Jesus is Greater Than Joshua

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[0:00] If you want to take your Bibles, you can open with me to Hebrews chapter 4. It's good to be back with you all tonight. I was gone last week and Kashan filled in for! me. He did an excellent job. I listened to the recording. Kashan's like Amazon. He just does everything. Kashan can play music, he can preach, whatever. Thank you, Kashan, for filling in last week. And this week we come to Hebrews 4 in our study of the book of Hebrews.

And one of the main passages of this, one of the main themes of this passage is something that we all want. Rest. Especially me and Lacey having a baby. We want rest. And what is your favorite form of rest? Minus sleep as well. Good answer. Sleep. But what is rest, though? What is rest according to the Bible? The Bible talks a lot about rest. One of the reasons I like it. But in the Bible, rest is more than just a nap. Rest is more than a vacation. Rest is more than playing five hours of Fortnite.
night. Someone had to say it. Rest in the Bible has a spiritual quality to it. Rest in the Bible is peace with God. Rest in the Bible is being able to be confident in God's presence, knowing we're forgiven. There's a pastor from church history named Augustine. And he said about us as human beings, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God. And so whatever you're trying to find hope in, whatever you're trying to find rest in, you will not find it until you meet Christ. You will not find it until you come to rest in God. And in Hebrews 3 that we looked at a couple weeks ago, we saw that the author of Hebrews started to talk about rest. And he said that the Israelites in the wilderness did not enter God's rest. And we know they did not enter into the promised land. And so, so far in Hebrews 3, rest is equated with entering into the promised land. But even then, the promise made to the Israelites was so much more than just a piece of property. It was so much more than just owning the land of Israel, because being in the land would have meant that God had kept his promises. God had kept the promises that he made to Abraham. Entering the land for Israel would have meant enjoying and entering into
God's promise of salvation. And Israel did eventually get to the land, but they never experienced the full extent of God's rest. They saw a shadow of it, but they didn't experience the full reality.
And in chapter 4, which we'll look at tonight, the author is continuing to remind us why the Israelites failed to enter God's rest. Why was it that the Israelites all died in the wilderness, and that generation did not see the promised land? How was it that they failed? They did not believe. In the last verse of chapter 3, it says they failed to enter it through unbelief. They did not trust in God's promises. And we come down to chapter 4, and I'll read verses 1 through 7 for us.
[3:59] Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear, lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, as I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way, and God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And again in this passage, he said, they shall not enter my rest. Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter, failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day today, saying through David so long afterward in the words already quoted, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. We'll cover chapter 4 in two sections. Number one is let us fear to fall short of God's rest. Let us fear to fall short of God's rest.

In verse one he says, therefore, so building off of the negative example of Israel, given that they fell in the wilderness and died under the wrath of God, while the promise of entering his rest still stands.

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This promise of rest is still available today. Because the Bible says today, if you hear his voice. And so this promise of entering peace with God, of entering into his rest, is still available. And the author of Hebrews is saying, while that is still available, let us fear. Why? Lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. He is calling on his Christian audience to examine themselves. To take an inventory of their heart to fear, lest they end up short of God's rest, just like Israel did, dying, in the wilderness. And he says in verse two, for good news came to us, that's the gospel, just as to them. But the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. And so the author of Hebrews is saying that Israel received God's promises as well. They received good news that they would inherit the land, they would be in the presence of God. And so good news came to us similarly. We've received the news of Jesus that we can enter God's rest.

[7:07] But just because we hear the message of the gospel doesn't mean we are safe. Just because the gospel is announced in your presence does not mean that you will escape God's wrath in the end.

