

## Living out of Rest

by Ray C. Stedman

Some time ago a group of tourists were visiting in the city of Rome, and came to an enclosure where a number of chickens were penned. The guide who was taking them through the city said, "These are very unusual and distinctive chickens. They happen to be descendants of the rooster that crowed on the night in which Peter denied the Lord." The tourists were very much impressed. One Englishman among them peered at the chickens and said, "My word! What a remarkable pedigree!" An American immediately reached for his checkbook and said, "How much do they cost?" But an Irishman there turned to the guide, and said, "Do they lay any eggs?" He was not interested in apostolic succession, but in apostolic success!

This is the attitude many have toward the Christian faith, and properly so. Can it do anything for me right now? Does the good news of the gospel have anything really helpful to say about the problem of nervous tension, for instance? Can it aid me in the matter of an inferiority complex? Will it do anything for my terrible habit of anxiety and worry when things do not go right? These are the problems that more desperately affect our lives than any other. We may be concerned about atomic bombs and nuclear warfare but the problems of nervous tension and inferiority, perhaps resentment or bitterness are the ones which take their bitter toll of us each day.

In our last study in Hebrews, Chapter 2 closed on that practical note. The Lord Jesus, in his coming to earth, became a man for four mighty reasons. Among them, and the one last stated, was that he might be a compassionate and merciful High Priest in order that he might help those that are tempted, in the midst of their temptation.

Chapter 3 picks up that theme and develops it, asking us to consider the astonishing solution that is offered by Jesus Christ to this plaguing, nagging problem of frustration, hypertension, anxiety, and all the neuroses and psychoses that are so familiar today.

**Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. He was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in God's house. Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of as much more glory than Moses as the builder of a house has more honor than the house. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to all the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ was faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope. {Heb 3:1-6 RSV}**

Six times in that short section the word house appears, "the house of God."

There is a very common misunderstanding abroad in our day, especially among Christians, which uses the term, "the house of God" to mean a church building. In my opinion there is nothing more destructive of the greatest message of the New Testament than that belief! A building is never truly called the house of God, either in the New Testament or the Old Testament, in the present or in the past. Certainly no church building, since the days of the early church, could ever properly be called "the house of God." The early church never referred to any building in that way.

As a matter of fact, the early church had no buildings for two or three hundred years. When they referred to the house of God they meant the people. A church is not a building, it is people!

Even the temple or the tabernacle of old was not really God's house. Let someone point out the fact that no building today can properly be called the house of God, and some Bible-instructed Christian nearby wisely nods his head and says, "Yes, you're right. The only building that could properly be called 'the house of God' was the temple or the tabernacle." It is true that these buildings were termed that in Scripture – I recognize that – but it is meant only in figure, only as a picture. They were never actually meant to be the place where God dwelled.

In the sixty-sixth chapter of his magnificent prophecy, Isaiah records the words of the Lord, saying, "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool – where is the house which you would build for me? ... All these things my hand has made," {cf, Isa 66:1-2 KJV}. Paul, in preaching to the Athenians, reminded them that "God does not dwell in temples made by hands," {cf, Acts 17:24 KJV}. Even as he said those words the temple was still standing in Jerusalem. No, God does not dwell in buildings.

Then what is the house of God that is mentioned here? The answer is very clearly stated in Verse 6. "We are his house." We people. God never intended to dwell in any building; he dwells in people, in men and women, in boys and girls. That is the divine intention in making men, that they may be the tabernacle of his indwelling.

In that beautiful scene recorded in the 21st chapter of Revelation, the next to last chapter of the Bible, the mighty vision of the prophets is fulfilled, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men," {Rev 21:3b RSV}. Paul refers to this in First Corinthians, "Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you which you have of God?" {cf, 1 Cor 6:19a}. This is the focus toward which all Scripture is directed. God's purpose is to inhabit your body and to make you to be the manifestation of his life, the dwelling place of all that he is; so that, as Paul prays in Ephesians 3, "you may be a body wholly filled and flooded with God himself," {cf, Eph 3:19}. The great message of the gospel is that it takes God to be a man. You cannot be a man without God. It takes Christ to be a Christian, and, when you put Christ into the

Christian, you put God back into the man. That is the good news, that is the gospel.

