

## Articles and Sermons :: Enter Into the Rest of Jesus by A.W. Tozer

### Enter Into the Rest of Jesus by A.W. Tozer - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2014/2/12 22:56

(Hebrews - Part 12): Enter Into the Rest of Jesus by A.W. Tozer

Topic: Expository

Scripture(s): Hebrews 4:1-16

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### Re: Enter Into the Rest of Jesus by A.W. Tozer - Transcript - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2014/2/13 6:36

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Transcript:

The man of God says, "Let us therefore,"

You will note that 'let us' is one of the characteristic expressions of the book of Hebrews, exhorting, let us therefore. And the word therefore is a word meaning 'because of what went before'. Because of what I have said before, let us fear. Lest the promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them, that is the Jews of old times of whom he had spoken in the 3rd chapter. "But the word preached did not profit them not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest as he said, 'I have sworn in my wrath if they shall enter into my rest.' Which means if they shall not enter into my rest which it says above in chapter 3:11, 'If I swear in my wrath if they shall not enter into my rest.' If they shall enter into my rest, I understand is a Hebrew-ism for a not. Though the works were finished from the foundation of the world, for He speaks in a certain place of the seventh day, in thiswise, 'And God did rest on the seventh day from all His works. And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest, they shall not enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. Again he mentioned a certain day in David so long a time, if today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts for if Jesus, that is Joshua had given them rest, then he would not have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he that has entered into his rest has also ceased from his own works as God did for his. Let us therefore labor to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow. And is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight but all things are naked and open under the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our profession for we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but one who was in all points tempted like we are but without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need."

Now this chapter deals with a certain kind of rest. It is a moral rest, a spiritual rest, an inward rest and a rest that satisfies. And this rest springs out of a labor finished. And in this case a labor finished by someone else. The Bible is very clear that no one has any right to rest until his work is done. The Lord never once told his children to take unnecessary breaks from their labor but to finish the work. David after he had by the will of God served his generation, fell on sleep. And our Lord labored until he could say, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do."

Rest follows labor, according to the will of God. According to the will of man, rest and labor are so intermingled that the average fellow never gets tired. But in the Bible this is not true, we labor and when the labor is finished, we wash our hands and say thank God that is done. And we can properly sit down and rest. Now, the argument in Scripture here is that God wants did a work and rested from it. That's in Genesis and He entered into His own rest after he had done a necessary work. Then He entered into His own rest, that is a session of labor. For you will notice that rest is negative

thing. Rest is not a positive thing. I remember once a gentleman who hoped that he could help me. He said, "Tozer what you need is an intensive rest." I've always smiled about that. I can just see a man with his muscles tense and his knuckles tight trying to rest. He was intensely trying to rest and we do that and don't get rested.

Now God entered into His rest, that is He ceased from doing something. That is what rest is. That is the cessation of labor and rest is automatic after that. Now, when a work is to be done, I say, no man has any right to rest until it is done. Either the man has to do it or someone has to do it for him. Now, God offered Palestine to the Jews, that's in the chapter here, that's the argument of the chapter. God offered Palestine to the Jews. And said, "Now this is yours, it's all yours. You will not need to plant a vineyard. It's all planted for you. You will not need to clear a field. All the fields are cleared and fenced. You will not have to start herds, the herds are everywhere. Milk and honey are flowing, the bees are there and the vines are bearing, everything is prepared for you. And I am driving out the unworthy inhabitants who are unfit to live and I am going to turn this whole thing over to you free of charge. The work is already been done. But Israel refused and they failed God all down the way. In unbelief, they refused and forfeited their rest and so after all these years now, the book of Hebrews is written and the man who wrote it argues from this history of Israel, he says that there was a rest that could have been the possession of the Jews. They could have had it, it was theirs. God was offering them Palestine because a work had already been done. All they had to do was move in and unpack their things because it was already done for them. The rest was theirs by the labor of others.

Now he said Israel met this in unbelief and they never occupied all of the land. And they were in and out of the land. They were sometimes in bondage to the people of the land. And they never quite had the faith and obedience to go and takeover and enter into God's rest. Now that's the argument. It goes on that there is another rest offered to us in the Gospel. And this is not a rest of having herds of cattle and houses already built and fountains already flowing and orchard already bearing. This is a spiritual rest of which the others were symbolic. This is a rest of the heart. This is a rest of the question, what am I going to do about sin? It has to do with holiness and how am I going to face the great God Almighty in that Day to come. How am I going to stand up there in that awful judgment day before the blazing throne with sin on my heart. How am I going to satisfy justice which demands that I should die for my sin. How am I going to pay the moral debt, I'm a man that is under deep debt. If you're in debt to the Canadian government for unpaid income tax, you would be worried and you should be properly be worried. And yet, if somebody came along and said, "Now here, you owe \$10,000 in back taxes and they're breathing down your neck but here I'll take care of it for you. It'll be paid. It is paid, here's the receipt." You'd rest, you'd relax for the first time and you'd sleep well that night. You'd say now I'm not worried when I see a Mountie. I'm not thinking he's after me. I know better now, he's just walking down the street looking for bad but I'm alright. I've entered in to my rest. Not mine, but the rest of another.

