We are not here to wait for the storm to pass but to learn to dance in the rain.
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Prayer Study #514
HEBREWS 4
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Hebrews 4 Amplified Bible (AMP)

The Believer's Rest

4 *Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still remains and is freely offered today, let us fear, in case any one of you may seem to come short of reaching it or think he has come too late.* ***2*** *For indeed we have had the good news [of salvation] preached to us, just as the Israelites also [when the good news of the promised land came to them]; but the message they heard did not benefit them, because it was not united with faith [in God] by those who heard.* ***3*** *For we who believe [that is, we who personally trust and confidently rely on God] enter that rest [so we have His inner peace now because we are confident in our salvation, and assured of His power], just as He has said,*
"As I swore [an oath] in My wrath,
They shall not enter My rest,"
[this He said] although His works were completed from the foundation of the world [waiting for all who would believe].

4 *For somewhere [in Scripture] He has said this about the seventh day: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this, “They shall not enter My rest.” 6 Therefore, since the promise remains for some to enter His rest, and those who formerly had the good news preached to them failed to [grasp it and did not] enter because of [their unbelief evidenced by] disobedience, 7 He again sets a definite day, [a new] “Today,” [providing another opportunity to enter that rest by] saying through David after so long a time, just as has been said before [in the words already quoted],*
“Today if you hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts.”
8 [This mention of a rest was not a reference to their entering into Canaan.] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak about another day [of opportunity] after that. 9 So there remains a [full and complete] Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has once entered His rest has also rested from [the weariness and pain of] his [human] labors, just as God rested from [those labors uniquely] His own.

In Chapter 4 the writer is addressing the Body of Christ (*let us).* We are to fear coming short of eternal life. The promise is eternal life

in heaven with Jesus. The *good news* was preached to Abraham 430 years before the law was given (Galatians 3:8, Genesis 12:1-3) and to the Israelites under the law (Romans 9:608; 10:7-21). The Word is not effective if it is not mixed with faith. This idea comes from the human body, according to Dake. The body is kept alive by the proper mixing of food with the saliva and gastric juices. If this mixture did not take place, food would be a means of death instead of life. God has obligated Himself to bless only those who believe and walk in faith (Matthew 16:15-20; John 3:16; Romans i:16; Romans 10:9-10; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:5-8).

We hear so much in the Body of Christ urging us not to fear, and usually *fear* in the Word indicates a lack of *faith,* and I do believe fear is one of the greatest bondages in this generation. People are so afraid of what might happen next. The Lord tells us that He did not give us *a Spirit of Fear, but of power and love and a sound mind* (2nd Timothy 1:7) Paul told the Romans in 8:15: *"For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear."*

Mary Garrison in her excellent book *How to Try a Spirit* list the following characteristics of a person with a Spirit of Fear: fright (Psalm 55:5 AMP, torment (1st John 4:18), trembling (Job 4:14), horror (Psalm 55:5), dread (Exodus 15:16), faithless (Matthew 8:26), terror,

nightmares, apprehension, anxiety, unduly careful, agitation, timidity, worry, shy, inferiority, inadequacy, tension, heart attacks (Luke 21:26), fear of man (Proverbs 29:25), fear of poverty, and phobias. Five types of people who are oppressed by the Spirit of Fear are those with a critical spirit, an introvert, a perfectionist, a hermit, and a recluse.

I have found in my own ministry that many are subject to the Spirit of Fear and this manifests often in teachings that expose Satan and his demonic kingdom. We should not be fearful of the demonic kingdom, although we do respect the fact that this kingdom has a measure of power. This power is so weak, however, compared to the power we have in the Holy Spirit, in the Blood of Jesus, in the Name of Jesus, and in the Word of God, which is our testimony, our testimony being the Holy Bible scriptures which we can quote aloud to Satan to counter any attack of the wicked one. He hates the Blood, because it is what was necessary to "buy" us back and set us free. He hates the Name because it reminds him of the Lord of Hosts who has *already* soundly defeated him. He hates the Word because it blows his cover and shows how limited his power really is. He hates the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us power. There will be a day when we will look

on Lucifer and say sarcastically and with amazement as he is brought down, *“Is this the man who made the earth to tremble, who did shake kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness, and destroyed its cities, who opened not the house of his prisoners?”* (Isaiah 14:16-17). Then he will be revealed not as a fallen archangel, which we have been falsely taught, but the cherub he really is. (Ezekiel 28:14-15)

Yet here the writer is telling us *to fear*. I believe that fear as an emotion is different from fear as a bondage. One of the biggest problems in this generation, for example, is they don’t fear the Lord. We are to have a reverential fear of God. We also must teach our children to fear certain things, such as rattlesnakes or walking out in the middle of a busy highway, but not be bound by those fears. In this case, perhaps we could say, “Be strongly aware,” instead of “let us fear.” So fear is not always bad, and the writer is telling us here that we need to fear missing God’s rest.

