

## Monday, August 10, 2009

For the rest of our summer, I'm inviting you to follow our Summer Scripture reading in Proverbs, one chapter daily while at the same time 'studying' Hebrews with me. Proverbs will give you practical, daily living wisdom and Hebrews will give us deeper spiritual understanding of our Christian life.

A reminder, the book of Hebrews appears to be written primarily to Jews who are struggling with the challenge of fully trusting Jesus Christ for their salvation and leaving behind "the law" and the requirements which Moses gave their ancestors as essential to their culture and their God given religion. It is very much the struggle modern day Jews have when trying to discern if Jesus really is their long awaited Messiah. For Gentile Christians, it's a great book to help us understand the link between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Exodus/Leviticus...the 'old covenant' and the 'new covenant'.

This week our focus is chapters 3 and 4. Notice please the comparison between Jesus and Moses in 3:1-6. For the Jewish reader, three historic figures are pre-eminent...Abraham, Moses and David. Abraham, of course, the father of the Jewish race; Moses their 'father' spiritually as the one who led them to God and received 'the law' for them from God; and David the leader of their nation, as their first God selected king. 'Christianity' was asking them to transfer their spiritual allegiance from Moses to Jesus Christ, a profound challenge. Note 3:1 "*holy brothers who share in the heavenly calling*" identifies writer and reader as united in their sacred relationship with God through Jesus Christ, (not Moses and law) and confirms their shared eternal destiny. "Apostle" means "one sent by God to people to draw them to God" and while Moses was clearly this, Jesus is even more, for He is God and came from heaven. "High priest" is one 'sent by the people to God representing the people'. Moses functioned as 'high priest' as he went up the mountain and into the Tent of Meeting, to God. Jesus went to the CROSS representing all peoples! Can you celebratethe superiority of Jesus Christ as your Savior and Sovereign as you navigate the remainder of your summer?

## Tuesday, August 11, 2009

What is an American? The Statue of Liberty invites the world to join our "melting pot". While our history in Williams Bay is highly Scandinavian, even our church began in the Swedish language...it didn't take long for us to be American rather than Swedish or Norwegian or German. So what is a Christian? Do you celebrate the "melting pot" of nationalities, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, skin colors and languages of peoples globally who are the "Christian nation", united by our King Jesus Christ?

In Hebrews 3:1-6 'the house' in relationship to Moses is the Hebrew nation beginning with those 2 million slaves he led to Mount Sinai where they spent several months learning about their unique relationship with God (Exodus 19-40). But 'the house' in relationship to Jesus is the global church, all those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for their salvation, in all generations and in every culture of the world! (Eph. 2:11-22) Please note Hebrews 3:6..."*Christ (Messiah) is faithful as a son over God's house.*" Remember Hebrews 1:2,3, emphasis on Jesus being SON and HEIR? Moses was neither of these!

Do you notice the latter part of verse 6 "*if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*"? This theme of 'being anchored' in the truth of Jesus Christ and our relationship with Him, and therefore not "drifting" (Heb. 2:1) is nowhere more central than in Hebrews. These dear people were living during a terrible time in history. I Peter, written perhaps about the same time, speaks a great deal about endurance in suffering. Jewish Christians faced horrible persecution by BOTH Roman soldiers and Caesars, and also by Jews who felt they were traitors (Acts 8 and 12). Many left home as refugees, couldn't find work or education for their children, and often were publically humiliated...for being followers of Jesus Christ. "Hold on" is the cry in Hebrews, note 3:12-14! Do you hear Jesus saying it to you?

When is your faith in Christ most vulnerable? In what circumstances do you find yourself struggling to stand strong? Read Psalm 95. one half of it is quoted in Hebrews 3. It is rooted in Exodus 17:1-7...a great story of anchoring hope! Take courage in your storm. Hold on to Jesus!

