

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Peter Hess

Vol. 2 No. 10 May 9, 2008

Heb. 4: 1-*Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.*



PERFECT REST

There is a perfect rest for the people of God. There is a perfect rest for the Christian who is willing to serve God on His terms. There is a perfect rest for the remnant that God has called at this time in history. And this remnant must enter God's perfect rest in order to be used by God in the manner in which He wants to use us. **This rest comes from dying to self.** Jesus spoke plainly about dying to self, through the Scriptures, though few Christians completely understand what He said. *"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Matt. 10:39)."*

Many Christians assume that because they have received salvation they, therefore, have met the requirements of this Scripture. Not so. Jesus is speaking of dying, allowing the self to be, as it, in fact, was, crucified on the cross. **It is only as the self is put to death that the rest, of which Jesus speaks in Hebrews 4, can be attained.**

"For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did

from his (Heb. 4:10)." You see, God doesn't need us to help him run the world, nor does he need our help running the Church. God already has all that He needs to do the job perfectly. **He just needs someone through whom to do it.** We are those someones. But we must first die. Only then can we be used. And by entering His rest, we do not become a threat to interfere in God's work. Again, He doesn't need our help. He needs our empty vessels.

How amazed we will be when we get to Heaven and find that God's purpose for us was that we become nothing so that He could be everything through us. That's all!

If you are a radical disciple, you are no longer your own. If you are a radical disciple, you are possessed by God. You need for Him not just to rule over you, but to conquer you. Have you asked the Lord to do that?

DYING TO SELF

You cannot be at rest, as God would have you be, if the self is still on the throne of your life. There is a

beautiful, joyous freedom that comes only from dying to self and with it comes this perfect rest, an absolute peace that comes no other way.

The self was crucified on the cross. The problem is we don't believe it. And if we think we do believe it, we don't act like it. Believe it, friend. It is true. And start acting like it. **Ask God to bring the experience of the death of your self into manifestation in your life.**

The Israelites could not enter God's rest. God's rest resided in Canaan, awaiting them. But they could not die to self. They could not rid themselves of Egypt. The old ways were cemented in. They were comfortable. Even though there was turmoil, slavery, dissension and a loss of freedom, there was a certain comfort in everything staying as it had always been. The status quo brought about a false peace. And God did not allow them to enter His rest.

But this false peace is a trick of the enemy. We, too, live in a world that is quickly spiraling completely out of control. We, too, are slaves in our own Egypt. We have given up millions of our babies to premature death.

We have sanctioned filth, gross promiscuity, corruption in government, and fiscal waste beyond belief – yet there is a certain comfort in the fact that “at least we know where we are”. As long as it doesn’t get any worse. Of course, it does get worse but we don’t even realize it. The devil doesn’t stop being the devil, you know.

What has happened to us? We have become apathetic and dazed. We have become stunned by all that has occurred around us and we have become anesthetized by it.

And we will never enter God’s rest as long as we stay tied into the spirit of this world. We must make a clean break. We can be in the world, but we must not be of the world. Only then can we enter into perfect rest in God.

One of the reasons that we must die is that God wants all of us, not just part of us.

Ps. 91:1- *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.* In order to dwell, you must move in. When you move to a new house, you take everything with you – pots and pans, furniture, knick-knacks. That is how it must be with God. We are to dwell in the shelter of the Most High. We must take everything with us that comprises who we are. And we must yield it to God and leave it with God. When we

do that, we will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

We spoke in the last newsletter about the word of God. Dear friends, please understand the truth and the power of God’s word. The word of God is living and active. The word of God is not an abstract thing. It is not a group of letters that when put into a certain format form a particular thought. **The word of God is Jesus. The word of God is the Holy Spirit. The word of God is God the Father.** The word of God is living and active. He is alive and He is poised, ready for action. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, in fullness, it is God Himself who has pervaded your being. The alive and active God has entered your earthsuit and has chosen to dwell with you. If you dwell in the shelter of the Most High, you will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

IMBUED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

At the risk of being torpedoed by believers and pastors everywhere, I will state what I believe the Scripture clearly teaches regarding the Holy Spirit. When you were saved, the Holy Spirit entered your life and brought your spirit, which, up until that time, had been dormant, to life. Until that time, your self operated your life. You were under the

control of the self. But when you received salvation, because of your alive spirit, you could then understand the Scriptures and you began to grow in the Lord. But if you never died to self, you chose, by your unwillingness to obey, to allow the self to control and to dictate your life. And, as a result, you also chose to keep the fullness of the Holy Spirit out. **The Holy Spirit does not come in and invade a life controlled by the self.**

If you had a full glass of Coca-Cola and asked to have it filled with Pepsi-Cola, you would be told: “Please, first pour out the Coca-Cola, then I can fill your glass with Pepsi-Cola.” But you may respond: “Oh, no. I don’t want to get rid of my Coca-Cola. I just want my glass to be filled with Pepsi-Cola.” You would then be told once again: “But, if you do not pour out the Coca-Cola, there will be no room in the glass for me to fill it with Pepsi-Cola.”

And that is what happens when we desire to be baptized with the Holy Spirit yet we are unwilling to die to self. You must first begin to die to self so that there is room for the Holy Spirit to come in. **He does not break Himself up into little pieces just because you only have room for a little piece of Him.** When the Holy Spirit comes in, He invades you, He permeates your being. So, you must be empty. You

must have, at least, begun the process, through yielding, of dying to self.