Now in this house of God which is ever people, Moses ministered as a servant, but Christ as a Son. Therefore, the Son is much more to be obeyed, much more to be listened to, much more to be honored and heeded, than the servant. Moses served faithfully as a servant. What is the ministry of a servant? A servant is always preparing things. He must prepare meals, he must prepare rooms, he must prepare the yard. He is always working in the anticipation of something yet to come. His work is in view of that which is yet future. So, "Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later (yet to come), but Christ ... as a Son."

What is the role of a son in a house? To take over everything, to possess it, to use whatever he likes. The house was made for him. So Christ has come to inhabit us, as Paul again prays in Ephesians, "that Christ may make his home in your hearts by faith," {cf, Eph 3:17}.

Now, the writer declares, "We are that house – if." At this point he interjects the little word, *if*.

**And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and ... our hope. {Heb 3:6 RSV}**

And again in Verse 4:

**For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end, {Heb 3:14 RSV}**

Now a cloud passes over the sun. The possibility is raised of being self-deceived in this matter of belonging to Christ, of being his house. It all hangs upon that word of uncertainty, *if*.

What does this mean? Well, there are two possible views of this that are usually taken by the Christian world:

1. There is that view which says, we can enter the house of God and become part of it, that Christ can come to dwell in our hearts and we can be the tabernacle of the Most High, and then, later on, because we fail to lay hold of all that God gives us and we sin, we lose all we have gained, Christ leaves us and we lose our salvation. This is the view that is called Arminian-

ism (not Armenianism) after a man named Arminius, a theologian in the Middle Ages. This view suggests that it is possible to lose our faith after we have once become the habitation of the Most High.

But, if we take that view, we are immediately in direct contradiction with some very clear and precise statements elsewhere that declare exactly the opposite. There is no possible way to hold that view without putting Scripture into contradiction with Scripture.

For instance, in John 10:28, Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Why? "Because no one is able to take them out of my Father's hand," he says. "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," {John 10:29 RSV}.

Romans 8, Verse 35, asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul goes on to list all the possibilities, then he declares, "No in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us," {Rom 8:37 RSV}. It is impossible, you see, to take that view of it.

2. Then what is the correct view? There is another possible meaning here which suggests that, once having professed to receive the Lord Jesus, once having him come in, if then we do not manifest signs of new life, if nothing happens to our behavior as a result of this, we have simply been self-deceived. We never had faith despite the external appearance, the religious observances that we have gone through. This is the danger this whole book faces. We will return to it again and again. The book of Hebrews is addressed to a body of people among whom were certainly some whose Christian life was highly in doubt because they were not growing, they were not going on, they were not entering in to what God had provided for them.

This was not mere hypocrisy. The writer is not speaking of one who deliberately tries to pass himself off as a Christian, knowing in himself he is not. There are those who join a church because they think it is good for business, or it helps their status or prestige in the

community, but they know they are not Christians. They do not believe what they hear, they do not have any interest in what is said. Such people stick out like sore thumbs among the saints. They deceive no one but themselves.

But he is talking here about some who have fallen into a self-confident delusion and who feel themselves to be Christians. They have gone through every possible prescribed ritual to identify themselves with Christianity. Because of this they feel they are Christians. They believe the right things, they hold the right creed, they have orthodoxy in every bone of their body. They are rigid about the proclamation of the truth and conform to doctrine in every degree. But they are self-deceived, for as they are unable to manifest what God has come into human hearts to produce, they reveal that there never was faith in the beginning. So, in Hebrews, continuance is the ultimate proof of reality.