Now that's exactly what the Bible teaches here. The rest of the Christian is based upon the work of another. It is not his own work for that he could never do. It is done by another who is capable earning that rest, capable of procuring it. The Christian isn't capable, nobody is capable. That is I can not deal with the matter of holiness outrage. I can not deal with the matter of justice violated. I can not take care of the question of sins committed and of moral debt. And it's impossible that I should for the best I could possibly do, and I can't do that. The best that I might do, in a remote way, would be to stop sinning now and not add any more but I can't pay one penny on the debt I already owe. And the debt I already owe is so great that it would sink me into Hell. So now I have got to pay that before I can rest. I owe not to government but to God Almighty, the eternal god, a debt I can't pay. And it's weighing me down. And when the conviction of that strikes a sinner, we call it getting under conviction. And that's the only place anyone ever was under conviction, weighing him down. Now we either we've got to pay that or somebody else has to pay it. And, I say, you and I can't pay it. The best we can do is to pay from here on but we can't even do that. So all the back taxes are still owing. And all the moral debt still owing.

What happens then? There is someone who comes and lays down his life just for the unjust. Pays the debt he didn't owe and includes in that debt all of our debts. Propitiates for violated holiness. Atoners for justice that is broken. He does all of this. Now, he's capable of it and whole book of Hebrews argues for the capability of Jesus. Is He able to do it? It's one thing to make promise, it's quite another thing to carry it out.

And our Lord Jesus Christ came and said, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me to do thy will, oh God." Was He able to do? The whole book of Hebrews declares loudly with logic that He was able to do it. "By Himself, He purged our sins and sat down on the right hand of God. Now if you will hear His voice," that's the vital question. Shall we be like Israel in those days when they heard the Gospel, that is the good news. That there was a place prepared for them that they didn't have to cut down a tree nor pull out a stump nor clear a field. It was all theirs. And didn't have faith to believe it so they never entered to enjoy. They entered in but as I said before, it was always under shadow and they never got it all. Shall we be like them? And so fail completely or shall we try to do our own labor and enter into our rest? For a

any man who knows his own heart would dare stand and say, "I am morally capable of earning my own rest." And we would put that man down as being a moral fool. For a man who knows his own heart knows better. We either have to do this. We either have to satisfy God's holiness and satisfy violated justice, deal with the sin question and pay the moral debt or we have to have somebody do it for us. The book of Hebrews declares that somebody did it for us.

That work was done by the Eternal Son. And it's a dual rest we rest from, we rest on labor of Egypt and we rest in Canaan from labor trying to make ourselves good or fix ourselves up.

Now from what do we rest, let's look at that for a little bit. A lot of people don't want this kind of rest, they want another kind. But those of you who want a moral rest want to know what it is to rest in the heart. You're concerned, what is it? What is it I rest from? Well, you rest from the yearning for character.

From the time I was a boy I heard an expression I've never liked. That is character building. I've never liked it, the liberals use it a lot and educators use it - building character. I suppose it's alright but if you're pressed, I guess I'd have to admit that it's a valid phrase but you usually like or dislike a phrase because of the context you've heard it in. And I used to hear it uttered by men I knew didn't know what they were talking about so 'character building' has never pleased me. You can't build character. You can take a man dying of cancer and you can teach him Greek and Hebrew and Latin and sing grand opera and to enjoy great music and art but he's still a dying man and you're not building anything in him. He's a dying man. And you can take a sinner and you can teach him to be honest and to be a square shooter and to be good Canadian or a good American or a good Britisher. You can help a man, there's no question about it, our schools can help the characters of our children. And I think when we're criticizing everybody, we ought to stop one minute and salute, and stand in salute to teachers that have helped to train our young people of the world and teach them that it is better to be good than to be bad. And that it is better to be honest than to be crooked. It's better to tell the truth than to lie. We find fault with the teachers but they've done a pretty good job.

If I'd been as good a young fellow as my teachers taught me when I was going to school I would have been much better than I was. I think we ought to thank God for the teachers. But all you're doing building is teaching a dying man how to speak good English. All you're doing is making a cultured man out of a dying man. He and his culture are going to die together. That's what character building is, that's all it is. It's better than nothing but it isn't enough.

