

22nd Sunday after Pentecost  
“God’s Sabbath rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:8-10)  
October 20, 2024  
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost is from our Epistle reading, Hebrews 4:8-10.

**“8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”**

So far the text...

Rest. Our epistle reading has a lot to say about rest.

Did you have a good night’s sleep last night? Was it restful? Or did you toss and turn? Everyone likes to feel refreshed in the morning and ready for a new day, with the energy that is needed to be your best self!

Maybe you’ve heard of these devices called sleep trackers. There are rings, wristbands, or watches that will measure how well you sleep at night. The sensors in a ring will measure things like your heartrate, respiration, temperature, REM state, how long you’ve slept, and your restfulness. Too much information? Is it useful? I suppose that if you got a good score then you could think back on what you did right and try to repeat it. And the opposite is true, I imagine...like if watching your favorite sports team lose right before you go to bed has a negative effect, maybe you want to avoid that. Or maybe that cup of coffee at 9pm should have been decaffeinated...

We know that God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Why? Because He was tired after creating the universe with all the stars, planets, animals, vegetation, and man and woman? No, of course not, because God is almighty – all powerful. Isaiah 40:28 tells us that **“The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.”**

When God rested, it meant that He rested from creating, stopped creating and said, “It is good.” And God designated this day of rest to be observed and remembered. By whom? By His creation, you and me. We are to remember who our God is and what He has done and continues to do for us.

God designed it as part of our weekly routine, the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment. “Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.” Believers in God gather together to rest in the true knowledge that the Almighty God provides all that we need for our body and soul. How does He do that? By giving us His Word and Sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

And oh, how much we need this rest! Our souls need it! And what our souls receive also affects our bodies! No sleep number bed can give the restful sleep that God offers. For since the fall of man, our souls are restless. Our consciences accuse us. Our bodies are afflicted with the sin that wears us down from within, from the devil and from the evil of this world. The Isaiah 40 passage that spoke of God not needing rest goes on to speak about our great need of God to give us rest!

**29 He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”**

God gives, God increases, God renews! Because with man this renewal is impossible. We are weak, without might and utterly fall. Because of Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God they were cast out of the garden and given the death sentence that all mankind will return to dust. Because of the Israelites’ rebellion in the desert our epistle reading this is the punishment that Hebrews 3 tells us.

**“Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”**

And because of our sins, we too cannot enter the heavenly rest to be with God eternally. With man this is impossible. As we have heard these the last two Sundays, the rich young man wanted to know how he could receive the inheritance of eternal life. He thought he

could keep the 10 commandments perfectly. “I’ve done that from my youth”. But he couldn’t get past the first commandment for his riches was his god. And he went away sorrowful because he trusted in his riches that nobody can take to heaven.

Yes, money is a good gift from God and we are called upon to be good stewards of it, using it first of all to give thanks to God for all that He has done for us with our offerings. And then, using it for our daily needs and the needs of others.

But the love of money is what is evil ...when money becomes your god. James 2:10 reminds us **“10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”** Again, impossible for man to enter heaven by keeping the law.

But, not impossible for God! For God out of great love, not only provides for our daily needs, but has provided the greatest riches of complete forgiveness and salvation through His Son Jesus! Forsake all that you trust in and follow Me, was Jesus’ answer to the rich young man. And He says the same to us.

For by Jesus’ death and resurrection He has cancelled our sin, paid for it with His precious blood on the cross, carried it for us with His Holy innocent life and buried it at the cross. Our sins are forever buried and can longer accuse us! That is the key to a restful night’s sleep – resting in the sure promises and loving arms of your Savior Jesus.

### **Romans 8:31**

**“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”**

Oh, and Jesus is for us as our epistle from Hebrews 4 says! **“14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”**

Jesus has done it once and for all. Jesus, the High Priest, made the supreme sacrifice on the altar of the cross, His very self, the Lamb of God. And now we can **“come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

For there remains a rest that Joshua couldn’t physically give. **“8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.”**

Yes, many did not enter the promised land of Canaan because of their rebellion. And even those who did, still needed to enter the heavenly rest of another day by keeping their faith in God. Yes, heaven itself, our true fatherland, our heavenly rest remains even though many Israelites rejected God and did not enter Canaan. Man's rebellion cannot invalidate God's promise of eternal life!

## **9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.**

This rest, God's rest, that He graciously gives to His people is sure and no one can snatch it away from you.

**“<sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8: 38-39**

Christ has gained this rest for you and graciously gives it to you. With boldness approach God to receive Jesus very body and blood for your forgiveness and go in peace. With boldness remember your baptism that has made you an heir of eternal life. Titus 3: **through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a faithful saying**

So that on that day when God calls us to our heavenly home, He would say this of you and me...

### **Revelation 14:13**

**‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”**

Blessed in Jesus, now and eternally through His saving work that leads us into heaven and our faith and the works of our faith follow us as witness of our trust in Him. Thanks be to God for making all things possible for us through Jesus! Amen.

**“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**