible says, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9). That rest cannot begin until they leave this life and are ushered into the glorious presence of their Lord.

The Apostle Paul said, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Victor Hugo said of death: “When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others: I have finished my work, but I cannot say I have finished my life. My day’s work will begin the next morning. My tomb is not a blind alley. It is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight to be open in the dawn.”

Confident of the fact that death is not an end but a beginning, we can say with Paul, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55).

—From *Unto The Hills* by Billy Graham

Look around and be distressed.

Look inside and be depressed.

Look at Jesus and be at rest.

—Corrie Ten Boom