

Weaving the Word

Every Effort

January 6, 2019

Welcome to where we're learning how to enter the place of rest!



How hard do you work at resting in Christ? *That's a serious question.*

Travel agents know how much effort it takes to rest.



[Hebrews says] Anyone who *enters God's rest* also *rests from his own work*, just as *God did from his*. [The big difference being that only *one of us is God!* And, He didn't take a *snooze*; He *stopped* because it was *finished*] Let *us*, therefore, **make every effort to enter that rest** ... [because we *can't* create, let alone finish, *our own*] – Hebrews 4:10-11a NIV

Isaiah describes the God-ordained “*měnuwchah*” or “**resting place**”; which turns out to be His Word when *gathered* by joyful children, **so He can weave it in our hearts and minds as He sees fit**.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. ... “This is the rest [lit. resting place] with which you may cause the weary to rest,” and, “This is the refreshing” ... – Isaiah 28:10-12a NKJ

“This is the covenant I will make with them after that time,” says the Lord. “I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” – Hebrews 10:16 NIV

But, it takes effort to open a gift. Albeit not much.



[Remember] **Jesus answered** [publically, Isaiah's line-upon-line question (in 28:9); before calling out] ... “Come to Me, all you who *labor* and are *heavy laden*, and **I will give you rest** [as promised in Isaiah]. Take *My yoke* upon you and **learn from Me** ... and **you will find rest for your souls**. [When God can speak to you by His Word with simple coherency, rather than the confusion that comes from ignorance] *For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* [Live out love; and, receive like a child] – Matthew 11:25, 28-30; NKJ



It's almost Passover (one year before the cross).

Jesus just finished telling about the Good Samaritan to those who took Him up on His offer and came to Him to learn from Him how to rest in Him.

That morning, He'd snuck into Jerusalem (as a wanted man) and anonymously healed an excuse-making whiner at the Pool of Bethesda.



Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. **Stop sinning** or something **worse** may **happen to you**.” **[But]** The man went away and **told the Jews** that it was **Jesus** who had made him well **[on the Sabbath]**. **[And they now come to confront Jesus; but, we know from line-upon-lining Matthew and Luke that Jesus had gathered 72 junior disciples and a crowd, and publically denounced the woe-to-you cities whose religious rulers had rejected His message of rest (which I’ll bet was these guys). And just as He finishes telling the parable of the Good Samaritan to an expert in the Law, they see their opportunity]** So, because Jesus was **doing [working]** these things on the **Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him**. **[And while they were gasping with judgmental offense]** Jesus said to them, **“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”** **[And they fell over dead from shock! That’s the best worst thing He could’ve said!]** – John 5:14-17 NIV

So, how is God *not violating* His own Sabbath?

One year earlier, when healing a man with a shriveled hand ...

He said to them, “What man is there among you who has *one sheep*, and if it *falls into a pit on the Sabbath*, will not **lay hold of it and lift it out?** **[He made the same point a week before, using a donkey (Luke 14:3-5); so, you pick which fits you best]** ... Therefore **it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.**” – Matthew 12:11-12 NKJ

You see, **God never rests from doing good.**

Father and Son are working to save us *donkey-sheep* from the pit!

For this reason the Jews **tried [sought]** all the harder to kill him **[that’s what they were seeking!]**; not only was he **breaking the Sabbath** **[according to their own tacked-on, self-justifying, religious rules]**, but **he was even calling God his own Father**, making himself equal with God. **[Thanks to Matthew (11:25-27) and Luke (10:21-22) weaving together just before this; we can see the extent to which He did!]** Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the **Son can do [work]** nothing by himself; he can **do [work]** only what he sees **his Father doing [working]**, because whatever the **Father does [works]** the **Son also does [works]**. For the **Father loves the Son** and shows him all he **does [works]**. Yes, to your amazement **he will show him even greater things [works] than these**. **[We’re saving the best for the big finish when we save the sheep!]** For just as the **Father** raises the dead and gives them life, even so the **Son** gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. – John 5:18-21 NIV

As Jesus was lifted on the cross, He was lifting us from the pit. He’s the sole source of the deep rest we seek; because, **He’s the Father’s Arm that reaches into the pit.**

And, **He has thrown us an eternal lifeline. In fact, it’s a line-upon-line.**

[Ethan writes in Psalm 89] You **rule the raging of the sea**; when its waves rise, you **still them**. **You have broken Rahab [the proud] in pieces** ... You have a **mighty arm; strong is Your hand** ...” – Psalm 89:9-10, 13 NKJ

[And Job says] Naked is **Sheol** [*shě'owl*: grave; hell; pit] before [Jehovah] ... *He quieted the sea with His power, and **by His understanding He shattered Rahab.*** – Job 26:6-7, 12 NAS

[But look what Isaiah foretells about Jesus] *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD! Awake as in the days of old, in ages long ago! **Was it not you who crushed Rahab*** ... [Jerusalem] has no one to *grasp her by the hand* ... – Isaiah 51:9, 18 NAB

... until Jesus reached down to lift us up.



