

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 4:6-10

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Today, we will continue reading Hebrews chapter 4, verses 6 through 10.

God's eternal purpose is for His people to obtain true rest. In God's original creation, He worked for six days and created all things. Humanity was created at the end of the sixth day, in God's image and according to His likeness. On the day after humanity was created, which was God's seventh day, He set that day as the Sabbath. God ceased all His work because He had worked for six days. However, as soon as humanity was created, God wanted man to enjoy rest. After man's fall, sin entered and corrupted the world that God had created, and Satan became the ruler of this world. Humanity became slaves of sin and found no rest; thus, God Himself could not rest either.

God did not abandon humanity. Instead, He desired to manifest His glory through humanity and began His plan of redemption. God first called Abraham to leave the land of idolatry and follow Him into the promised land. Abraham believed God and became the first person to be justified by faith, as well as the father of faith. As the father of faith, Abraham had two groups of descendants: the Israelites, who are his physical descendants and God's earthly people, and the New Testament saints, who are his spiritual descendants and God's heavenly people. In the Old Testament, God's guidance of the Israelites became a foreshadowing of His guidance of New Testament believers.

In the Old Testament, God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh's slavery in Egypt. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness on their way to the promised land of Canaan. However, the Israelites were unbelieving, frequently tested God, and provoked His anger. As a result, the first generation of Israelites, except for Joshua and Caleb, died in the

wilderness. Even Moses himself could not enter the promised land to enjoy rest. These events in the Old Testament became a foreshadowing in the New Testament of how believers follow Christ.

Verse 6: “Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience.”

God promised the Israelites that they would enter the good land and enjoy rest. God’s promises do not fail, so there must be some who enter the good land and enjoy the rest that God prepared for them. However, those who heard the gospel but did not mix it with faith could neither enter the good land nor enjoy its rest. From the New Testament perspective, this refers to those who hear the gospel, choose to believe, and are baptized into the name of the Lord. However, the gospel does not stop there; it is meant to bring people into God’s rest. Some Christians lack continuing faith and cannot persevere to the end. As a result, after baptism, they drift in the wilderness of their souls and never enter the land of rest, meaning they never settle in the church life.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we look around at the saints among us, are there not many Christians who were saved and baptized but ultimately could not remain in church life? On the other hand, there are Christians who drifted for a time but later returned to church life by God’s grace. We must understand that God’s intention is to obtain a church that is successfully built. Only a built church can overcome the gates of Hades. Saints who do not participate in the building of the church in church life have not entered the land of rest.

Verse 7: “Again He designates a certain day, saying in David, ‘Today’, after such a long time, as it has been said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.’”

From Moses to David was about 500 years. The “book of David” refers to the Psalms. David was not only a great king skilled in warfare but also an outstanding poet who wrote many beautiful psalms. The book of Psalms contains 150 psalms, about half of which were written by David. Therefore, the Jews refer to the Psalms as the book of David, just as they call the first five books of the Old Testament the Pentateuch of Moses and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon the wisdom books of Solomon.

The author then quotes Psalm 95:7–8, saying, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” If we read the context of Psalm 95, it refers to those who fell in the wilderness. Because they hardened their hearts, they could not enter rest. David referenced events from 500 years earlier to remind the Israelites of his time: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” But the author of Hebrews reads this passage with spiritual insight, focusing on the word “today.” It implies that the speaking God is still speaking today. Therefore, if you hear God’s voice today and do not harden your heart, you can obtain God’s promise.

David encouraged the Israelites of his time to hear God’s voice “today.” The author of Hebrews interprets David’s “today” as God setting another day. In other words, God gives humanity another opportunity to hear His voice, not harden their hearts, and obtain His promise. This new opportunity is “today.” The author’s approach to Scripture is very insightful, discovering new revelations. He follows David’s example and, in Hebrews 3:7–8, encourages the Hebrew saints: “The Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’” Moses and the first generation of Israelites could not enter the good land and obtain rest, but Joshua and Caleb led the second generation of Israelites into the land. This leads to the author’s discussion of Joshua.

Verse 8: "For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day."

Since God, through the Psalms of David, has set aside another day for people to enter His rest, this proves that although Joshua led the second generation of

Israelites into the promised land, they did not obtain true rest. If they had, God would not have spoken of another day nearly 500 years later through David.

The Israelites who were able to enter the land were more blessed than those who perished in the wilderness, for at least they entered the land. Let us first look at the history of those who followed Joshua into the promised land, beginning with Joshua himself. In Numbers 13:8, "from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun." Then, in verse 13:16, "And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua." Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim, and his original name was Hoshea, which means "salvation." Later, Moses changed his name to Joshua, which means "God saves." The name Joshua in Hebrew corresponds to the Greek name Jesus. Joshua succeeded Moses in leading the Israelites into the promised land, so in a complete typological sense, Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt into the wilderness, together with Joshua bringing the second generation into the promised land, perfectly prefigures Jesus Christ.

Now, let us consider the person of Hoshea or Joshua. He was 40 years younger than Moses. He was born the same year Moses killed the Egyptian and fled into the wilderness of Midian, just as Pharaoh began to increase the oppression of the Israelites. Therefore, his mother named him Hoshea, which speaks of the need for salvation for the Israelites. Hoshea grew up in Egypt for 40 years, under the harsh slavery imposed by Pharaoh. At the age of 40, exactly when Moses turned 80, God called Moses to return to Egypt to deliver the Israelites. Joshua must have been excited to join the exodus from Egypt, for he was a capable and natural leader.

