

Hebrews Chapter 4

by Chip Brogden

Chip Brogden's sermon on Hebrews Chapter 4 emphasizes the importance of entering into spiritual rest through faith in Christ rather than reliance on the law.

Duration: 30:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 1:1, John 1:14, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 4:12-13

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by emphasizing that Jesus is our high priest and final sacrifice, deserving more glory than Moses. The sermon focuses on the book of Hebrews, specifically Hebrews 3 and 4. The preacher highlights the importance of entering into God's rest through Jesus Christ, rather than relying on our own religious efforts. The sermon also emphasizes the power and living nature of the Word of God, which is personified as Jesus Christ himself.

Transcript

Rejoice and be glad in it. Hello again everyone, this is Chip Brogden coming to you with another edition of our weekly webcast. I am streaming online at www.watchman.net and this week we are continuing our series of messages on the book of Hebrews.

But before we turn to Hebrews, I'd like for you to turn first to Acts chapter 21. Now we've been talking about Christ as our mediator of a new covenant, our high priest, our final sacrifice. We've had quite a lot to say about how we are saved by grace and have been delivered from the law.

And I want to show you an example of the problem that Paul ran into. And I think that will help you understand the purpose behind this book of Hebrews. And so in Acts chapter 21, I want to show you here, now Paul has come back to Jerusalem and in verse 20, he has just shared with them all the things that God has done through his ministry to the Gentiles.

And it says in verse 20 of Acts 21 that when they heard it, they glorified the Lord and they said to him, You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed and they are still zealous for the law. That's a good example right there of why Paul had to write this letter to the Hebrews. It was a problem in the early church.

It's becoming more of a problem today, but it's not a new problem, it's an old problem. And the problem was in the New Testament, they preached the gospel to the Jews only. All the disciples were Jewish and rightly so.

But nevertheless, the Lord wanted to show them that this gospel was not for the Jews and it was not a Jewish gospel, but it was a universal gospel. It was a gospel of the kingdom. And so Paul ran into a problem when he began to preach Christ to the Gentiles.

He ran into issues with brothers that had been Jewish, just as he had, but they were still very zealous for the law of Moses. And you saw that problem in Galatians when Peter and Barnabas and some others from Jerusalem came up, that they wouldn't eat with the Gentile Christians because they thought that would offend the Jewish Christians. And Paul, it says, he rebuked Peter before them all and thanked the Lord that he did.

That's another example that just because someone's an apostle or someone is in leadership, it doesn't mean that they're perfect. It doesn't mean that everything they do is correct and necessarily above board all the time. And they've got to be willing not to be perfect, but they've got to be willing, on the other hand, to be able to accept godly correction from other people.

And Paul stood up and spoke out and said they were not walking uprightly according to the gospel because they were expecting the Christians there to behave like Jews. And Paul said, no, we've been delivered from the curse of the law. And then in Acts 21, as he comes back to Jerusalem, he meets up again with the brothers and they greet him and they're glad to hear the things that God is doing in his ministry.

But then they say, you know, Paul, when the Jews find out that you're back in town, there's going to be a problem. And even in the church here, we have many Christians who used to be Jewish and they have believed in the Lord Jesus, but they are still very zealous for the law. And, you know, I've found a lot of people like that today.

Whether they realize it or not, they're very zealous for the law of Moses, very zealous for the Hebrew Old Testament and the Mosaic law and all of the covenants and the feasts and the festivals and the ceremonial attributes of that law. But they don't really understand that we are living under a new covenant, which is established upon better promises and Christ is the high priest of that covenant. And what happened in Acts 21 is they persuaded Paul to make some type of a vow and follow through on a Jewish custom.

And what happened is he was totally misinterpreted and that ended up getting him arrested. Now, God is using all things together for his purpose. And he even used this to get Paul in the place that he wanted him to be.

I think Paul, in this case, he was trying to be accommodating. He was trying to be sensitive and he was trying to be humble and submitted to the other brothers there. But all that compromise got him was a lot of trouble.

Now, God used it, but my point is that these brothers in Christ were more zealous for the law of Moses than they were for this new covenant established by Jesus Christ. And it caused a problem. And it will cause a problem today if you're not careful.

So that's what we want to make sure of. If you're going to be zealous for something, let's be zealous for what God is doing in Christ and not have a misguided zealousness that only results in hypocrisy and religiosity. You know, so many people write in and they say that the reason they follow the Old Testament covenant and the Old Testament foods and the Old Testament holy days and the Old Testament language is they say it's not because I think I'll be saved by doing all that.

They've gotten smarter now to realize they can't be saved by that. But they say we want to please God by doing these things. And this is how we please God.

We please God when we follow the Old Covenant law and the Mosaic law and all of the feasts and festivals and the ceremonies of that Old Testament law. We just want to please God. You know what? If you really want to please God, then give Jesus the glory and the honor he deserves in this New Covenant.

