



Growth Group Curriculum Lent 2021  
Week 3 – March 7, 2021 – Hebrews 4:1-11

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. In this time of the virus and social distancing, please meet safely outside or online. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at [connect@ljpres.org](mailto:connect@ljpres.org). Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

Hebrews 4:1-11 speaks of rest, sabbath and re-centering. Up to this point, the preacher has been bringing together the Old and New Testament in an effort to encourage the disheartened church. But, as chapter 4 begins, we see a shift in tone and topic. The purpose of these verses is to remind the church of the work of God, which includes rest or sabbath. From Genesis 1-2, it is clear that there is a rhythm to life and part of that is experiencing a time to rest.

In the scriptures we see the grand narrative that God has written. We know that God created and God will fully redeem his creation. We read stories of the wandering Israelites, the faithful prophets, and the figuring-it-out-as-they-go disciples. All of these stories create a chain of God's promises and fulfillment. We see all of these characters struggle, succeed, fall away, and have faith. One theme found in all of their stories was the temptation to believe that they were the only characters involved in the story that God was writing. They could not always see beyond themselves and they lost sight of the basic plotline and instead tried to rewrite the story. This was part of Adam and Eve's problem, this was Israel's problem in the wilderness, and this was Simon Peter's problem as well.

The preacher of Hebrews reminds us that the failure of Israel to enter the Promised Land was because they did not believe God's promises. God offered them a place of rest – the Promised Land, but they chose not to enter the land. They did not trust that the story would unfold like God told them it would. Hebrews reminds us to not grow restless as we wait for the story to unfold, but instead to seek out the sabbath rest that comes from God alone.

True rest is only possible when we have a calm confidence that we are participating in the will of God, when we trust in Jesus. Just as God prioritizes rest from the beginning, we too must create space for a Sabbath in our lives. Times of rest and Sabbath are not just a day off.



The promise of rest is given to all who follow God. As we “sabbath” or rest, we see the will of God, we will remember, with gratitude, the work of God and we will maintain hope for what God will do. The author of Hebrews encourages his listeners to seek God’s rest in this present age and also reminds them of the eternal rest they will experience when Christ returns in glory.

## Exploring the Text

### Read Hebrews 4:1-11

**4** 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. **2** For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. **3** Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. **4** For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “On the seventh day God rested from all his works.” **5** And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.” **6** Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, **7** God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” **8** For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. **9** There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; **10** for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. **11** Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

- 1) In the past year, do you feel like you have had too much time to rest, or not enough time?
- 2) Hebrews 4:4 alludes to Genesis 2:2 and how God rested from all of his works. What do you think the author of Genesis means by that? Why do you think the preacher of Hebrews includes this idea? Is this saying that God only works six days a week?
- 3) Why do you think the Bible tells us so often to take a day for rest?
- 4) How would you define sabbath?
- 5) Have you ever taken a regular sabbath? Are you currently trying to take a sabbath? What have you found effective in keeping a sabbath?



- 6) In his sermon Pastor Paul alluded to six thoughts that Pastor Tim Keller has about keeping the sabbath. Which of these resonated with you?
- 1) Set Aside Time That Is Completely Unplanned
  - 2) Take Some Avocational Time
  - 3) Take Some Contemplative Time
  - 4) Take Some Aesthetic Time
  - 5) Take Some Time For Relationships
  - 6) Inject Sabbath Into Your Work
- 7) Hebrews 4:10 says that anyone who has entered God’s rest “has also rested from their works as God did from His” (Hebrews 4:4). Are there other Scriptures that speak about our “works” which are helpful in understanding Hebrews 4:10? How does faith in Christ enable us to rest from our works on a daily basis?
- 8) Our restlessness can lead to weariness. Is there anything in your life that is causing you to be restless? How can your growth group be praying for you to find rest in this situation?