The first battle of the Israelites after entering the wilderness is recorded in Exodus 17:8-13, where Joshua led the Israelites in battle against the Amalekites. Joshua fought in the valley while Moses prayed on the mountain. The two of them worked together perfectly, defeating the Amalekites. After that, Joshua remained by Moses' side, becoming the leader of the new generation. He was also one of the twelve spies sent to scout the promised land. When the spies returned, only Joshua and Caleb, in faith, declared that God had already given the land to the Israelites. Because of their faith, they were the only ones of the first generation who could enter the promised land.

In Joshua 1:1-2, "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.'" Joshua succeeded Moses in leading the Israelites into the promised land. He was a great general and an effective administrative leader. He led the Israelites in battle and divided the land among the twelve tribes. After each tribe received their portion, they were to continue to fight until they fully possessed the land allotted to them.

However, the Israelites who entered the promised land did not fully possess the land that God had promised them. After Joshua, the period of the Judges began, which was a very dark time in Israel's history. The Israelites rebelled against God, suffered His discipline, and then repented and received His deliverance. This cycle continued until the time of King David, when the nation of Israel was established and fully received the promised land from God.

At that time, they still did not enter God's rest. The Israelites entered the land but did not experience God's rest. They observed the Sabbath, yet still did not experience God's rest. It appears that God's rest is not a particular day nor a specific place. This parallels the experience of New Testament believers who, after being saved by grace, gather in church on Sundays to worship God with other saints. But does simply doing this each week grant us God's rest? If we are honest, we must admit that many times, we still do not experience rest.

Verses 9-10: "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."

The author of Hebrews draws a conclusion: there remains another rest for the people of God. He calls this rest "the rest of the Sabbath," a Greek word *sabbatismos*, which is a new term that only appears once in the entire Bible, meaning the rest of the Sabbath. It is not a day, nor a place, but rather a realm, a category. Whoever enters this realm has ceased from their works, just as God ceased from His work.

We all live within time and space, and we tend to define rest by time, such as the Sabbath, or by space, such as entering the land of Canaan. In the New Testament, we might say that Sunday is our time of rest and that the meeting hall is our place of rest. But God does not define rest in this way. True rest is the rest of the Sabbath, which means you must stop all your work and be fully within the realm of rest.

What does it mean to stop all work? Does it mean we do nothing at all? The best explanation of the rest of the Sabbath is found in the words of Jesus Christ Himself. In Matthew 11:28-30, He declares to all, "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." The Chinese Union Version translation says, "you shall find rest for your hearts," while the KJV translates it as "ye shall find rest unto your souls." So, if we translate directly from the original text, it means "you will find rest in your soul." This true rest is in the rest of our souls. We will continue to explore this concept in tomorrow's scripture.

Today, let us focus on how we can obtain rest according to this passage in Matthew. There are three steps: The first step is to come before the Lord. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We must come before the Lord, unloading our labor and heavy burdens. When we first come to Christ, we have many burdens of sin, many labors in the world, which must all be unloaded. After some time in the church, as we begin serving, we often carry the burden of serving, which must also be laid down. We must unload our burdens and come out of ourselves in order to enjoy rest before the Lord. This is the first step—coming before the Lord and unloading our burdens.

The second step is to experience the gentleness and humility of the Lord. Jesus says, "for I am gentle and lowly in heart; learn from Me." We come before the Lord to receive Christ's supply, and in our life, we gradually grow in gentleness and humility. This is the second step.

The third step is to take the yoke of the Lord upon ourselves, to bear the burden of the Lord. And the Lord's yoke is easy, and His burden is light. Sometimes, when we

follow the Lord to do His work, we no longer do our own work, for the Lord is the master of the work, and He bears the full responsibility. True rest is not doing nothing, but stopping our own work and doing the work of the Lord. Paul also tells us in Ephesians that Christ is the Head of the church, and the church is His Body. The saints are the members of His Body, and each member listens to the Head's direction. This means we stop doing our own work to do God's work. The members must also cooperate with each other, and under the Head's guidance, we can build up the Body of Christ, which is the church. From the perspective of the new creation, the church is holy and without blemish. If we can remain in the new creation, we will experience God's rest.

The Israelites who followed Joshua into the promised land experienced many failures. It was only under David that they fully possessed the land, and David began preparing materials. By the time of King Solomon, the temple was built. When God's glory filled the temple, there was a house for God on the earth, and God could rest. Only then did the Israelites truly enter into rest. In terms of New Testament typology, this is like entering the church life, which is similar to entering the promised land. The church has an outward aspect, but it also has an inward, practical aspect. The outward aspect of the church is the gathering of believers; the practical aspect of the church is Christ within the saints, which is the realm of the new creation. Only if we remain in Christ can we experience true rest.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for reminding us through the author of Hebrews that there remains another rest for us, the rest of the Sabbath. This is true rest, where we cease from our own works and take on the yoke of the Lord. Because Jesus Christ has finished the work for us, we only need to follow His lead and build the church, and then we can enjoy true rest. Bless the church I belong to. I pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.