

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What does it mean to persevere? Who are the examples of perseverance in your life? Through what did they persevere? How did they do it? In what areas of life are you being challenged to persevere?

2. What does it mean to you be held? Picture a baby being held by his mom or dad sleeping peacefully. Look at the expression on that baby's face. Recall a time when you needed it most and someone in your life held you. How did it feel? How do you think about and approach rest? The rest described in Hebrews 4 points to the eternal rest (Hebrews 4:11) that we will enter in the future however there are aspects of rest in Christ that can be enjoyed in the present (Hebrews 4:3). Read John 14:26-27, John 15:9, Psalm 73:23-26. What three aspects of rest are available to us now in Christ? How might rest look differently in your life?

3. Can you recall a time when you attempted to give instruction or help and the recipient completely ignored you? From Hebrews 4:7 read "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." What does it mean to "harden your heart". The message of Hebrews was to believers in Christ. How can a Christian's heart grow hard towards God? What is the remedy?

4. Reflect. Have you ever been on a team or participated in performance of some kind where the training was grueling? How did you feel about the coach or director in the practices? What are some difficulties that you have experienced? How did these experiences affect you spiritually? It is counter-cultural to view trials as training grounds especially for rest. Refer to Hebrews 4:11. How can you work hard at being at rest? How can the message from Hebrews reframe how you are thinking about a current trial and how you can anticipate future trials?

Praise to Jesus- Good news! Good news! Good news! In Christ we have rest for tomorrow AND today! Praise Jesus that the promise of rest still stands. Praise Jesus that we can rest in the peace of the Spirit. Praise Jesus that we can rest in the love of Christ. Praise Jesus that we can rest in the hands of the Father, knowing the power of tenderness in that grip.

Repentance through Jesus- The flesh tends to convince us that rest comes after being busy, after we have accumulated things, accomplished goals, met deadlines, gotten the big promotion, gotten married, finally retired, or a hundred different things. Or we may be in a space where cultural accomplishments have proven not to provide rest and we have given up hope that rest is possible, and we have moved to numbing our unrest through unhealthy habits. If your understanding of rest and your approach to rest doesn't line up with the message of Hebrews 4:1-13 take some time to ask the Spirit to lead you in confession and repentance.

What is the disposition of your heart towards God? What is the temperature of your heart towards worship and obedience? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are not listening to God. Take some time to confess this to the Lord and repent. Enter the rest that Jesus has purchased for you.

Consecration for Jesus – Read Matthew 7:9-11. Our Father has such good things for us! Through Christ we have rest. Face life today with active faith. Cling to the promises of God during today's difficulties. Work hard to cling to the promises. It's hard to do when things seem to be falling apart around us, but it's in that context that you can experience rest in the middle of life in a broken, fallen world. When we persevere in the Gospel through the hard and the hurt, our hearts are at rest. Consecrate yourself to Jesus to strive to enter His rest. There is no better place to be.

"It is not enough simply to come to church, any more than it was enough to have been a member of Israel during the exodus. It is not enough to hear the gospel or even to understand it, to explain it to others or even to appreciate the wonder and beauty of the gospel. Unless you receive the gospel in faith, you will not enter into God's rest; you will not be saved. Indeed, if you hear the gospel and do not combine the hearing with believing, if you do not respond to it by confessing yourself a sinner and casting yourself upon Christ, that gospel, will become the source of damnation. If you have been attending church, listening to the gospel as it is preached, perhaps enjoying the music and the lovely setting, but have not personally put your trust in Christ, you are in great peril."

– Richard Phillips

Scriptures for further study:
Psalm 73:23-26

John 15:9

John 14:26-27

Genesis 1&2

Revelation 21

Matthew 7:9-11

“Pastoral discipleship from the pulpit for you through the week.
Each of our pastors has designed content with you in mind.”

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

1. In Hebrews 4, the author continues to talk about the rest that God promises to His people.

- a. Ask your children to describe what it means to rest and why we need to rest. Ask them about times this week when they have rested. For example, resting after playing outside or playing a sport or after dancing.
- b. Read Hebrews 4:2-3 and ask your children about the role of faith or belief in receiving God's rest. Our salvation can be described as receiving God's rest through faith in Jesus.
- c. Ask your children what it means in verse 11 to “strive to enter that rest” (ESV). Some Bible versions say, “make every effort to enter that rest” (NIV) or “do our best to enter that rest” (NLT).
- d. Talk with your children about what it means in your life to rest in Christ's work for us and how that doesn't mean that we will be inactive in life.
- e. It might be helpful to ask your children what the difference is between Do vs Done. Sometimes we think as Christians, our life is all about what we are to do for God. Instead as Christians, we have the power to live out our faith based on what God has done for us through Christ.

2. Read Hebrews 4:12 together as a family and talk about this description of God's Word, the Bible.

- a. Tell your children about times when God's Word has come alive for you.
- b. Ask your older children how the Bible can discern “the thoughts and intentions of the heart”. You might have to give them examples of when God's Word has convicted you and pointed you back to Jesus.
- c. Talk with your children about the importance of the Bible in our lives as Christians and how we need to study it individually, as a family, with other Christians, and with our church.

As the narrative continues into Genesis chapter 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

What is absent is the language of morning and evening? The seventh day is an eternal day. It is the Sabbath rest of being in a relationship with God.