Besides the word *fear,* there is another word that is important for us to understand. That word is *rest.* Barclay says that the writer of Hebrews is using the term *rest* in three different senses: 1) To mean the peace of God; 2) To mean the promised land; 3) To mean the

rest of God, when God rested after the sixth day because His creation was complete. Interestingly, during the six days of creation there was a morning and evening. However, on the seventh day there was no evening. The Rabbis believed that this meant the day of God's rest had no ending. Although the Israelites had failed to enter that rest, it still remained for them to do so. Using a word to mean different things in a sentence was typical of academic type writing of that day, and it is quite common today. For example, when I say, *"Worship,"* I might mean a complete service, just the time of singing worship songs, or a personal, individual experience that has nothing to do with a service.

Bible Gateway says this about God's rest: *God "rested" because everything that needed to be done was done-everything was complete, fully accomplished. In human terms this expression is used when a lawyer completes his presentation in a court of law; he "rests" his case-everything is in evidence, there is nothing left to present.*

In summary, Barclay says there are two great truths in this passage. First, "a word, however great, has no impact unless it becomes integrated into the person who hears it. There are many different kinds of hearing in this world. There is indifferent hearing,

uninterested hearing, critical hearing, skeptical hearing, cynical hearing. The hearing that matters is the hearing that listens eagerly, believes and acts. The promises of God are not merely beautiful pieces of literature; they are promises on which we are meant to stake our lives and which should dominate our actions."

Secondly, Barclay reminds us that the writer to the Hebrews is asking us to fear or to beware lest we miss the promise of eternal life: "This Christian fear is not the fear which makes people run away from a task, nor the fear which reduces them to paralysed inaction ; it is the fear which makes them summon every once of strength they possess in a great effort not to miss the one thing that is worth while."

The Terror of the World

11 *Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest [of God, to know and experience it for ourselves], so that no one will fall by following the same example of disobedience [as those who died in the wilderness].* ***12*** *For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very*

thoughts and intentions of the heart. ***13*** *And not a creature exists that is concealed from His sight, but all things are open and exposed, and revealed to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.*

The writer now tells us that the Word of God has come and cannot be disregarded. The Jews believed that words spoken were powerful and did things. We know not only theologically but also scientifically and psychologically the power of words from such passages as Proverbs 18:21: *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*

Verse 12 is one of the great verses of the Bible concerning the Word of God. Here the Word is compared to a sword. Dake gives us twelve symbols of the Word in the Word:

1. A hammer to convict (Jeremiah 23:29)
2. A fire to refine (Jeremiah 23:29)
3. A mirror to reflect (James 1:23)
4. Seed to multiply (1st Peter 1:23)
5. A laver to cleanse (Ephesians 5:26)
6. A lamp to guide (Psalm 119:105)
7. Rain and snow to refresh (Isaiah 55:10)
8. A sword to cut (Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17)
9. A bow for revenge (Habakkuk 3:9)
10. Gold to enrich (Psalm 19:7-10)

11. Power to create faith (Romans 10:17) and eternal life (1st Peter 1:23)
12. Food to nourish:
a. Milk for babes (1st Peter 2:2)
b. Bread for the hungry (Matthew 4:4)
c. Meat for men (Hebrews 5:11-14)
d. Honey for dessert (Psalm 19:10)

Dake goes on to explain the use of the Sword: It pierces through the body laying open the inner-most
Recesses of the soul (feelings, passions, desires, appetites) and mind (thoughts and intents of the inner-most being).

The writer of Hebrews ends this passage reminding us that God sees all and knows all. We can in no way hid from Him.

The Perfect High Priest

14 *Inasmuch then as we [believers] have a great High Priest who has [already ascended and] passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [of faith and cling tenaciously to our absolute trust in Him as Savior].* ***15*** *For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize and understand our weaknesses and temptations, but One who has been tempted [knowing exactly how it feels to be human] in every respect as we are, yet without [committing any] sin.* ***16*** *Therefore let us [with privilege]*

approach the throne of grace [that is, the throne of God's gracious favor] with confidence and without fear, so that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find [His amazing] grace to help in time of need [an appropriate blessing, coming just at the right moment].

What a beautiful way to end an important chapter! The writer puts all the focus on Jesus, our High Priest, the Son of God, the Son of Man who lived among us, but also the heavenly Lord of lords and King of kings. Jesus is not great because of earthly honors but by Who He is. He has passed through the heavens but even heaven is too small a place for Him. As a man on earth, He went through everything that any of us have gone through, and yet He did not sin. In fact, we never know the full extent of temptation because we fall before we get to the ultimate testing, but He did know the ultimate temptations because Satan himself, with all he had, came against Jesus. As Barclay puts it, "It is true to say that He was tempted in all things, just as we are; but it is also true to say that no one was tempted as He was."

These temptations gave Jesus compassionate sympathy, mercy, and understanding. All of this makes Jesus available and willing to help us through any trial or temptation. This was a

brand new concept to the Jews. They saw God as holy only. Jesus was certainly holy, but He also was a God of love.

The wonderful news, the invitation in verse 16, is that we can come with boldness into the very throne of grace, and there we will find mercy and grace to help in our time of need. Oh, what a Savior!

RISE AND BE HEALED

Rise and be healed,
In the Name of Jesus.
Let faith arise in your soul!
Rise and be healed,
In the Name of Jesus.
It will cleanse and
Make you whole!