

Philip Melancthon, the great Reformation theologian, once said to his friend Martin Luther, "This day you and I will discuss the governance of the universe." What Luther said in response was unexpected: "This day you and I will go fishing and leave the governance of the universe to God."

There is deep theology in that statement, not just because I love to fish, by the way, but Luther's simple statement strips away the varnish of righteousness on my heart and reveals its inner desire to control my life and the things around me. You see, my flesh is constantly trying to control my inner world and my outer world. Do you do this? Is your heart noisy within you because we cannot control the circumstances of our lives, nor can we seem to quiet our hearts and rest in the Lord?

I had a friend who tells a story about a woman who simply would not accept the teaching that God was graciously sovereign over her salvation, that there was nothing she could perform to save herself. She desperately wanted something to do in her salvation. He asked her why she struggled so hard to believe what God has said. She responded, "Because if God saved me completely by His grace, then He can ask me to do anything." Think about that. It was a matter of control that kept her from receiving God's grace...now, she did eventually, by the way. But, isn't that true still with us in those moments of the noisy heart? Of inner turmoil? We don't want to trust God completely, with everything, because it means that we might suffer more!! He would have a right to ask us to do anything and we wouldn't have any leverage to say "no" because we didn't do anything in our salvation. I know, in my own heart, I run away from grace because of such things. I hide from God's Word because it makes claims on my life and I don't trust in Jesus in all things and times because I'm still trying to control my own destiny for comfort, ease, and self-deceived peace. The irony of such unbelief is that I am more tossed about, full of worry and self-defensiveness, criticism and joylessness at these times than when I rest completely in Christ.

"The ability to calm your soul and wait before God is one of the most difficult things in the Christian life. Our old nature is restless...the world around us is frantically in a hurry. But a restless heart usually leads to a reckless life." - Warren Wiersbe

Oh, the irony and self-deception of sin!! When I run to control my life and find my rest in things other than trusting in the Lord I am noisy, discontented, and restless in my soul and it does lead to a reckless, off-kilter life. And the answer to this noisy restless heart and life? Trust in Jesus. True rest and peace lies only in our Savior, the Prince of Peace, the substance of the Sabbath, and the lover of my soul.

The author of Hebrews speaks of our rest in chapter 4 of this beautifully Christocentric letter. Let me begin by stating the purpose of Hebrews: the Supremacy of Jesus Christ

Chapters 1-2 – Jesus is supreme over angels

Chapters 3-4 – Jesus is supreme over Moses

Chapters 5-6 – Jesus is supreme over the priesthood, etc.

1. Fear unbelief

a. Notice that we are told to fear!

- i. Not to fear death, or suffering, or financial loss, or any enemy
- ii. We are to fear only one enemy: unbelief! (see 3:18-19)

b. It is unbelief that keeps us out of God's rest

- i. Every restless heart is rooted in unbelief
- ii. Noisy and discontented b/c it seeks some other source than God

2. There remains a Sabbath rest for God's people

a. one who believes enters that rest

- i. faith brings us into the rest of God
- ii. trusting in the LORD

b. rests like God rested

- i. not "not working"
- ii. but finished in works: peace, nothing left to lose or gain
 1. (6:11-12)

3. Be diligent to enter that rest **by faith**

a. To "fall" in this sense is to not believe

- i. This "disobedience" is the disobedience of unbelief

b. Matt 11:28-30

- i. This promise of rest to those who come to Christ is in the context of the lack of repentance, the rejection of Jesus by the cities in which he did miracles
- ii. See the context of Matt 11:20-27
 1. He denounced the cities because they did not repent

