

SUPERIOR

February 18 & 19: Superior Rest

Series Overview

Our faith is rooted in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Like the rays of the sun, Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory. But the book of *Hebrews* tells us that Jesus was no mere man, that He is not just another prophet or the face of another religion—He is the Son of God! And it's through Him alone that we've been given a superior message, a superior promise, a superior faith, a superior everything. During this series we will be learning how to see Him more clearly, love Him more deeply and serve Him more passionately.



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Sermon Highlights

Given rest is the salvation from God. Grace sets us free from the sin that keeps us in bondage. *Found* rest is when we actually decide to benefit from that salvation. The Israelites accepted the salvation from the Egyptians that God provided, but they didn't remain in it. They lost faith. Therefore, they didn't find the rest they were promised and consequently didn't enter the Promised Land.

Aren't we all like this though? We see the need to be living closely with God, but we aren't actually planning for it and doing it. We want the peace of God, but there is no margin in our lives to receive it. And God knew this was going to be true of us. So, back in Genesis, He patterned it for us.

Genesis 2:2-3, ²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

He also thought it was such a good idea that He mandated we do it by making it a commandment in *Exodus 20:8-11*.

Hebrews 4:1-2 points out that our understanding of why Jesus came is enhanced when we find rest. There is an association between the good news of God and living in the rest that He provided through Christ's death.

Hebrews 4:1-2, ¹Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ²For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.

This is stating that a life that reflects Christ is a life that lives in the rest and peace that God has given us. To do otherwise is to live in rebellion against the rest God gave. God's desire is for us to choose Him and seek Him every day. When we choose Him over our schedule, anxiety is replaced with peace. God knows we need peace in our lives to help us keep a healthy perspective.

If God wants us to find rest, what can we do to tap into this resource? I believe the answer lies in two sentences from *Hebrews 4:7*: *God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."*

1. Hear His voice.

If you're hearing the word of God, apply it TODAY. Don't wait! Don't delay! We need to be actively engaging with the Word of God every day to find rest. *Hebrews 4:12* says, *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Hearing the Word of God provides a perspective and understanding that we just don't get on our own. It opens up, reveals, challenges, confronts, convicts and comforts. I'm sure there has been a time in your life when peace has come over you and you found comfort in Scripture. That's not accidental. It's designed to do that.

2. Refuse to let our hearts be hardened.

Hebrews 4:13 helps us see that there is nothing in our lives that God doesn't see. Hardening your heart toward Him will only prevent you from finding the rest that He wants to give. *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

Keep your heart open and receptive so God can work in you and through you. Imagine the relief you would get from approaching Jesus every day.

Hebrews 4:14-16, ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

When I read this, I feel a sense of peace. I can find rest in this. I can approach the God of the universe with confidence any time I want to. That gives my spirit a break. Why don't you plan on practicing the presence of God this week? Practice hearing His Word. Work on your heart's attitude and keeping in step with Him. Lean into Him for the rest and peace that your soul needs.



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: When was the last time you stayed up all night? What was the occasion?

Read *Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11* and *Hebrews 4:1-2*.

1. What is your reaction to the idea that God rested after creation? Why do you think He rested from His work?
2. Do you practice any kind of a sabbath rest? Why or why not?
3. What might be some of the benefits of having a regular time of rest—daily or weekly? What changes would you have to make to your routine to have this kind of regular rest time?
4. Would you say that your relationship with Christ has given you a sense of peace and rest? How so? What are some practical results of that rest in your life?

Read *Hebrews 4:7, Hebrews 4:12-13* and *John 10:27*.

1. Would you say that you regularly set aside a time to stop and listen to the voice of God? What are some of the spiritual exercises you use to help you hear Him speak to you?
2. When is the last time you felt the Word of God speaking directly to you or about a situation you were facing? How did that challenge or encourage you?
3. Do you approach your times of reading the *Bible* with the attitude that God can use this to show you your own heart? How might this change the way you read? How might this help you see the Scriptures as the voice of God in your life?
4. Would you say that you have learned to know the voice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus? How does this impact your life on a daily basis? What are some ways you can better attune your spiritual ear to His voice?

Read *Hebrews 4:14-16*.

1. Do you view Jesus as being sympathetic to your weaknesses, or have you been raised with a view that God is harsh and judgmental? Why could your view of God greatly affect the kind of rest that you find in Him?
2. What is your response to the fact that Jesus has experienced the trials common to the human experience? How might that impact the way you approach Him in prayer?
3. How can a heart that has been hardened by disobedience and lack of faith affect the way we view God? The way we approach God?
4. Would you say that you approach God with boldness in your prayers? What do you think that boldness would look like?



Take it home ... Practical Applications

Take some time to look at your daily or weekly schedule. Do you take time to find rest in God? Are you ever slowing down to give God time to speak into the many aspects of your life?

Look for ways that you can include times of rest into your week. Ask God to give you more spiritual sensitivity to His voice and greater appreciation for His grace as you read His Word and learn to follow Him as your Good Shepherd and Great High Priest.

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All Bible references are from the NIV unless otherwise stated.

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