That's how you please God. You don't please God by some external ceremonial traditional custom that they did back in the Old Testament. Study that and understand that and see what God is trying to tell us in that and then apply that as a New Covenant believer and give Jesus the glory and the honor due His name.

It's not pleasing to God if you somehow elevate Moses and put him on the same level with Jesus. That's not pleasing God at all. Hebrews it tells us and what we're learning is that Jesus is worthy of more glory and more honor than Moses.

So give Jesus the glory that's due His name and honor Him in this New Covenant. Learn what it means to be a New Testament believer, not an Old Testament believer, and you'll be pleasing to God. Then another group of people will say, but God says we have to do these things.

Well, where does He tell me that I have to do that? He did not give the law to us. He gave the law to Israel. He gave the law to those Hebrews out there in the wilderness.

He gave it to them to obey. He gave it to them as an example to us. And what is the example? Well, the example should be not that we have to go and imitate what they did, but that because they failed, it is a failure to try and please God on the basis of the law.

That's what that example should be teaching us. It should be pointing us to Christ. See, it's not so much that the law is a failure.

We are a failure. We are a failure in trying to keep the law and trying to keep the commandments externally. If we do not have spirit and truth, if we do not have a new creation in Christ, and that's why Paul says if you're in Christ, you're a new creation.

Old things are passed away. All things become new. And God Himself says in Ezekiel, I'll take away your heart of stone.

I'll give you a heart of flesh. I'll put my spirit within you. That's new covenant language.

Why? Because we could not keep the law. And so in that sense, it's not so much that something's wrong with the law. It's something's wrong with us.

Something's wrong with me. It's because of this thing on the inside of me that is unsubmitted, unrenewed, uncreated, uncreated. It needs to be made anew.

It needs to be fresh. It needs to be a new creation. It needs to be a change of heart and not just a change of conduct on the outside.

Religion always measures by the outward appearance. But God does not do that. God measures by the thoughts and the intents of the heart.

And so that's what we're learning here in this new covenant and particularly in the book of Hebrews. You have other groups of people that say, well, Jesus said He didn't come to abolish the law or do away with the law. He came to fulfill it.

Well, exactly right. Jesus came to fulfill the law because I could not fulfill it. You can't fulfill it.

And since we could not fulfill it, He fulfilled it in Himself. And now that He's fulfilled it, we don't have to. That's the bottom line.

Don't take that verse out of context and try to repudiate the rest of the New Testament by taking one statement of Jesus out of context and saying, well, Jesus said He came to fulfill it, not to do away with it, so that means I'm obligated to it. No, that's not what that means at all. It means that because we could not fulfill the law, He fulfilled the law.

How did He fulfill the law? Three ways. He fulfilled it by being the mediator of a new covenant. He fulfilled it by being our high priest, and He fulfilled it by being our final sacrifice.

You know, one of the functions, one of the duties of the high priest was to teach the commandments and laws of God to the people. Well, how did Jesus fulfill that? He fulfilled that by placing His Spirit within us. Just as it says in Ezekiel, I put my Spirit within you, and I will write my laws upon your heart.

And that's exactly how Jesus has fulfilled the law, by teaching the law, by giving us the Spirit. And when we love God, and when we love one another, Paul says we are fulfilling the law. I mean, it's just crystal clear to me.

And the only way you can come to any other interpretation would be to try to force a square peg through a round hole. It just doesn't work that way, folks. Jesus is our high priest.

He's our final sacrifice, and He is worthy of more glory than Moses. Praise the Lord. So if you'll turn back to Hebrews 4, we're going to take back up again where we left off last week.

We actually fell just short of Hebrews 4, so we're going to begin reading in the last few verses of Hebrews 3. Now, all that was just introduction, so as you're turning there, let's go to the Lord and ask Him to bless the remaining time that we have together. Bless the study of the Word. Thank you, Father, for another opportunity to study your Word and to behold wonderful things in your Word.

I pray that Jesus would be revealed to us as we study the Scriptures and as we meditate upon these things. Open our hearts, Lord, and open our minds. Open the eyes of our understanding that we would see and know and have spiritual discernment and wisdom and understanding in these things.

I thank you for it, and I thank you for all who are listening. In Jesus' mighty name, amen and amen. Hebrews 3, because last week we did not complete it, so we'll begin in verse 16 of Hebrews 3. Hebrews 3, 16.

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now, with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Chapter 4. Therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. So, again, there is a warning here that if we're going to give glory and honor to Moses, we need to give even more glory and honor to Jesus, whose glory far surpasses Moses, who is the mediator of a new covenant, a heavenly covenant.