The illustration he gives confirms this very clearly. If it is properly understood, it is designed to shake us to our eyeteeth. It is the story of the rebellion of Israel in the wilderness:

**Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,  
"Today, when you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,  
on the day of testing in the wilderness,  
where your fathers put me to the test  
and saw my works for forty years.  
Therefore I was provoked with that generation,  
and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts;  
they have not known my ways.'  
As I swore in my wrath,  
'They shall never enter my rest.'"  
{Heb 3:7-13 RSV}**

Further, in Verse 16:

**Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? And with whom was he provoked forty years? What it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they should never enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient?**

**So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. {Heb 3:16-19 RSV}**

The writer points out this people comprised almost the whole number of those who left Egypt under Moses. They had fulfilled every prescribed symbol of deliverance, but they were not delivered. While they were in Egypt they had killed the Passover lamb, and had sprinkled the blood of it over the doorposts. On the terrible night when the angel of death passed through the land and took the life of every first-born son in every household, they were safe. They had followed Moses as they left Egypt and had come to the borders of the Red Sea. As the waters flowed before them and the armies of the Egyptians were fast approaching from the rear, Moses lifted up his rod and the waters parted and they all passed through the sea as well. As Paul says in First Corinthians, they were “baptized unto Moses in the sea” {cf, 1 Cor 10:2}, they were united unto him.

Many of us, perhaps, have likewise looked to the cross of Christ and in some degree counted his death as valid for us, as the blood of our Passover lamb. We have gone through the waters of baptism, testifying by that we believe we have been baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ, made to be part of him.

These people, as they wandered through the wilderness on the way from Egypt to Canaan, had enjoyed the protection and guidance of the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day, speaking of the protection, guidance, and fatherly care of God. They had even been fed every day by the manna as it came from the skies, fresh every morning. Centuries later, when the Jews of our Lord Jesus’ day heard him refer to them as children of the devil they said to him, “We are not children of the devil, we are children of Abraham. Don’t you know what happened to our fathers? Talk about people of God! We are the true people of God. Our fathers ate bread in the wilderness for forty years; if that is not a sign that we are the people of God, I don’t know what could be!” {cf, John 6:30-66}. But the writer says, “With whom was he provoked forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness.”

When the test finally came and they stood on the borders of the promised land, they were given the word of the Lord through Moses to advance and take the land. But they held back because they

were afraid of the giants that inhabited the cities of that land. When they were asked to face the giants and, by the principle of faith, overcome them and enter into the rest of the land, they refused to do so. They turned back and for forty years wandered in the wilderness. The test came when for the first time they were asked to come to grips with the thing that could destroy their life in the land, the giants, and their failure to do so revealed the bitter truth that they never had any faith. They had never really believed God. They were only acting as they did to escape the damage, death, and danger of Egypt. But they had no intention of coming into conflict with the giants in the land.

The Word of God is pointing out to us that we may profess the Lord Jesus, we may take our stand in some outward way at least upon the cross of Christ and claim his death for us, we can profess to have been baptized into his body and say so by passing through the waters of baptism ourselves, we can enjoy the fatherly care and providence of God and see him working miracles of supply in our life, and even find in the Scripture much which sustains the heart, at least for awhile. Yet, when it comes to the test, when God asks us to lay hold of the giants in our life which are destroying us, those giants of anxiety, fear, bitterness, jealousy, envy, and impatience and all the other things that keep us in turmoil and fret and make us to be a constant trouble to our neighbors and friends – when we are asked to lay hold of these by the principle of faith, and we refuse to do so, the writer says we are in danger of remaining in the wilderness and never entered the promised rest.

**Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end. {Heb 3:12-14 RSV}**

We share in Christ if that faith which began continues to produce in us that which faith alone can produce, the fruit of the Spirit. This is the second warning of this book. The first one was against drifting, the danger of paying no attention, of sitting in a meeting and letting the words flow by while our minds are occupied elsewhere. The peril

of letting these magnificent truths which alone have power to set men free, to drift by, unheeded, unheard.

But this second warning is against the danger of hardening – of hearing the words and believing them, understanding what they mean, but of taking no action upon them. The peril of holding truth in the head, but never letting it get into the heart. But truth known never does anything; it is truth done which sets us free. Truth known simply puffs us up in pride of knowledge. We can quote the Scriptures by the yard, can memorize it, can know the message of every book and know the whole book from cover to cover, but truth known will never do anything for us. It is truth done, truth acted upon, that moves and delivers and changes.