Meritorious deeds. People want to do meritorious deeds. Did you ever dream, I won't ask you to put up your hand because I know you have, did you ever dream of doing noble acts? I used to when I was a young fellow when I was in my teens. Dream of going to war. And coming home a hero. And when I would hear the Star-Spangled Banner, , I would get goose pimples on my wrist and I'd say I'd love to die for something and come back. I'd die for my country and then I'd come back to my country to enjoy it. But it didn't work out, somehow or other. I never got any higher than a buck private rank when I was in the service. Never had a gun in my hand. So I sort of fizzled on that one. But we all want to do meritorious deeds, you know. We want to go out and do something big.

And then when we come to think of God and the eternal world, we want to do virtuous deeds. We want to be known as virtuous, we want to be good. Benjamin Franklin, as you all remember, was so eager to be a good man that he made a sheet of paper and divided it into squares, like a tight checker board. And he had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, seven of them and then he had the virtues on the left hand side - honesty, modesty, humility, truth... He had all the virtues he could think of down on the left hand column. And then, each day he would go down that list and check off where he had failed. If there was a blank spot then he'd been alright but if he failed, he checked it off. Well, he was wanting to be good and I thank God for everybody who'd rather be good than give up and sink into the mud. But that still isn't enough. He never found rest. You never find rest when you're only building character because you're never done building. You never find rest when you're only seeking to do virtuous deeds.

And the warfare of the flesh and the spirit. We can only be delivered in that warfare, we can only win if we take deliverance by resting. I was at a gathering of preachers at Knox Presbyterian Church Thursday. Brother Gray and I were there and I was one of the speakers, briefly. And there came into our meeting without our knowing anything of its coming, we would have asked him to speak, no doubt, Norman Grubb. Most of you know him or know about him. And, he stood up there and gave us a little talk about, just after we'd eaten, we were still around the table. And he said something that rather interested me. He said that he thought that he ought to arrive at a place where aspiration had given way to realization. That the person that aspires all of the time, and that's good. A person that doesn't aspire is a finished and finite clod. There's no hope for him. But you can aspire for a life time but never realize. He said, "Let's lay aspiration aside and begin to realize. Let us enter in." Not only want to get into Palestine but cross the river and get in. Not only want to give up the struggle but give up and trust the Holy Ghost to take over. He didn't add that but I'm adding that and explaining what he said.

Now, the Holy Ghost says here, "Let us fear." Now the man who writes in the Spirit says, "Let us fear. That the promise being left us of entering, we as they, should seem to come short of it." The promise still holds good but somebody said didn't Joshua lead them in? Well the argument is if Joshua lead them in and they had obtained that rest, then why should centuries later God repeat it in David and say, "If therefore you will hear His voice and harken not your hearts." No, he said Joshua could not give rest to Israel because of Israel's unbelief but there is a rest spoken of by David centuries after Joshua. And therefore he talked about another rest, not the rest that Joshua could bring to the people by taking them into Palestine but another rest and the writer makes the application and he says it's an inward rest. A rest of the soul, it's a rest from our labor. The promise still holds good. We are to attain God's rest. What have we to be afraid of?

"It is that there may be some among you who may be found to have missed this chance." We fool with religion, we played with Christianity. We've been in and out of churches, we've heard this and that speaker. We've read this book and your book. But in unbelief we've blocked any effort of the Spirit to lead us into rest. We get mental habits, they get fixed. Our hearts get tough and unresponsive. Then we should plough deep, break up our fallow ground and seek to be able to respond quickly. To be responsive and sensitive to the voice of God calling us to cease from our labors and trust in Jesus Christ completely, wholly, that we might be able to rest from our struggles. I'm afraid that most Christians are not very restful about that matter. A Methodist bishop said once in a sermon that he had found as a pastor that 70% of his parishioners were not ready for Heaven. They had to cram for the examination at the last minute before they felt free to get in. They weren't resting in what Christ had done. They were vaguely hoping that what they might do or had done. And somebody said, bishop were you not a bit wrought up there when you said 70%, is that right? He said I'm telling you the truth it is 70%, I counted them. Only about 30% of my parishioners are ready to go. Two thirds, over two thirds, of those who went to church for a lifetime, sang the hymns of Zion, heard the Scripture read and listened to prayers and engaged in them, and heard great preaching for there was great preaching in those days, great preachers; when they came to die, they hadn't entered into rest. They couldn't go without fear.

I want God to lead me to place where there's no fear in dying because you're resting in God.

Resting in what Jesus Christ has done for you. God did His work and entered into His rest, His son Jesus Christ did another work and we enter into that rest. Let's see that we do it.

I pray that this may be a heart searching morning as we continue with the service. Let's search ourselves before God.

Amen.