

Hebrews 4:1-16 ESV

Do You Want to Go to Heaven?

FAITH Is Necessary!

Sunday, October 18 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, October 19 at 7 PM
 21st Sunday after Pentecost / 20th Sunday after Trinity – 2015

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: God ♣ loves us and ♣ wants us to be with Him forevermore, so He keeps calling us through His Word to **know** the truth, **be sorry** for our sins, and **believe** in Jesus as our only Savior! In the OT we have *types* or *pictures* of God's eternal blessings; for example: the slavery in Egypt – *pictured sin*; the Passover lambs – *pictured Christ*; and the Promised Land – *pictured heaven*. Those who tried to enter without believing in God—*did not enter*, while those who trusted in God for their entrance—*did enter*.

So what will we do: ♣ follow in the footsteps of the unbelieving or ♣ cling to Jesus Christ alone as our Savior?

1. **1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest** *[thus one day going to heaven]* **still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.** // Imagine walking on the edge of a steep cliff; when we fear falling, *we will be careful in our walking*. When we fear going to hell, *we will be careful in our believing*.
2. **2 For good news came to us just as to them** *[who failed to enter God's rest]*, **but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they** *[the eternal blessings of God]* **were not united by faith with those who listened.** // On one side *all people are in need*, on the other side *eternal blessings are being freely offered*, **but only God's gift of faith can unite the two together!**

3. **For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They [who do not believe] shall not enter my rest,’” although his works [of creating the heavens and the earth] were finished from the foundation of the world.** ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” ⁵ And again in this passage he said, “They [who do not believe] shall not enter my rest.” // So think of God’s rest in at least five ways; each way is connected to FAITH:
- God’s rest in the Promised Messiah; Adam and Eve believed in God’s promise to send the Savior.
 - God’s rest on each Sabbath Day; each was a *shadow* of the coming Savior in whom we trust.
 - God’s rest in the Promised Land; it was a *picture* of heaven.
 - God’s temporary rest in heaven for the souls and spirits of believers when they die.
 - God’s eternal rest in heaven for the bodies, souls, and spirits of believers when Jesus’ returns.
4. **Since therefore it remains for some to enter it [that is, God’s rest, for not everyone is currently believing in Jesus for eternal life], and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience [which came from the root of unbelief],** ⁷ again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward [about 400 years after the 40 years in the wilderness], in the words already quoted, **“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts [so do not reject what God is saying].”** // God’s wonderful offer of eternal rest has been available since the *first* sin was

committed. Even though so many have failed to receive God's rest – *due to their unbelief*, God's rest is still available and being freely offered! Therefore, it is vital that those who hear of God's offer *do not **harden their hearts*** (Hebrews 3:8, 15).

- a. Cancer diagnosis: The doctor says you have cancer and need chemotherapy. If you believe him, *you will receive the medicine*. If you **don't believe** and **don't act**, *and he is right*, you will die.
- b. Sin diagnosis: The pastor says you have unrepentant sin and need Jesus. If you believe him, *you will repent (be sorry and believe)*. If you **don't believe** and **don't act**, *and he is right*, you will be eternally separated from God.

5. ⁸ **For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on** [so the rest given through Joshua was a preliminary rest, which pointed to the final rest]. ⁹ **So then, there remains a Sabbath rest** [an eternal rest] **for the people of God,** ¹⁰ **for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.** // Jesus said to His disciples: “We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work” (John 9:4 ESV).

- a. Now we have the light of life, *so we who are believers serve (or work for) our Savior* – never to earn heaven, but out of thanksgiving for the gift of heaven.
- b. But the night of death is coming when our service (or work) will cease; then, *by grace through faith*, we will be with the Lord forever!

6. ¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience [*thus saying "No" to God's Word in their lives*]. ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. // The Bible Is God's Word and the Spirit works through that Word like a *highly skilled surgeon* to **identify** our sin and **remove** it, so let us welcome the Spirit's work. Think about the Third Commandment and Explanation.
7. ¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. // Sometimes it is not easy to be a believer, *but we are not on our own.* We have Jesus who ♦ was tempted but did not fall, ♦ bore our punishment, ♦ laid down His life, ♦ was raised on the third day, and ♦ is now interceding for us. So let us draw near to Him and receive *His help now and His blessings forever!*

Conclusion: Do you want to go to heaven? Then let God have His way with you by His Spirit through His Word! **Amen!**

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