If we're going to pay attention to Moses and if there were consequences for disobedience in the Old Testament, how much more are the consequences of disobedience as we are living under a new covenant, under a high priest that is far superior and is, in fact, the Son of God? That's the point. And it talks about this rest. Now, immediately, when you start thinking about what is this rest, and here's what he's trying to get them to do.

He's saying in the Old Testament they could not enter the promised land. They could not enter into the rest because of disobedience, because of unbelief. Therefore, and remember I said when you see the word therefore, you need to see what it's there for.

Therefore is a connecting word that tells you what conclusion you should be making as a result of everything that's been said up to that point. So, he's saying just as in the Old Testament they could not enter into the promised land, into the rest that God had prepared for them because of unbelief, because of disobedience, therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. So, immediately, what do you think about? When you think about entering into his rest, what do you think about? The first thing I think about is where Jesus says, Come unto me, all ye who are burdened and heavy laden.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy, my burden is light. I will give you rest unto your souls. I'm not quoting it verbatim, but everything is there, I promise you.

Come unto me, I will give you rest. And what we have here is a rest that is being promised. A rest from what? A rest from my own works.

Resting from my inability to be good enough, to be holy enough, to be spiritual enough, to be sanctified enough. It is come unto me, Jesus says, and learn of me and I will give you rest. Now, that is something quite different and quite profound, in fact.

Quite more splendid and glorious than any kind of the promise of a physical land or a physical land flowing of milk and honey or some kind of a geographic location. But we're talking about a spiritual rest, a spiritual inheritance. And that rest, folks, is promised by Christ when he says, Come unto me and learn of me, take my yoke upon you.

And right then and there, he is issuing the same promise of rest that they had in the Old Testament, which was a type and a shadow of this New Testament rest, which is entering into that rest of God, which is Christ. And it means, basically, that we can either enter into that rest, which is grace, or we can not enter into that rest by continuing to work and trust in our own righteousness. And just to be quite frank with you, to try and establish my sanctification based upon the Old Covenant Mosaic Law.

Specifically, that's what he is talking about writing here to the Hebrews. And generally speaking, I can apply that to many Christians today, whether they consider themselves to be Mosaic or Messianic, or whether they are just in bondage to some type of a religious system. It doesn't have to be Messianic.

It doesn't have to be Hebrew. It doesn't have to be the things that they were struggling with, particularly in the book of Hebrews, which was going back to Judaism. It could be any kind of a religious system.

It could be any kind of a denomination. It could be any kind of an organized religion. Jesus is standing outside of all of that, and he is saying, Come to me and learn of me, I will give you rest.

Religion will not give you rest. It will only give you more work to do. And that's why this promise is so wonderful and it's so magnificent.

Verse 2, Now again, how do we enter into that rest? We believe. Not we work, but we believe. Come unto me and learn of me and I will give you rest.

We who believed do enter that rest as he has said, So I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.

And again in this place, they shall not enter my rest. Verse 6, Since therefore it remains that some must enter in, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again he designates a certain day, saying in David, Today, after such a long time as it has been said, Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, again he's referring back to the Old Testament as the example, as the prototype, as the shadow, as the prophetic message intended to give us something to learn by and apply to our life today.

For if Joshua, verse 8, had given them rest, then he would not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. This is very profound here, and you might miss it, and a lot of people will take issue over it, but this whole concept of the promised land belonging to Israel, the promise of rest, the promised land that God is talking about, it's not a geographic place, folks.

It is Christ. It is Christ. Now, obviously there was a physical nation.

There was a physical location, but the promised land, the inheritance of entering into rest, it is certainly not talking about some type of an earthly thing, and that's why they missed it. That's why they didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah. That's why it took them so long to understand that he wasn't coming to establish an earthly kingdom to overthrow the Romans and restore Israel as the ruler of the world.

Instead, he is talking about a place, there remains therefore a rest for the people of God, and he's saying it was not Joshua who gave them that rest, even though it was Joshua who led them into the promised land and they took possession of it, right? They crossed over the Jordan, they entered into the promised land, but here Paul is saying Joshua did not give them this rest because afterwards God was still inviting them to enter into his rest. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God, and the implication is it's not talking about the holy land. It's not talking about physical land.

It's not talking about some geographical place in the Middle East. It is talking about a spiritual rest, and you might not like the way I spiritualize things, but folks, all I can do is read and interpret, come to the same conclusion that Paul is coming to here, that there remains therefore a rest for the people of God,

okay? And it's not the nation of Israel. It is the kingdom of God, and it is Christ himself that we enter into when we believe.

That is the promised land. That is the rest that God has promised, and see, you can't enter into it unless you believe and unless you are obedient. Now, how do we come short? He says that beware lest any of you, well, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Verse 10, For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from his. And that's the whole point about grace. The whole point about grace in the New Covenant is I have ceased from my own works.

I can't save myself through works. Most people get that. A lot of people get that.