The Israelites are example number one. They failed to believe the message that God had given them. They rebelled against God and they refused to enter the land that he was giving them. And so we've got a couple of things we need to consider to apply this. One is simply hearing the gospel does not mean you're saved. You can be tempted to think, I come here on Wednesday night, I listen to the preaching, I come to this church on Sunday morning, I listen to the preaching. Just because you're associated with the church that preaches the gospel does not mean you've been forgiven of your sins. All of Israel saw what God did at the Red Sea. All of Israel experienced God's miraculous provision of manna from heaven, this bread that they were able to eat. All of them heard the word that came from God through Moses, and yet so many of them died short of God's rest.

They assumed that because they were connected to Moses, because they were hearing God's word, that they were safe. But they did not believe it. And so simply hearing the gospel doesn't mean you're saved.

[8:38] Just like simply going to the gym doesn't mean you're fit. You know, if you want to get fit, like the gym's a good place to go. There are guys in there that lift a lot of weights and make a lot of noise and all kinds of stuff, getting gains. There are also some guys, though, that show up and talk to people, go to the sauna, go to the bathroom, drink from the water fountain, talk to some more people, and then go home. Just because you're at the gym doesn't mean you're getting fit, right?

Just like hearing the gospel does not automatically mean you're saved. And so the author of Hebrews is saying, let us fear. Just because we're in proximity to Christ, just because we're hearing his word does not guarantee our safety. So simply hearing the gospel doesn't mean you're saved. Secondly, faith is more than simply understanding the message. Faith is more than simply understanding the message.

So you could hear the gospel and say, that makes sense to me. I get what you're saying, that Jesus came and died on the cross, and not believe it, and not obey it. So in our house, Charlie, our son, is two, currently has a double ear infection. God bless him. But I was, we were at home the other night, and I've got these little foam golf balls that we play with, and he threw, just chunked a couple of them over the fence. And I was like, I said, Charlie, do not throw these golf balls over the fence. And he said, Ote. And I said, don't throw them over the fence. And he said, Ote. And I turned around, he grabs two more, and sprints out, and just chunks them over. And so he understood what I was saying to him. That did not mean he was safe. He understood what I was saying, but that does not mean that he obeyed it. And so simply understanding the message isn't the same thing as faith, because faith obeys.

And what we see from this passage, and many other others, is number three, that salvation in the Old Testament was also by faith. Salvation in the Old Testament was also by faith. Israel would have entered the promised land if they had believed God's word, if they had believed what God had said.

[11:04] And so the author is now calling us to fear, lest we should fall short of entering God's rest, just like the Israelites did. In verse three, for we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, as I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. We who have believed enter that rest. Those who believe God enter into his rest. This rest, the author is talking about, is salvation itself. And now it's interesting, because he quotes this again. He says, we who have believed enter his rest. Then

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he quotes Psalm 95 again, as I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

Although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. What is he saying here, that God's works were finished from the foundation of the world? What he's saying here is that God's rest was not a new concept when the Israelites were on the scene. What he's saying is that God created the world in six literal days, and on the seventh day, he rested from his works. His rest was not a result of him being tired or exhausted. His rest was a result of him having completed his work. God has been at rest from his creative work from the beginning. And because of that, God's rest has been available to all who believe from the beginning of creation. And so the author of Hebrews is saying that just because the Israelites failed to enter his rest, this was not the first offering of entering into his rest. And again, this rest was God enjoying the things that he had made. Him recognizing that it was complete and full. And when I was little, before I took over mowing the yard as one of my chores, my dad would mow the yard. And he was such an old guy. Some of you guys know my dad. But he would mow, and then for like an hour, he would just sit outside looking at it. And it made zero sense to me. And one time I was like five, and I was like, Dad, what are you doing? He's like, I'm just looking at the yard, enjoying it. I'm like, that makes, this is so boring. What are you doing? And as I got older now,
I do the same thing. But he was resting like God was from his creation. My dad wasn't tired. My dad wasn't exhausted. He was done. And he was looking at what he had done. And so this is how God's rest is pictured here. And he quotes Genesis 2-2 in verse 4. He has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And this rest also has connections to fellowshipping with God. Who was in the presence of God on that seventh day? Who was walking in fellowship with God after he was done creating? Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were enjoying God's rest that began on that seventh day. They were enjoying his rest. They were with him in his presence.
And that's exactly what they were created for. But they failed through unbelief and disobedience. They did not trust God. And so they disobeyed him and lost the rest that had once been theirs. And it's through Jesus that God has opened up the way back into this rest. This is the rest that you and I were created for. Again, that quote from Augustine, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God. The only way you can enter this rest, the only way I can enter this rest is through faith in Jesus Christ who purchased, who bought this rest for us through his death and resurrection on the third day. And if we refuse to believe God's promises, if we refuse to hold on to this gospel that God has given to us, we will die apart from God's rest just like the Israelites did. But if we trust in Jesus, we will enter into fellowship with and enjoyment of God just like Adam and Eve had in the garden when God was resting from the things that he had made.
[15:31] And he brings us back here in verse 5. Again in this passage, he said, they shall not enter my rest. Verse 6, since therefore it remains for some to enter it.