We must be willing to die to self first. We must be willing to become empty. Then, the Holy Spirit can come in and fill us with Himself. He will then empower us to continue to yield to God until the full sanctification process has been completed. As stated earlier, it is the indwelling of the Triune God that gives us this perfect rest. For we must first rest from our own works. We must recognize that God doesn't need our help; He needs our empty vessel. **The empty, transparent Christian has entered into the perfect rest of God.**

In the 8th Chapter of Matthew, we read of Jesus sleeping peacefully in the boat while the disciples were in a furious storm, wondering if they would even make it to the other side of the lake. "Lord, save us. We're going to drown," they shouted. And Jesus responded, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid." Jesus was at perfect rest. He had ceased from His own works. How often He said, "I only do the things my Father tells me to do; I only say the things my Father tells me to say."

God had the storm under His control. Jesus knew that. The disciples did not. Why? Jesus had entered the Father's perfect rest. The disciples had not.

And isn't it amazing that after Pentecost, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they, too, entered God's rest. They died to self and the power of God resided in and worked through them. As Jesus said, "*You will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father (John 14:12).*"

Anyone can enter into this rest. It is not reserved for great men and women, but rather for empty men and women.

In my own tempestuous storm, three years of raging, pancreatic cancer, with all its pain, discomfort and suffering, I, too, by the grace of God, lived in His perfect rest. Not once did I fear for my life. Not once did I doubt that God had me right where He wanted me. Not once was I concerned for my safety. Through 14 times in the hospital and numerous failed operations, not once did my faith waver. Why? How can that be? It is because, by the grace of God, I had entered His rest. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit resided within me – and I knew it. The lack of fear had nothing to do with me. It had everything to do with Them. By God's grace and only by His grace, I had entered His perfect rest. By His grace and only by His grace, I had ceased from my own works.

Is this not proof enough that anyone can enter the perfect rest of God?

THE PROMISE

Isn't it wonderful that this perfect rest is promised to us? *Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands ... (Heb. 4:1).* Paul then exhorts us to do whatever is necessary to make sure we do not fall short of entering that rest. Well, you ask, whatever is necessary? It is necessary for us to yield to Almighty God. We cannot force our self to be crucified. It has already been done. We need to experience that finished work in our every day lives. Only God can bring that about. So, we yield. We throw ourselves on the mercy of God and allow Him to manifest that truth in our experience.

We must cease from our own works. We must understand that God doesn't need us to work for Him. He needs us to become empty. Moses was a great man of God because God sent him to Midian for 40 years where he could do nothing but commune with a bunch of sheep. What happened? All of Egypt was stripped from him. He became empty. Only then could God appear in the burning bush and bring about that which He had planned from the beginning of time.

It will be no different with us. We must allow the Lord

to do this mighty work in us, to strip from us everything that reeks of the world. Even the good things must go if they were done in our own strength. **God wants a remnant of men and women like Moses, like Esther, like Abraham and King David, like Ruth, Priscilla and Lydia.**

Age doesn't matter. God called Jeremiah to be a prophet when he was still a boy. Caleb, at age 85, was still able to go to war. Why? Because he was empty and if God wanted to use him as a warrior, that was God's business, not Caleb's.

King David was a teenager when God started working with him. God already knew he would be king some day. He was just a boy when he slew both a lion and a bear because they had attacked his sheep.

I was 65 when God finally got my attention through the pancreatic cancer. I am now 68 and finally, by His grace, am able to serve Him in the manner in which He has always wanted me to serve Him.

Who says God can't use you? Who says you cannot experience the fullness of the death of the self? Who says you cannot enter into His rest? The devil says so and we know that he is a liar. But what do you say? Are you willing to allow God to have His way with you? Are you willing to allow Him to strip you of everything that does

not please Him? If so, He will do the work. He will bring about the death to self. **Only when you die will you truly find your life. Otherwise, you will lose it.**

You see, you can only truly find your life in Jesus. And you cannot find your life in just a little piece of Jesus. **You will find your life when Jesus' life and yours become intertwined.**

It is available but only on God's terms.

This perfect rest is available to every Christian, but it, too, is only available on God's terms.

There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God.

Please join us at the Radical Discipleship meetings every other Monday at New Life Foursquare Church, 5913 Jefferson Pike, Frederick. We meet next on Monday, May 19th at 7:00 PM.

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP is created and published by Peter Hess through PDH Writings, Inc. The information in this publication is not necessarily the opinion of any particular church or denomination. The author takes full responsibility for its content.

To view prior messages, please visit the website www.peterhessbooks.com and *click* on Radical Discipleship Newsletters in the upper right corner of the Home Page of the website.

If you would prefer to have this publication e-mailed or to add new subscribers, please contact Peter at peter@peterhessbooks.com. Please note: there is no cost to subscribers nor do we accept donations regarding these publications.

Please call or e-mail for permission to copy or distribute this publication. In most cases, permission will be granted.

Peter Hess is the author of multiple non-fiction Christian books and Christian fiction novels that are sold nationwide. More information is available on the website.

GOD BLESS YOU !!