Most of us work-and-work to prove ourselves, to convince God, others, and us, that we're good enough. **Why aren't we working to prove God** ... as commanded, by renewing our mind with His Word? (Rom 12:2)



Jesus is the Lord of the *Sabbath/Rest* because **He's the Master of Isaiah's place-of-rest, who rules and calms the raging sea of Scripture.**

Even when the Pharisees stopped *toiling* on the Sabbath, they weren't resting. They were still *earning* by resting in a religiously specific way.



It's like how you sleep the night *before* the big test, and the night *after* you *nail the big test!* **Jesus took the test. Nailed it!**



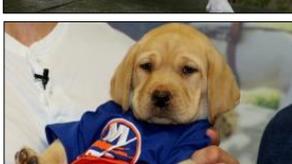
Tim Keller writes that at the end of God's great act of creation **He said, "It is finished," and He could rest.** And, on the cross at the end of Christ's great act of redemption **He said, "It is finished" – and we can rest.**



This was the best work saved for the big finish! **The work of you trying to justify yourself, and prove your worth, and earn your way – that work is finished.** It's out of your hands and in His! **But the light-burden work of un-wrapping the gift is just begun.** The Arm has come down to lay hold and lift up. **Now we must take hold and be lifted.**



Ever try to lay hold of and lift a sheep? They're not real keen on cooperating. **It takes effort to resist your own nature, and trust and relax and surrender and cooperate.** On the other hand, ever try to pick up a puppy that *wants* to be picked up? Resist your nature, and trust and relax and surrender and cooperate.



Make an effort to try to not try to be in control.

It reminds me of what the Spirit says in Psalm 95.

In [the Lord's] **hand** are the **deep places** of the **earth** ... Oh come, let us **worship** and **bow down**; let us **kneel** before the Lord our Maker. [**Be still and yield control**] For **He** is our **God**, and **we** are the **people** of His **pasture**, and the **sheep of His hand.** – Psalm 95:3-7 NKJ

What comes next in this Psalm, is used *in Hebrews* to setup the passage we read, about making every effort to enter His rest.

As the Holy Spirit says [in Psalm 95:10-11, just after what we read] "... a **people** who **go astray in their heart ... shall not enter My rest.**" [Because, we the-sheep-of-His-hand (which is in the **deep places of the earth**) tend to **not bow down and kneel and be still**] ... For he who has **entered His rest** has **himself** also **ceased** from **his works** as **God** did from **His**. Let **us therefore** be **diligent** to **enter that rest** ... let us **hold fast** ... – Hebrews 3:7, 10-11; 4:10-11, 14 NKJ

So, how hard are you working to rest in Jesus?

We must rest in His Word.

If we can't, we must make every effort to enter into that rest.

The light work of rest'oration is substituted for the heavy work of religion by those who want to be liked by Jesus but not like Jesus. Nothing wrong with tradition *or* routine *or* ritual ... *until* the moment it becomes a way to rank your position in *any way*.

Whatever measure you choose to use, **you'll either succeed, which will lead to conceit; or fail, which will lead to despair.** And, **if you rank yourself, you'll eventually rank on others;** either because you *feel superior* or you *feel miserable*. *Or both!* And, the more we religiously rank, the more we invalidate the work of Christ *for us*, and reject the work of God *in us*.

Paul says "*continue to work out your salvation ... for it is God who works in you*". (Phil 2:12)

Maybe the Father and Son are still at work to *this* very day!

Rest'oration is all about allowing the ongoing work of God.

Which comes down to doing His will.

Which comes down to knowing His heart.

Which comes down to hearing His voice.

Which comes down to dwelling in His place of rest. His Word.

Not with a stopwatch. Not with a scorecard.

You only need a willing heart and a desire to reach out.

This is what Jesus fought and died to provide for you.

So, stop *striving ... and rest.*

Stop *proving ... and rest.*

Receive Him as the Lord of the Sabbath, the Master of the rest ... of your life.