This rest is open today. You can enter this rest today. And those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience. Now let's pause there. If you look back up in chapter 3 verse 19, it says they failed to enter through unbelief. Here in chapter 4 verse 6, he says they failed to enter through disobedience. So which one is it? He's tying these two things together. Unbelief and disobedience fit together. And so if you're looking at your life and you're saying, I just, I disobey God so much, that's because there's lingering unbelief in your heart. When I look at sin in my life, the amount of sin that's in my life is the amount of unbelief I still have in my heart. And so we want to pray that prayer of Mark 9, Lord, I believe but help my unbelief.
And so if you look around at the world and see sin, that's a result of unbelief. And so Israel failed to believe God and it resulted in disobedience. And because of these things, they did not enter his rest. But this rest still stands open today. Verse 7, again, he appoints a certain day today. And today will always be today because scripture never changes. Saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, in the words already quoted, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. This was God's message through David to the Israelites. And it says that God said this through David so long afterward. Israel died in the wilderness in the 1400s BC. David wrote this psalm at about 1000 BC. So there's 400 years between Israel dying in the wilderness and David writing, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. The author's point is that this rest still is available today. Do not harden your hearts if you hear God's voice. And the author of Hebrews is taking what happened to the wilderness and taking what David said in Psalm 95 and applying it to his church. And the same thing is happening tonight as we read these words. Psalm

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95 condemns the Israelites who died in the wilderness and it also extends the promise of God's rest to those who hear today.
This is what the author of Hebrews is doing. And you might say, why is this important? I don't care about all these nerdy details about dates and timing of this stuff, but do you remember what this book is about? This book is declaring to us that Jesus is better than everything. We've seen that Jesus is greater than angels, that Jesus is greater than Moses, and now we're moving into the next phase of his argument where he declares that Jesus is greater than Joshua. And if you remember, Moses was the leader of the Israelites, but Moses himself did not enter God's rest. He did not enter into the promised land.
[19:07] Who led the men? It was Joshua. Joshua was the one who conquered the land. Joshua was the one who led Israel across the Jordan River in to possess the promise that God had given to them. Joshua is the one who gave Israel rest. And in Joshua 21 44, if you want to write that down, it says, Yahweh gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Joshua conquered the enemies of Israel and God gave Israel rest. But did Joshua give them full and final rest? Did they enter into that spiritual rest that the author of Hebrews is talking about? No. Even in the promised land, the people of Israel continued to rebel against God.