“Despite from Genesis 2:1 the indication of the origins of Israel's Sabbath, because of unbelief Moses and Joshua were unable to bring Israel into God's promised rest (cf. Ps. 95:7-11; Heb. 3:7-4:11). By these observations, biblical writers inform us that the rest that God provides is not simply a weekly cessation from labor, or the provision of land in which God's people were able to rest from slave labor. The rest is not only about a day or the inheritance of a piece of geography. The Sabbath rest is ultimately a spiritual rest in which sinners may find peace with God and enjoy his presence (Matt. 11:28-30).” ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

Big Idea

Those and only those who persevere in Christ through faith amidst the complex challenges of life will experience the living promise of God's rest.

Outline

1. God's Eternal Rest.

2. How to Receive God's Eternal Rest.

3. The Context for Our Rest

“A real Christian is an odd number... He feels supreme love for the One whom he has never seen; talks frequently to Someone he cannot see... expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another; empties himself in order to be full; admits he is wrong so he can be declared right; goes down in order to get up; is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest and happiest when he feels the worst. He dies so he can live; forsakes in order to have; gives away so he can keep; sees the invisible; hears the inaudible; and knows that which passes knowledge.”

- A.W. Tozer.

Scriptures for further study:

Matthew 11:28-30

Psalms 119:11, 72,103

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"GOSPEL RESTING"

Hebrews 4:1-13 ESV

1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. **2** For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. **3** For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,' "although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. **4** For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." **5** And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest." **6** Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, **7** again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words 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 of another day later on. **9** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, **10** for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. **11** Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. **12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **13** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Historical Context

Refer to Genesis 1. Notice the pattern. "There was evening and morning, the first day...there was evening and morning, the second day...this pattern continues all the way through the seventh day when God rested. On the seventh day, does it say there was evening and morning?

In Genesis 1 verse 31, And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

FOR STUDENTS

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Pastor Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. What causes you to doubt, grumble, or complain in your relationship with God?
2. Do you find yourself with an appropriate level of fear when you think about your eternal future? What are some ways in which we can wake up from our complacency?
3. What does it mean for us to "enter his rest" (4:1a)? What is God's rest?
4. What are we to fear? What is the result of us not fearing (4:1b)?
5. What is the good news? To whom else did the good news come? (See Heb 4:2a, Psalm 95:7-11, and Exodus 32.) What light does Hebrews 1:1-2 shed on 4:2a?

Selected questions borrowed and adapted from Hebrews for You by Michael J. Kruger and Hebrews: How Jesus speaks into everything by John D. Barry.

Scriptures for further study:

Psalm 95:7-11

Exodus 32

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

1. In our passage (verse 2) we are told that “hearing” is of no value unless it also leads to “faith.” Have you heard about Jesus? Have you heard the good news of the gospel? If so, then keep in mind that it is not simply enough to have knowledge of these things. One must take the next step of actually believing the gospel and trusting in Christ. Would you take that next step from hearing to faith?

2. To have “faith” is to enter into God’s “rest” (verse 3). To “rest” in God is to rest in what he has already done for you. We can rest because he has “worked” salvation for us on the cross. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites us to come to him in order to experience his “rest.” He wants you to enter into the peace and joy that comes with knowing and believing in him.

3. . Look carefully at verses 12 and 13. Notice what it says about all the dynamic qualities of God’s word. It is living, active, penetrating, exposing. If you would grow in your faith, you must read God’s word. When God speaks, his word has energy to bring things to life. He causes things to spring into activity in you. God’s word also exposes us. In reading God’s word, what you will discover is that in some ways God’s word reads you; he exposes our thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and spirit—every part of us!

Simply put: God’s word is vital to your life and faith.

4. Verse 13 indicates that one day we will all stand before God and give an account. Would you be prepared today to stand before him? You can do so only if God’s only Son is standing with you because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, your Advocate, your Righteousness, your Faithful and Merciful High Priest (2:17).

Like Christina. But even more so...we need something to fix our gaze upon...we need a home to pull us forward...and according to Hebrews, that is Jesus Christ...like the home on the hill in the painting, Jesus is the pinnacle of God’s plan of redemption...so considering this painting and background, here these words afresh from Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, church, let’s begin this journey in Hebrews together...which is not disconnected from our humanity and our struggles...for we to live in Christina’s world...a world of suffering, pain, and hardship...but we are in a relationship with the savior, Jesus, who has overcome the world...and because of His supremacy, calls us to fix our eyes on Him in order that we might persevere in faith. -Tremper Longman, EBC, 23-25

About the artwork

Andrew Wyeth is perhaps the most famous American artist of the 20th century. He, along with John Singer Sargent, are the only two American artists invited into the Academy of Fine Art in Paris, France. President Kennedy awarded Wyeth the presidential medal of freedom, the only visual artist to receive such an award. He was also awarded presidential medals from George H Bush and George W Bush.

His art is connected to his humanity. He was a man that experienced loss and grief in this broken and fallen world and often expressed his pain in visual form through art.

His most famous work, and the one that best expresses his struggle with pain and grief, is a painting called Christina's World (1948). Christina is a friend of Wyeth and had a disease that left her unable to walk. Instead of choosing a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl using her arms. The painting is a picture of her struggle...but it is also a picture of her hope...in the painting her hands are gripped to the ground portraying her daily suffering, yet her body is leaning towards the farmhouse, which was her home. Life was a struggle, but her gaze and hope were on her home, which kept her moving forward and not giving up.

The book of Hebrews has a very similar theme...the writer expresses the hope and gaze of home in the person and work of Jesus Christ...the struggle to give up or turn back was very real for the audience...most scholars believe the original audience was Jewish Christians who were facing persecution...it would have been a struggle for them to keep moving forward in the profession of Jesus Christ because with that profession came pain and hardship.

ADDITIONAL NOTES



What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day.

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together through the Book of Hebrews. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948 ;

Perseverance by Promise ***A Study of the Sermon to the Hebrews***

March 13, 2022