

Experiencing God's Rest

"No Turning Back" (Study of Hebrews) - part 5
Pastor Bob Johnson, November 24th, 2019

Insights from Hebrews 4:

- **The concern: missing out on ...**
(Hebrew 4:1-2)
- **The reason: not acting on ...**
(Hebrew 3:18-19, 4:3, 6, 11, John 1:12, Mark 9:22-24)
- **The rest:**
 - **is from and with ...** (v3-5)
 - **is available but not ...** (v6-7)
 - **is both now and ...** (v8-10)
- **The encouragement:**
 - **He ...** (v12-13)
 - **He ...** (v14-16)

What can cause a hardened heart:

1. **When we decide God's way ...**
(Psalm 73)
2. **When we think God's way is ...**
(Isaiah 55:8-9, Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 14:12)
3. **When we fear ...**
(Genesis 3)
4. **When we think our situation is ...**
(2 Chronicles 26)
5. **When we suffer from ...**
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-19)

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This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to our last week of this 5 week mini-series as we have studied and discussed Hebrews 1-4 together. After this week, most of our small groups will be taking a Holiday break until we start back up in mid-January.

Getting Started:

Before we get started with some questions related to last Sunday's message on Hebrews 4:1-16, let's catch up a bit.

What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened in the last few days that you can share. Let's take a little time to celebrate with one another and support one another.

In Hebrews 4, we learned a lot about "the rest" God makes available to us. Speaking of rest, what brings you rest? We are all different! What renews you or restores your sanity? (i.e. long walk, music, working out, taking a nap, playing a game, etc.)

In Hebrews 4, we were reminded that a good start doesn't guarantee a happy ending. The Israelites that followed Moses to freedom from Egypt, eventually (sadly!) died off in the wilderness. Eventually, their kids were given an opportunity to enter into the promised land. We have all had times when we started something off strong only to be tempted to quit when things got tough.

What is something you were tempted to quit but are glad you didn't?

This past Sunday, we heard five things that can cause our hearts to harden leading us to wander from God. Of the five, what would you say are the top two or three that people in general struggle with?

What is the one or two that you are tempted to struggle with???

The last point Bob made last Sunday was how thankfulness helps us wander less. Read 1 Thess. 5:16-19.

In light of Thanksgiving, knowing that giving thanks feeds our faith and starves our doubts, how has God been faithful to you (good to you) this past year?

What are some things you can choose to be thankful for that you might not recognize if you didn't intentionally slow down and reflect a bit?

Before we further discuss the passage from last Sunday and dig a little deeper into other passages, let's read Hebrews 4:1-16 again.

From last week's message, what was helpful or encouraging to you related to this passage? Was there a question that you thought of after listening to the message we can discuss together?

Was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged you or raised a question for you?

Digging Deeper:

For many of us, it is easy to follow God when His way makes sense to us and aligns with our desires. Yet it can be tempting to stop following God's way when it threatens our 'freedom' to do what we want, believe what we want or live life our own way. This can cause us to veer off God's path and onto our own.

The verses below highlight the dangers of following our own path, as well as the freedom of following God's path. As you read these verses, how might they challenge the belief that following God means a loss of freedom?

Psalm 16:11, Psalm 19:7-9, Proverbs 5:1-14, Romans 6:19-23

If someone were to ask you why you believe following God brings more freedom, what two or three points would you make to support this belief based on these verses?

Many times fear plays a huge part in causing us to doubt God's plan. While it is not a sin to doubt, acting on our fears can have major consequences and often ensures we miss out on what God intended.

In the book of Numbers, we read the story of twelve men who were told to scout the land of Canaan, a land God wanted the Israelites to settle in. As we read through the following passages, how do we see fear take root and alter how they responded to God's invitation to enter and dwell in the land and experience his rest?

Numbers 13:1-3, 17-33, Numbers 14:20-23

Where have you seen fear or anxiety cause you or others to doubt God or compromise their beliefs similar to the Israelites?

Can you think of any fears that seemed like giants at the time but ended up being much smaller?

In each of our lives, regardless of whether we have gotten off to a good start or not, the truth is our story is still being written :).

There is hope in having a God who believes in us and went to great lengths to provide a path towards our adoption and redemption.

As you think through the story of your life, what hope or reassurances are given in the verses below that could help you write your next few chapters?

Ephesians 2:1-7

Colossians 1:13-14

Galatians 4:4-7

Isaiah 40:31

As 2019 is wrapping up (can you believe it???) what resources, gifts or strengths do you possess that could be key in writing the next chapters of your redemption story as you launch into a new year?

Wrapping Up:

Looking back at this week's teaching and study, what is one thing you would especially like to remember until we meet up again?

And ... looking back on these past weeks, how has our small group been an encouragement to you? How has being in our small group stretched you ... maybe more than was comfortable?

What would you say to someone who was possibly considering being in a small group (like ours :) ... starting in January?

Who might you invite to be part of our small group as we kick off a new small group season in January?

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other. We are better together!