And the author of Hebrews says in verse 8, for if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. And so the author of Hebrews is saying that David is able to declare and extend this promise of rest because Joshua did not deliver this full and final rest of God that God had held out to his people. The rest that Joshua did provide was only a foreshadowing of the true rest that would come through Jesus. Joshua himself was merely just a glimpse of who Jesus would one day be. And something cool is that in Greek, Joshua and Jesus are the same name.
Joshua was the lesser Jesus, the one who gave them a partial rest, but did not enter them fully into God's rest like Jesus one day would. Verse 9, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. God's rest does not come through Moses or Joshua or David or through angels. It comes through Jesus Christ. So how is it that we enter that rest? It's through belief.
Like verse 3 says. And what's the result of entering into God's rest? Verse 10, For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.
Whoever through belief has entered this rest is resting from his works just like God did from his. God's rest.
[21:59] This is the gospel in one verse. The gospel or the good news is not doing better things to save yourself. The gospel is not a life hack to turn your life around. The gospel is not something you can use for your advantage to make your life go well. The gospel is a message that Jesus has accomplished what we could never accomplish for ourselves. Jesus has lived a perfect sinless life and has paid for our sins by giving his life, his perfect life as a sacrifice on the cross in our place. Jesus has accomplished all of the work so that we might rest from our works of trying to earn our salvation.

By believing in Jesus, we are walking away from our own righteousness. By receiving the gift of Christ, we are saying, I am unrighteous. I need the righteousness of another. I am resting from my good works of trying to earn God's favor, of trying to earn a right standing before him. I am entering into his rest and giving up my efforts to try to make myself look good before him.
And we receive this rest here and now, but one day we'll receive it even more fully in heaven. And in Revelation 14, it says, blessed are those who die in the Lord from this point on, because they will rest from their labors. One day when our life on earth is over, we will fully and finally enter into God's rest and be at peace and in perfect fellowship with him.
So we enter his rest. We rest from our works by receiving the gospel. And so once we're Christians, does that mean that we just let ourselves go? We just at this point just let go and let God take care of all the details. We just kind of are flowing along. Secondly, let us strive to enter God's rest.
Our first point was let us fear to fall short of God's rest. Secondly, let us strive to enter God's rest.
[24:25] Verse 11 says, let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

We are called to strive or to work hard to give ourselves up to enter that rest. We must work at resting. We must strive and work against our sin and our own righteousness and believe in Jesus us alone. One temptation is to think that I believed in Christ and so now it's all up to me. Now it's all of my good works will earn me favor with God and will earn me a reward with him.

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But what we see is that we must fight against our tendency to try to earn God's favor. The only reason God has mercy on us is because of what Christ has done.
And nothing we can do can make him love us more because he has already demonstrated his love for us in sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. And so once we enter into that rest, it's not as though we sit back and do nothing. We are called to obedience. We are called to put the flesh to death, to get rid of sin in our lives. And this is work, but we are working in the rest of God, having peace with God and living our lives as a result of his love for us.
We need to make sure that we are in the faith. Make every effort to ensure that you are believing in Jesus. The Apostle Paul says to examine yourselves to determine if you are in the faith in 2 Corinthians 13.
[26:15] We need to take stock of our lives and make sure we are in God's rest. He says, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience, of failing to believe and trust in God.

In verses 12 and 13, we have some of the most famous verses in the book of Hebrews. 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.
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. God's word not only brings life, it also brings judgment.
When we think of a sword here, I think our tendency when we read this verse is to think of God's word being small and precise, kind of like a knife that a surgeon would use.
A sword was a weapon. A sword was something used in war to bring judgment. And when we think back to Israel, what happened to them? They were judged.
[27:43] And what was it that ultimately killed them? What was it that ended their lives in the wilderness? It was the word of God saying to them that they will not enter his rest.

And so the word of God is powerful. The Bible is active and alive. Disobedience to it is fatal. God's word exposes everything. It rips off all disguises. There is nowhere to hide in the light of God's word. God's word is searching. God's word is not dead. It is living and active.
And so in one sense, we don't read the Bible. The Bible reads us. What you find as you read the Bible is the Bible knows you better than you know yourself.
Because it comes from God who made you. And it talks about that it pierces the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow. And the author of Hebrews' intention here isn't to say that the soul and spirit are two different things or that joints and marrow are different things.
What he's saying is that God's word can dig into the innermost part of your personality. There's nothing in your heart that's off limits to the word of God.
[29:03] God knows everything. God's word discerns the thoughts and intentions of your heart. Things that you think in your mind that you never say, God knows.