The terrible danger which the writer is pointing out is that truth that is known but not acted on has an awful effect of hardening the heart so that it is no longer able to act – and we lose the ability to believe. This is what the Lord Jesus meant when he said to his disciples, “If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one should rise from the dead,” {cf, Luke 16:31}.

A man said to me not long ago, “If we only had the ability to do miracles like the early church did, then we could really make this Christian cause go. If we could perform these things again, and had faith enough to do miracles, we could make people believe.” But I had to tell him that after thirty years of observing this scene, and studying the Scriptures, I am absolutely convinced that if God granted us this power, as he is perfectly able to do, so that miracles were being demonstrated on every hand, there would not be one further Christian added to the cause of Christ than there is right now!

At the close of Jesus’ own ministry, after that remarkable demonstration of the power of God in the midst of people, how many stood with him at the foot of the cross? A tiny band of women and one man, and they had been won, not by his miracles, but by his words.

This is why God says, “I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” That is not petulance. That does not mean God is upset because he has offered something and they will not take it. That is simply a revelation of the nature of the case. When truth is known and not acted upon, it always, on every level of life, in any area of human knowledge, has this peculiar quality: It hard-

ens, so the heart is not able to believe what it refuses to act on.

Now we come to the sign of reality. What is it that unmistakably marks the one who has genuinely become part of God’s house? What is the rest of God, the mark of reality?

**Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers. {Heb 4:1-2 RSV}**

That does not mean the message did not meet with belief. When the Israelites stood at the borders of the land they had no doubts at all that the land was there, they believed in it. Nor was it that they did not believe there was honey and milk in the land, the fullness of supply awaiting them; they believed it. There was a species of belief, but there was no faith, for faith is more than belief. Faith is activity upon that belief! There was belief, there was even strong desire to enter the land, but they did not enter because there was no faith. They would not act upon that which had been given.

The writer says the same gospel was given to us as to them; we have the same good news, the same possibility of entering into a life of rest.

These words must be taken seriously.

The Word of God knows nothing of the easy believism that is so widely manifest in our own day. We think we can receive Jesus as Savior, raise our hand to accept Christ, and that settles the matter. We will go to heaven and there can never be any doubt about it from then on, though there is no change in our life. But the promise of Christ is that when he comes into the human heart there is a radical change of government which must inevitably, in the course of its working, result in a revolutionary change in behavior. Unless that takes place, there has been no reality to our conversion. The goal of his working in us is rest.

Now what is this rest?

In Verse 3 we learn it is pictured for us by the Sabbath:

**For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,  
“As I swore in my wrath,  
‘They shall never enter my rest,’”**

**although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. {Heb 4:3 RSV}**

Here is a rest that has been available to man ever since man first appeared on earth. It was available 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 place he said,  
“They shall never enter my rest.”  
{Heb 4:4-5 RSV}**

You know the story of creation. On the seventh day God ceased from his labors, he rested on the seventh day, intending that to be a picture of what the rest of faith is. It has been available to man since the beginning of the world. The Seventh Day Adventists and other legalistic groups have focused upon the shadow instead of the substance and have insisted that we must observe the Sabbath Day much as it was given to Israel; that this is what pleases God. But God is never pleased by the perfunctory observance of shadows, of figures.

Here is one of the great problems of Christian faith. We are constantly mistaking shadows for substance, pictures for reality.

A teenaged girl told me recently, in an anguish of repentance, that she had gotten up from a communion service, and gone out to engage in some very wrong activities. When I said to her, “How could you do this? How could you leave a communion service to do this?” She replied, defensively, “Well, I didn’t partake of communion.” And I said, “What difference does that make?” That was a mere shadow. Communion pictures the sharing of the life of the Lord Jesus, and if we deny that in our activity but are scrupulous about its observance in the shadow, in the mere picture, it is an insult to God.