2. He praised the Father for His gracious sovereignty over such things
 3. He proclaimed that He is the only way to know the Father, putting faith in the realm of relationship by faith in Him
 4. Then, right into chapter 12 Jesus speaks of His lordship over the Sabbath (12:6-8)
- c. What are we trusting in when we are not in God's rest?
- i. In the words of David Powlison:
 1. Where do we raise up ladders to nowhere?
 - a. Where do we trust achievement?
 - i. How do we go for victory and success?
 - b. Where do we trust acquisition?
 - i. Where do we say, "if only"?
 - ii. Where do we seek recognition and security?
 - c. Where do we race up ladders of appetite?
 - i. Where do we gratify our need for ease...control?
 - ii. Where do we gratify hunger or lust or superiority?
 - d. Where do we trust our avoidance?
 - i. What are we trying to get away from and stay away from?
 - ii. Bryan and Nikki
 2. These ladders to nowhere are not based upon faith in JC
 3. They are based upon our performance, and they make us:
 - a. Nervously happy when we climb a few rungs
 - b. Desperately devastated when we come crashing to the bottom
 - c. Criticizing others, not on everything, but on our "ladders of aspiration"
 - d. Defending or condemning ourselves based upon those same ladders
4. These stairs of sand collapse under the weight of life: they cannot give us rest for they are not entered by faith
- d. The Word of God pierces and sorts the hearts to see faith in Jesus
- i. Hebrews also emphasizes the Word of God
 1. "what God has spoken" (1:1-3)
 2. "what we have heard" (2:1)
 3. "good news" (v2)
 4. "God's voice" (3:7)
 - ii. Let us imbibe ourselves on the Word of God!
 - iii. Let's have the Word of God do surgery on our weaknesses and CT-scans on our souls, revealing the mess and bringing us to the Healer
4. **Hold fast to faith in Christ our High Priest**, our Sabbath Rest, our Anchor into the Holy of Holies
- a. "hold fast our confession"
 - i. Our confession is Christ as our propitiation, the faithful builder of the house, the supreme and supremely faithful (Heb 2:17-3:3)
 - b. 6:17-20
 - c. Col 2:13-17
 - i. The Sabbath day is a shadow, but Christ is the substance (lit. "substance is of Christ")
 - ii. Heb 8:5; 10:1,10, 14
 - iii. Christ is the perfect fulfillment of ALL things necessary for our perfection and holiness, our righteousness and acceptability before God

1. HE IS OUR LADDER TO GOD, NOT NOWHERE!
 2. John 1:51; cf. Gen 28:12
- d. Jesus keeps His promises!
- i. "I am always with you, even to the end of the ages" (Matt 28:20)
 - ii. "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14)
 - iii. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6)
 - iv. "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9)
 - v. "Come to Me...I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28)
 - vi. "Come to Me...and I will give you life" (John 5:40)
 - vii. "This is eternal life: that they may know You the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3)
 - viii. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all" (Ps 34:19)
5. Draw near with confidence to the throne OF GRACE in order to find timely help
- a. Hebrews emphasizes the aspect of "today" (3:7, 13, 15; 4:7)
 - i. Links the past with the present
 - ii. Continues always: today is always right now
 - b. Today is never too late
 - c. Today is the day of salvation
 - d. Today is the time of rest
 - e. Today...place your trust in Jesus, HE REALLY IS THAT GRACIOUS!

How do then practically handle unrest? BY TRUSTING in Jesus again daily!

Psalm 18:1-19

God has bowed the heavens and come down...**because He delights in you (v19)!**

Psalm 35:27 'Great is the Lord who delights in the shalom of His servant!'

Cry out to your Father for His rest in your situation!

1 pet 4:19 - entrust your souls to the faithful Creator just like Jesus

Call to Holy Spirit to fill you up with the joy of the Lord!

Run to Jesus with your sins in your hand and rejoice!

Heb 10:19-23

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Come to Him and find fullness of joy, freedom from performance-based religion and works-based identity!

Fall on Jesus as your sin-bearer, your joy-maker, the one who delights in you, joyfully dancing with you!

He has acquired all for you!

He has accomplished all for you!

He has performed all activities necessary to bring you into the presence of the Lord: the fullness of joy!

Behold your Sabbath...and rest in His delighted love of you!