Things that you've dreamed about, God knows. No other book is like this. No other text can do this. God's word is living and active because God is alive and active.
And you will never properly understand yourself apart from God's word. You know, it's kind of a popular thing for people my age to be like, I just need to take some time off and go find myself. You know, I just need to figure out who I am. Apart from God's word, that is not possible. We need to see the light coming from God's word if we want to understand who we are as people.
This is an ancient book, but the words are not dead. This is the living word of God. It accomplishes everything that God desires.
[30:09] In Isaiah 55, God says, my word does not return to me empty. It accomplishes that for which I sent it. God's word does what God wills. And there are some people who claim to be Christians today that will say, I don't want the Bible and all that theology.

I just want Jesus. You know, I don't want to think and talk about doctrine and think about the Bible. I just want Jesus. But who is Jesus?
Jesus is the word of God made flesh. Jesus is the word of God living among us. And so what they're really saying when they say, I don't want the Bible, I just want Jesus.
They're saying, I don't want the word of God, I just want the word of God. You can't separate the two. Jesus is revealed to us through the word. Jesus is the word from the Father.
In verse 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.

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[31:16] Jesus is our high priest. He's the one who's offered the sacrifice on our behalf. He's the one who offered himself up in our place.

And he has passed through the heavens. He is now seated at the right hand of God. And the author of Hebrews says, let us hold fast. Let us hold on to Jesus.
And you know what the Hebrews were tempted to do? They were tempted to turn their backs on Jesus. They had converted to Christianity and now they're being persecuted. They're being put in prison. They were losing family members. They're being cut off from society.
The pressure was high. And the author of Hebrews is saying, hold on. Jesus is better than anything you've left behind. Jesus will keep you and preserve you.
Jesus knows what it's like to be tempted. Do not turn your back on him. And thinking about the Israelites in the wilderness, what was one of the first things they started talking about once they got in the wilderness?
[32:17] They started to experience some trials. They started to be tested by God. They said, you know, life was better back in Egypt. We were slaves, but at least we got to eat.

We were slaves and couldn't do what we wanted and were kind of tortured for being slaves of Pharaoh. But at least we always had water to drink. They were tempted to turn their backs on God and go back to their former slavery.
And the author of Hebrews is saying, do not go back to your former slavery. Do not return to that which was not able to give you the rest that God promises through Jesus.
Hold on to Jesus, even through your trials, even through your difficulties. Because verse 15, 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. Jesus is a great high priest. He's one who's gone through the heavens, but he's unlike other high priests.
[33:25] Because he does not have his own sin. The first sacrifice that an earthly high priest would make was for his own sin before he went into God's presence. Jesus is completely without sin.

And he has passed through the heavens. And even though that's the case, he is able to understand what we go through. Jesus is able to identify with us. And he had to in order to pay for our sins as our priest.
And the Bible says that he was in every way tempted as we are. Jesus knows what it's like to endure temptation.
Jesus encountered temptation himself. And something we need to ask is, is there a difference between temptation and sin? And we have to say yes, because Jesus was tempted, but Jesus did not sin.
And so it's possible for you to be tempted without sinning. Jesus received temptation but never entered into sin. And so it is possible for us as well.
[34:32] But there's one thing we need to notice. All of Jesus' temptation came from outside of him. Jesus was not a sinner like we are.

