

Expository message approximately 30 minutes



★ Come In and Find Rest

An Expository Message on Hebrews 4

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us to Your Word. Some of us come with tired bodies, troubled minds, or burdens we have carried for years. Others come eager to grow, but we all need Jesus. Open our understanding through Your Holy Spirit. Show us where unbelief has taken root, teach us to trust Your promises, and draw us near to Your throne of grace. May Your Word reach beyond our ears and change our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

★ **Historical Setting: Believers Under Pressure**

Imagine following Jesus when that decision could cost you friendships, security, and possessions.

That is the world behind the book of Hebrews.

The writer is not named, and the precise date is uncertain. However, the letter addresses believers deeply familiar with Israel's Scriptures, sacrifices, and priesthood. They had already experienced suffering. Hebrews 10 describes public insult, persecution, and the seizure of property.

- Some were growing weary.
- Returning to their former religious life may have seemed easier than continuing to follow Jesus.

The writer answers by showing them the greatness of Christ. Jesus is greater than the angels, greater than Moses, and the fulfillment of what the priesthood and sacrifices pointed toward.

Chapter 3 recalls Israel's wilderness journey. God delivered His people from Egypt, but many refused to trust Him when it was time to enter the promised land. They had seen His power, yet hardened their hearts.

Chapter 4 brings that warning home: do not hear God's invitation and then refuse to trust Him.

The chapter moves through three connected truths:

- God offers us His rest,
- His Word reveals our hearts,
- and His Son welcomes us into His presence.

Let us walk through it together.

★ Hebrews 4:1-2 ... Hearing Must Become Trusting

  (NIV) ***Hebrews 4:1-2 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.¹***

Notice those hopeful words: **the promise still stands.** (v.1)

Israel's unbelief did not cancel God's faithfulness. The door of His promise remains open.

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:1-2.

But the invitation comes with a warning. We must take God seriously. Being near the things of God does not automatically mean we are trusting God.

Verse 2 explains that the wilderness generation heard good news, but the message did not benefit them because they did not receive it with faith.

- They heard about the land God promised.
- They saw evidence of His provision.

Yet when they looked at the obstacles, they treated those obstacles as more dependable than God's Word.

👉 We can do something similar.

We can hear sermons, know Bible stories, and recognize Christian language, yet still refuse to entrust ourselves to Jesus.

🤔 Suppose a doctor gives you medicine and explains that you need to

take it. You may admire the doctor, understand the instructions, and carry the prescription everywhere.

💡 But the medicine sitting unopened on the shelf is not helping you.

👉 God's promise calls for a **response**.

Faith means taking God at His word and relying on Him.

- It is more than agreeing that Jesus exists.
- 👉 It is trusting in Jesus who died and rose again.

For the new Christian, that means you do not need to understand everything before you begin trusting Him.

For the mature Christian, it means years of Bible knowledge never remove our need to depend on Him today.

★ Hebrews 4:3-5 ... A Rest Rooted in God's Finished Work



(NIV)

Hebrews 4:3-5 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.”²

² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:3–5.

Verse 3 says:

“Now we who have believed enter that rest.”

The writer then reaches back to creation, when God rested on the seventh day.

- God did not rest because He was exhausted.
- He rested because His work of creation was complete.

That helps us understand the character of His rest. It is rooted in what God has accomplished.

Many people approach God as though salvation were an unfinished project **they** must complete.

- “If I become good enough, perhaps He will accept me.”
- “If I pray enough, perhaps He will forgive me.”

- “If I make up for my past, perhaps I can finally have peace.”

  But our best efforts cannot erase our sin.

 Jesus accomplished what we could never accomplish for ourselves. His death paid the price for sin, and His resurrection declares His victory.

   We enter God’s rest by trusting Him.

This rest does not mean every problem disappears. A believer may still experience sickness, grief, financial pressure, and difficult relationships.