## Wednesday, August 12, 2009

Do you know anyone with a wounded heart or a hard heart? What's the difference? Do you see them closely linked? Babies are born with soft, tender, fragile emotional hearts. They quickly learn about their environment (home). A quiet, affirming, gentle, tender home has a profoundly different affect on a child when contrasted with a loud, critical, argumentative, combative, hostile home. Right? We naturally learn to protect our hearts, even from early childhood, don't we? That's why parental abuse, or abuse by those who should love you is the most damaging of all. Your heart is most naturally vulnerable to them...so when they attack the wound is much deeper.

Notice please in Hebrews 3 and 4, the author quotes Psalm 95:7,8 three times!! "*Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts*". (3:7; 3:15; 4:7) Have you learned, when God repeats Himself, it's wise to pay attention? Notice Heb. 3:10, there's the key. Do you remember how often God used these descriptors when referring to His people: "Stubborn; Stiff-Necked; Rebellious; Hard Hearted"? Consider Ex. 32:9; 33:3; Numbers 14:11; 14:35; 17:5. What does that look like in your life...hard hearted, stiff necked, stubborn?

For Jews, the failure of their ancestors when faced with the opportunity to trust God and follow Him into the new land (Numbers 13,14) stood as a horrible reminder that while God is patient, He will not bless a hard, rebellious, stubborn hearted person. In fact, God will discipline that person. Notice "Today" is capitalized in the call of Heb. 3:13? It represents a God given window of time for response, a sacred opportunity for obedience to God, for honoring God, for following God. Moses and the Jewish slaves had that when they sent in the spies (Numbers 13). Their refusal to trust God and follow Him into the new land, resulted in their wandering in the hot desert for 40 years until that entire "hard hearted" generation had died, before God gave their children the opportunity to go into the promised land (Joshua 3 and 4).

Have you noticed a hard, skeptical, stubborn, selfish heart really struggles trusting God? How's your heart today?

Thursday, August 13, 2009

With only 25 days remaining in summer 2009, have you found this summer to be restful or frantic? Have you noticed God designed you to need frequent REST? What are you doing about that? How do you rest your mind? What brings the greatest degree of “rest/comfort” to your troubled heart?

Notice Hebrews 4 uses the word REST several times, how many? For 40 years those Hebrew slaves wandered in the hot desert...waiting for an entire generation to die! Can you imagine the attitudes, the conversations among the young adults, the teens? They had been children when their parents grabbed them up and ran out of Egypt, when they crossed the Red Sea, when they spent a year at Mount Sinai...and when their parents said NO to God and refused to trust Him, for the promised land (Numbers 14). Rather than “rest” in the land of bounty, they toiled, in the dusty desert for 4 decades, until they had buried their hard hearted parents. Their epitaph was Hebrews 3:19.

But Hebrews 4:1 gives new hope...“*the promise of entering His rest still stands...!*” This, however, is not a land to be conquered (Joshua 1), but rather a relationship to be developed! (Matt. 11:28-30) Note please the power of Heb. 4:1,2. “Gospel” is “good news”, remember Romans 1:16! “*but the message they received was of no value to them, because those who heard it did not combine it with faith”.* The message God gave those slaves was the hope of a new land if they would cross the Jordan and take possession of it, and He would go with them. They refused to receive God’s message with faith believing it was true and believing God would do what He promised...and so they rejected the offer and died in the desert never having experienced the sweet “rest” available in the new land. Do you see the clear correlation with the Gospel?

Jesus Christ came and proclaimed God’s truth regarding Himself, His atonement death and resurrection, and eternal life available by trusting in Him for salvation. When accepting the Gospel with full faith, God does the full salvation work in your life. Without faith, you remain lost in your sin!

Friday, August 14, 2009

Let’s consider today the REST God offers as an anchor for your soul in the storms of life, based on Hebrews 4. First is the REST of the certainty of your relationship with Christ. If you’ve trusted Jesus to be your Savior, you can rest secure that He will never change His mind about you, He will not abandon you or push you away, He will not lose you or forget you! John 6:37-40 has all those truths for you! So when you feel alone in the storm, hold tightly to those truths and rest in them.