Jesus never had a moment of temptation that sprung up from his own heart. Jesus never desired something sinful in his own heart or mind. All of Jesus' temptation came from the outside.
And for us, we have sin dwelling in us. We have sin in our hearts that pulls us away from God and tempts us to walk away from him.
And so you need to watch out for quote-unquote pastors who will say, it's okay if you lust in your heart as long as you don't act on it. It's okay to be gay as a Christian as long as you don't act on it. Those aren't sins, those are temptations. But if those temptations are coming from within your heart, that is sin inside of you. And so there is a difference between temptation and sin.
[35:38] But with Jesus, all temptation comes from the outside. And with us, oftentimes it comes from our own hearts. And James 1 talks about our own evil desires leading us astray from God.

Some of our students went to cross-conference. There are three of you. Raise your hands. One, two, three. Yep. And then Kashana Mary. Yeah. Five total. So there's a question and answer about this topic.
We can send it in the reminder. It's really good. I would encourage you to listen to it by Rosaria Butterfield and Kevin DeYoung. But we can send that out. And so when we are tempted, we must go to Jesus.
Temptation is something we experience. We are tempted from the outside by situations we encounter. We are also tempted from sin in our own hearts. And when we are tempted in either

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respect, we must go to Jesus.
He can help us in every temptation. He can help us in every temptation, in every trial because he was tempted and yet remained sinless. He can relate to us at the level of experience.
[36:37] And he is powerful enough to help us overcome our sin. He is able to deliver us from our sin. When we are troubled in our hearts, when we are hurt, when we're sad, when we're sinful, we can go to Jesus.

He will receive us. He is a merciful and faithful high priest. He will be patient with us. And even though he is so like us, even though he is so near to us, he is without sin.
And this is so important for the gospel. If Jesus had committed any sin, he would not have been able to pay for our sins. If Jesus was a sinner, then he was no longer the spotless sacrifice that God demanded.
He would not have been able to pay for our sins. And verse 16 is the conclusion. 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. Let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace.
[37:57] What is the throne of grace? This is God's throne. And who is seated with him on that throne? It is Jesus himself. We saw that in Hebrews chapter 1. And the author is encouraging us to with confidence come near to God's throne.

And throughout the ancient world, if you look at kings, no one could approach their throne. No king in the history of the world would allow anyone to approach his throne unless he invited them.
And yet here, anyone is able to approach God's throne as long as he is repentant of his sin. And we can approach with confidence.
Even in our sin, we are confident that Christ has paid for our sins and will receive us warmly and gently. Even in our weakness, even in our sin, we can approach God with confidence.
Not because we are worthy in ourselves. Not because we are confident in our own righteousness. But because Jesus has paid for all of our sins. There is no more sin remaining that Jesus has not paid for.
[39:09] And so we can confidently approach God and be near to him without fear. And Jesus, our high priest, is not only able to sympathize with us, he is able to strengthen us through our temptation.

And in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says that there is no temptation that has overtaken us that is not common to man. And God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability. But when temptation comes, he will provide the way of escape that we may be able to endure it.
And this way of escape is through our high priest, Jesus, who died and rose again. And so understanding and following Jesus is God's rest.
What does it mean to enter God's rest like the Israelites failed to do? It means to believe and obey Jesus. And Jesus himself said this in Matthew 11. He says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
You will not have to earn your own righteousness. You just have to repent of your sin and trust in him. Jesus is greater than Joshua.
[40:19] Jesus takes us fully into God's rest. Jesus, as our pioneer, as the founder of our salvation, gives us rest. And he encourages us and sustains us in that rest through our trials and through our temptations.

What a high priest we have in Jesus. Have you gone to him? Have you approached his throne of grace? Have you repented of your sins and trusted in his death and resurrection?
God's rest is still able to be entered through faith in Jesus Christ. And I would urge you to enter even tonight. Let me pray for us.
Our Father, we thank you for our gracious and merciful high priest. We are not worthy of entering your rest, but through faith in Christ, you've given us the promise that we can experience fellowship and peace with you as we enter into the rest that you have enjoyed since the dawn of creation.
And I pray that we would not only keep this message to ourselves and believe it, but also take it to others as well. We pray we do this for your glory.
[41:40] It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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