This rest was figured in the Sabbath and anyone who learns to live out of rest is keeping the Sabbath as God meant it to be kept.

It was also prefigured in the land of Canaan, yet in Verse 8, it says,

**... if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later of another day. {Heb 4:8 RSV}**

If the figure had been enough God would not, later on in the Scriptures, have recorded the words,

**... there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God. {Heb 4:9 RSV}**

Obviously, Canaan, too, was nothing but a figure, nothing but a picture, a shadow. Then what is the real rest?

We come to it in Verse 10; it is most clearly stated:

**... for whoever enters God’s rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his. {Heb 4:10 RSV}**

Here is a revolutionary new principle of human behavior, on which God intends man to operate, and it was his intention from the beginning. It is from this that man fell, and it is to this, now, in Jesus Christ, he is to be restored. Unless this principle is operative in our life, we can have no assurance that we belong to the body of Christ. This is the clear declaration of this writer throughout the whole of the book.

We all have been brainwashed since birth with a false concept of the basis of human activity. We have been sold on the satanic lie that we have in ourselves what it takes to be what we want to be, to be a man, a woman, to achieve whatever we desire to be. We are sure we have what it takes, or, if we do not have it now, we know where we can get it. We can educate ourselves, we can acquire more information, we can develop new skills, and when we get this done we shall have what it takes to be what we want to be.

For three and a half years, the Apostle Peter tried his level best to please the Lord Jesus by dedicated, earnest, sincere efforts to serve him out of his own will, and he failed dismally because he could not be convinced that he did not have what it takes. When the Lord Jesus told him, “You will never have what it takes until the cross comes into your life,” he would not receive it. He said, “Lord, don’t talk to me about a cross. I don’t want to hear anything about that.” And the Lord Jesus said, “Get behind me Satan, you are an offense unto me. You do not understand the things of God, but only the things of men,” {cf, Matt 16:21-23}. And it was not until that wonderful day, the day of Pente-

cost, when the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to the full meaning of the cross, and all the Lord Jesus had made available to him by his indwelling life became part of Peter's experience, that he realized what the Lord had meant. Not till then did he realize what it took to be a Christian.

We repeat:

- It takes Christ to be a Christian, and it takes God to be a man.
- When you put Christ back in the Christian, you put God back in the man.

This is God's design for living, this is the new principle of human activity – to stop our own efforts.

We do not have what it takes, and we never did have. The only one who can live the Christian life is Jesus Christ. He proposes to reproduce his life in us. Our part is to expose every situation to his life in us, and, by that means, depending upon him and not upon us, we are to meet every situation, enter into every circumstance, and perform every activity. We cease from our own labors.

This is the way you began the Christian life, if you are a Christian.

- You came to the place where you stopped trying to save yourself, did you not?
- You quit trying to be good enough to get into heaven.
- You said, "I'll never make it, I'll never make it."
- You looked to the Lord Jesus, and said, "If he has taken my place, then that is all I need."
- Thus, receiving him, and resting on that fact by faith, you stopped your own efforts, you ceased from your own work, and rested on his.

Now, Paul says in Colossians, "As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him," {Col 2:6 RSV}. As ... so – in the same way. As you have received him, so live in dependence upon him to do all things through you. Step out upon that, and what is the result? Rest! Wonderful rest! Relief, release, no longer worrying, fretting,

straining, for you are resting upon One who is wholly adequate to do through you everything that needs to be done. He does not make automatons of us, he does not turn us into robots. He works through our thinking, our feeling and our reasoning, but our dependence must be upon him.

Notice the word that is stressed throughout this whole section, *today*.

This is God's design for living *today!* It is not inactivity, but it is freedom from strain. It is the principle upon which he expects everything to be done: your work, your schooling, your studies, your play, your responsibilities in the home, at the shop, wherever you are. All are to be fulfilled out of reliance upon this new principle of human behavior. "Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of [by the authority and ability of] the Lord Jesus," {Col 3:17}.

Now one final word on how.