But beneath those struggles comes a settled confidence: my acceptance before God rests on Jesus.

You can be exhausted physically and still rest spiritually. You can face uncertainty

about tomorrow while knowing who holds your eternal future.

That is a deeper rest than a quiet afternoon or a good night's sleep.

★ Hebrews 4:6-8 ... God's Invitation Is for Today



(NIV)

Hebrews 4:6-8

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." ^c

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.³

These verses explain that the promise remained available after Israel's wilderness failure.

Long afterward, through David in Psalm 95, God again called His people to respond:

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." (v.7)

The word **today** matters.

We often imagine that tomorrow will be a better day to obey God.

- Tomorrow we will surrender that habit.
- Tomorrow we will deal with that bitterness.

³ [*The New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:6–8.

- Tomorrow we will take Jesus seriously.

  But a heart becomes **hard** through repeated resistance.

Each time we push away the truth, pushing it away becomes easier.

God's call is gracious, but it is urgent.

Verse 8 explains that if Joshua had provided the complete rest God intended, God would not later have spoken about another day.

Joshua brought Israel into Canaan. That was a real fulfillment of God's promise, but life in the land did not provide the final, complete rest described here.

- There were still battles.
- There was still sin.
- There was still death.

The land pointed beyond itself to something greater.

👉 Jesus brings His people into peace with God now, and ultimately into the fullness of His presence forever.

Perhaps you have reached a goal you thought would finally satisfy you:

- retirement,
- a new home,
- financial stability,
- or someone's approval.

Then you discovered that your soul was still restless.

Good gifts have their place, but they cannot carry the weight of being your savior.

🤔 🔒 🔑 Your deepest rest is found in Christ.

★ **Hebrews 4:9-11 Resting in Christ and Continuing in Faith**



(NIV)

Hebrews 4:9-11 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.*⁴

Verse 9 declares:

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God.” (v.9)

This is a beautiful promise. God has not forgotten His people. The final rest He promises remains ahead, and believers already begin to experience His peace through faith.

Verse 10 describes entering God's rest and resting from work as God did from His.

⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:9–11.

Then verse 11 tells us to make every effort to enter that rest.

  At first, that may sound strange. How do you make an effort to rest?

The warning explains it: we must not follow Israel's example of **disobedience**.

The effort is the seriousness of continuing to trust God instead of turning away from Him.

Faith does not make obedience unnecessary. Faith gives obedience its proper foundation.

- We obey because we belong to Christ.
- We serve because His grace has reached us.
- We persevere because His promise is trustworthy.

  Consider someone struggling in deep water. A rescuer reaches him, but the

frightened swimmer keeps thrashing and resisting. He must entrust himself to the one who can bring him to safety.

👉 Some of us are spiritually thrashing.

We keep trying to prove our worth, control every outcome, or carry burdens God calls us to place in His hands.

👉 Following Jesus includes learning to surrender.

That surrender will produce **action**:

- repentance,
- prayer,
- obedience,
- and perseverance.

😬 🔓 🔑 But those actions grow from dependence on Christ.

The Christian life is **active faith** in a sufficient Savior.

★ Hebrews 4:12-13 The Word That Opens Our Hearts



(NIV)

Hebrews 4:12-13 ¹² **For the**

word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

¹³ ***Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.***⁵

Now the writer explains why this warning must be taken seriously:

“For the word of God is alive and active....” (v.12)

God's Word does something.

It reaches into the hidden places of our lives. Verse 12 **describes it as sharper**

⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:12–13.

than a double-edged sword, penetrating deeply and judging the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The language emphasizes its ability to reach where human thought cannot.

- We can manage our appearance.
- We can choose words that make us sound spiritual.
- We can hide our motives from other people.

   But God's Word gets beneath the surface.

- It asks why we serve,
- why we speak,
- why we refuse to forgive,
- and why we are afraid to surrender.