But even after they become saved, a lot of them think now it's up to them to be holy and be sanctified by their works. But Paul says, He who has entered his rest, who is Christ, has himself also ceased from his works as God did from his. Verse 11, And this is what I was alluding to earlier when I got ahead of myself.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. So how do we fall? How do we come up short? Well, one way we come up short, it's not through some great sin as what you would think, some huge unpardonable sin that we commit that keeps us from entering into the rest. Yeah, that'll keep you out.

But that's not what you need to be concerned about. What you need to be concerned about is falling short of the grace of God by trying to add to the grace of God, trying to save yourself by works, or trying to be sanctified by works. Either one of those is enough to cause us to fall short and fail to enter into the grace and the new covenant that Jesus has established with us as the high priest, the final sacrifice, and the mediator of a new covenant established upon better promises.

That's the message of Hebrews. The message of Hebrews, the message that God is trying to get through to us in this book of Hebrews is let us be diligent to enter that rest. What rest? The rest that Jesus invites us to enter into to cease from our labor, to cease from trying to be justified by the law, trying to be justified by some outward measure that man has set up, to be justified by what we do that we perceive to be good and religious.

Instead, to enter into his rest, which is Jesus Christ himself. For the word of God, now we've got a transition here in verse 12, for the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Verse 13, and there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Praise the Lord. Now I'm reading from the King James Version. That might make more sense to you than the regular King James Version.

But what I want to point out here, a lot of people will teach this and when it says the word of God, they automatically think Bible. They automatically think Scriptures. And I'm not saying that the Bible isn't the word of God.

I'm not saying the Scriptures aren't the word of God. But I want you to see here in Hebrews 4, 12 and 13 that what it is talking about is not the Bible, but Jesus himself. Jesus, John 1, verse 1, in the beginning was

the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

And later on it says, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. So when it says in verse 12, for the Word of God is living and powerful, it's not saying the Bible is living and powerful. Well, it is.

But it's the Word of God, the Word made flesh, folks. It's talking about Jesus Christ. This Word of God has a personality.

And in the book of Revelation, you see that it is Jesus on a white horse and he is coming to rule in the rain. And what is the title that they give him? He is called the Word of God. Praise the Lord.

The Word of God is living. The Word of God, Jesus, is living. Jesus is powerful.

And Jesus is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the vision of soul and spirit of the joints and marrow, is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And that is talking about Christ, our High Priest. Verse 13, and there is no creature hidden from His sight.

His sight. See, that's a personal pronoun. If it was talking about the Bible, and I'm not taking anything away from the Bible, I'm saying that Scripture itself makes a distinction between the written Word of God and the living Word of God.

The written Word of God is supposed to lead us to the living Word of God. I'll say it again. The written Word of God is supposed to lead us to the living Word of God.

And it's this living Word of God that is sharper than any two-edged sword, that sees right into our thoughts, reads our thoughts, reads the intentions and the motivations of our heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight. Notice how it talks about the Word of God, and then it talks about His sight.

Everything is open and naked before Him, and there is nothing hidden from His sight. Praise the Lord. So, that's just a little tidbit there of how we take something so often, we take something out of the Bible, and our eyes just kind of breeze over it, and we just kind of let it roll off of our back like water off the back of a duck, when there are little treasures like this, and all of them are pointing to Christ, pointing to Jesus.

Now, there are lots of places where the Bible talks about itself. It refers to itself as the Scriptures. But when it talks about the Word of God, you need to immediately connect that back to John 1, and see what it tells you about Jesus.

Here it is telling us about Christ, our High Priest, and it's talking about nothing is hidden from His sight, not its sight. This is not an it. The Word of God is not an it.

The Word of God is a person. The Word of God, Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord.

I'm excited about that. Verse 14, Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. And remember, He is trying to encourage them that just as they are zealous for the law, just like those brothers we read about in Acts, as zealous as they are for the law, they ought to be even more zealous for this new covenant and for this new High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who has passed through to the heavens.

He says, let us hold fast our confession. In other words, don't give up, don't quit, don't backslide. Verse 15, For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points

tempted as we are yet without sin.

What a powerful passage that is to describe for us that Jesus the Son of God, though He was a son and though He was sinless, nevertheless, He was tempted in everything just as we are and overcame it. So that tells us two things. First of all, it tells us that we can enter into His rest and we can learn to overcome just as He did.

And it also tells us that He sympathizes with our weakness and He does not hold it against us. And so, verse 16, we have the promise, Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Boldest means without fear and it's the throne of grace, not the throne of works.

It's where I throw myself upon the grace of God and I find the mercy to help me in my time of need. Praise the Lord. I'm all out of time for this week, but we'll resume our series on Hebrews next week with Hebrews chapter 5. This is Chip Brogdon streaming online at www.watchman.net. Thank you so much for listening and we'll see you next time.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10483.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chip-brogden/hebrews-chapter-4/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net