If you have never yet entered into this principle in any degree and yet have been truly born of God by the Holy Spirit, this study will find you asking the question, "Lord, show me how. I want to enter into this rest, I want to know what this is." Then look at the instrument by which we enter in, the Word of God.

**Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. {Heb 4:11-12 RSV}**

In order to enter into this new principle we must repudiate the old. But the problem is, the old basis of activity is so ingrained in our thinking that we automatically respond to old thought patterns, along old lines of reaction. Thus, though the new life of the Lord Jesus may be in us, we find ourselves repudiating it and responding along old lines, reacting in bitterness, impatience, anger, frustration, anxiety, worry, fear, trepidation, uncertainty and inferiority. We do not know how to recognize the old in its practical appearance. What will help us? The word of God! This living, marvelous word becomes an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit with a two-edged action. It strips off the false. If we seek to obey it, as we read it we shall discover that it exposes the entrenched power

of the flesh in our life, and strips off all pretense. It is not only the Bible which is meant by the phrase “the word of God.” It is the truth of God, whether it comes by sermon, by Scripture, or by some confirmation of life. It is the truth that strips off the false. It can be utterly ruthless, moving in on us, backing us into a corner, taking down all our fences and facades, worming its way right into the heart of our nature, discerning even between the soul and the spirit.

I watched this week the book of Esther in the hands of the Holy Spirit take a group of people and strip off their pretenses and expose them to themselves. For the first time they saw, with horror, that they really were under the domination of this sin principle, the flesh.

But the Word has a two-fold action. It not only strips off the false, but it unveils the true. When we come to the place where, like Jacob, we are ready to take a good look at ourselves, then there comes the marvelous, healing, wholesome, comforting, sweet, delivering word that sets us on our feet again, and shows us, in Christ, every provision for every need. We need no longer to go on doggedly, wearily, fighting a battle that is already lost, but we can step out each fresh, new day into the glorious experience of a victory that is already won.

And what is the final outcome? Look at Verse 13:

**And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. {Heb 4:13 RSV}**

We come at last to the God of reality.

Remember when Adam sinned, that he hid from God. He hid because he realized he was naked and he was ashamed and clothed himself.

- When all pretense is stripped off, and we see ourselves for what we are, and by faith have appropriated what Christ is;
- When we believe that he not only died for us, but rose again to live in us;

- When we realize that we not only need him for what he did, but also for what he is;
- Then we can stand again before God exactly as we are, naked without need of facades, masks, or pretenses.

We are exactly what we are, that is all, just men, just women, just sinners saved by grace, with nothing to defend, nothing that need be hidden, nothing that cannot be fully exposed to everyone. We discover a wonderful lifting of burdens, a wonderful freedom, a wonderful release – we have entered into rest. The fences come down between us and our friends and neighbors, we do not try to hide anything any more. Because we are what we are before God, we can be exactly what we are before men.

Perhaps some of you have been in the wilderness a long, long time – too long. Normally, as this book will make clear as we go on, it is expected that a Christian who comes to know the Lord Jesus will be led into the experience of rest within a few years after his conversion. It may take no longer than a few months. But even if you have been living in the wilderness of self effort for many years it is yet possible to die to your unbelief, as that old generation died, and to leave the carcass of unbelieving self-sufficiency behind, and like the new generation born in the wilderness, follow your heavenly Joshua into the land.

You cannot crucify the flesh; that God has already done, but you can agree to it. And when you do, you will discover this priceless gift of peace – of rest. But if you refuse, knowing what to do but not willing to do it, the living death that marks your fruitless, crabbed, self-centered, so-called ‘Christian’ life, will be the tombstone of a phony faith, a faith that never really was, a house built upon the sand, which, when the floods and storms of life strike it, is swept to destruction.

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, how this word has searched our hearts. We have found it to be exactly what you have declared it to be, that which can pierce even the joints and the marrow,

discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thank you for this wonderful surgery that sets us free. We rejoice that there is a rest remaining into which we can enter. Grant us that we shall. In Thy name. Amen.

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