Have you ever read a passage you had read many times before, only to feel that it was addressing your situation directly?

🤔💭 The circumstances were familiar, but suddenly the truth reached you.

“That is God...”

God was exposing something you needed to face.

👉 That exposure is an act of mercy.

🤔💭 A surgeon must identify what is wrong before treating it. 🤔🔓🔑 In a similar way, God’s Word reveals **our sin** so that we can bring it honestly before Him.

Verse 13 makes clear that **nothing in creation is hidden from God. We are fully exposed before the One to whom we must give account.**

That should humble us.

But watch where the chapter goes next.

The God who sees everything about us directs us toward the **Savior** who can help us.

★ **Hebrews 4:14-15 Jesus, Our Great High Priest**

Hebrews 4:14-15 ¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.⁶

⁶ [*The New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:14–15.

Verse 14 says:

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”

  In Israel, the high priest represented the people before God. On the **Day of Atonement**, he entered the Most Holy Place with sacrificial blood.

   That ministry pointed forward to **Jesus**.

Jesus offered Himself for our sins and entered heaven. Our representative before the Father is the Son of God Himself.

   That is why we can hold firmly to our faith.

Our confidence rests in who Jesus is and what He has done.

👉 Verse 15 then brings this glorious truth close to our everyday struggles. Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin.

- He knows what human suffering feels like.
- He experienced hunger,
- weariness,
- rejection,
- betrayal, and
- sorrow.

👉 He faced temptation without ever yielding to it.

🤔💭 His sinlessness does **not** make Him indifferent to our weakness.

🤔🔓🔑 It makes Him the perfect Savior we need.

When you pray through tears, you are approaching Someone who understands sorrow.

When temptation presses hard, you are approaching Someone who understands its pressure and can help you stand.

💡 You do not need to hide your weakness from Jesus.

👉 Bring it to Him.

★ Hebrews 4:16 Come to the Throne of Grace

The chapter ends with this invitation:

📖 ✝️ (NIV) **Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive**

mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.⁷

  A throne speaks of authority. This throne belongs to the holy God who sees every thought and knows every failure.

   Yet through Jesus, we are invited to approach it as a throne of grace.

Confidence here does not mean arrogance. It means we come trusting our High Priest.

- Mercy meets us in our failure.
- Grace supplies help for the road ahead.

Notice when we are told to come: **in our time of need.** (v.16)

We often delay prayer until we feel more worthy. But the invitation is to come because we need help.

⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:16.

- Bring the temptation before it grows.
- Bring the fear before it controls you.
- Bring the guilt instead of covering it.

The way into God's presence has been opened through Jesus.

An Invitation to Be Born Again

Before we close, have you personally trusted Jesus Christ?

You may know about Him and still be carrying the burden of trying to save yourself.

Jesus taught that we must be born again. That means receiving new spiritual life through the work of God's Spirit.

We have sinned against God, and we cannot remove our guilt through good deeds. But Jesus died for our sins and rose again. He calls us to turn from sin and trust Him.

Today, you can respond.

A prayer does not save you because you repeat certain words. **Jesus saves**. But if this expresses your heart, you can pray:



Let us pray...

“Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and need Your forgiveness.... I believe You died for my sins and rose again.... I turn to You and place my trust in You.... Forgive me, give me new life, and teach me to follow You.... Thank You for receiving me by Your grace.... Amen.”

If you have placed your trust in Christ, tell a faithful Christian or pastor. Begin reading

God's Word and growing with a Bible-teaching church.



Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that Your promise still stands. Keep us from hardening our hearts. Teach us to receive Your Word with faith and continue following Jesus. Search our motives, heal what is wounded, and expose what needs to change. Thank You for our great High Priest, who understands our weakness and welcomes us to Your throne of grace. Strengthen every weary believer, and help those who have trusted You today grow in their new life. We place our burdens in Your hands and rest in Your faithfulness. In Jesus' name, amen.