God’s Word is fully truth, and therefore a great source of REST for your mind and heart as you may struggle with anxiety, hard choices in life, tough questions, etc. Hebrews 4:12 assures you that God’s Word is “living and active”, when empowered by His Holy Spirit, the One who inspired the Bible into the minds and hearts of those who scribed it exactly as God gave it to them. Remember Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead you into truth (John. 16:12-15).

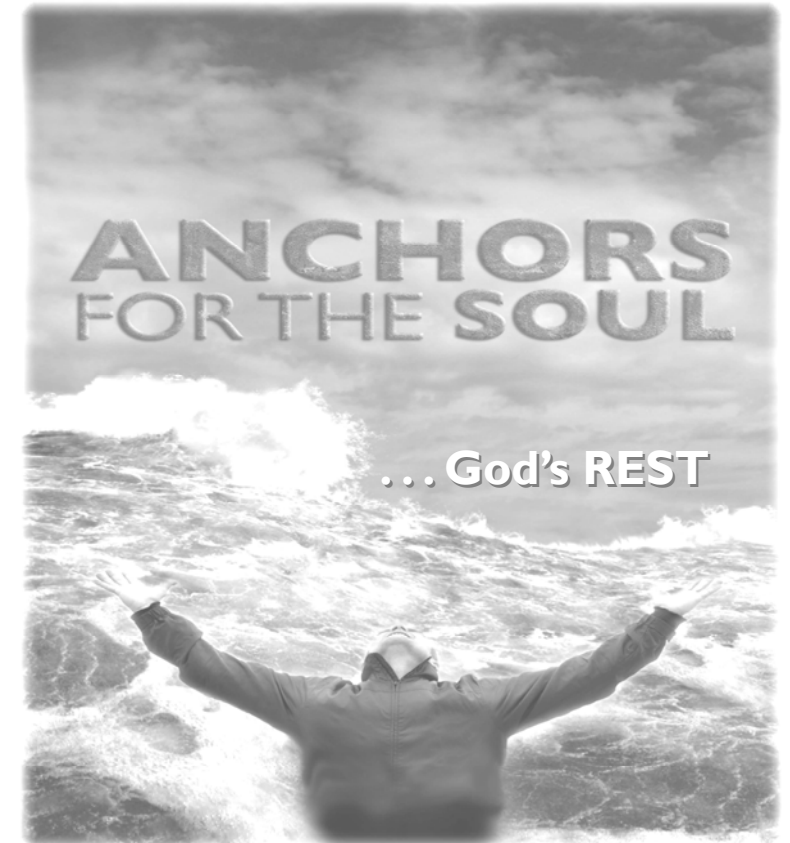
God is Omniscient, fully aware of all things at all times in all places (Hebrews 4:13) and as Sovereign over all He promises He will “settle the score” by calling everyone to accountability before Him, according to His standard of truth, justice, holiness, etc. 2 Corinthians 5:10 affirms that. While it may cause you some anxiety, I urge you to REST in the truth of this because if Jesus is your Savior, His blood has been shed so you can stand before God “justified” (Romans 5), forgiven for your sin! That should flood you with comfort and rest!

Then there is a “Sabbath rest” (Hebrews 4:9) which can be seen as referring to our eternal life spent in God’s presence, free from all that is evil and painful here. After God completed His creation work, He declared and enjoyed a Sabbath rest (Genesis 2:1). Do you think Paul has this in mind when writing Philippians 1:20-23 or 3:12-14; 18-21; or 2 Timothy 4:6-8? Should the anticipation of heaven give you a wonderful sense of rest here? Yes! Are you resting in Him and anticipating eternity?



Pastor Doug Anderson

August 10 - 14, 2009



Verse of the Week

*“Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” (Hebrews 3:13)*

A Disciplemaking Tool  
**DIGGING**  
**DEEPER**

**Calvary**  
Community Church

*Engaging With God*

Highway 50 & Harris Road  
P.O. Box 1200 • Williams Bay, WI 53191  
(262) 245-6294  
www.calvarycommunity.net