

Exodus: New and Old

Week 6 - Entering God's Rest

Pray or have a volunteer pray to open your time in the Word.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever had a time when you had to risk comfort and routine for a potentially better unknown? Or did you know that the unknown was actually better and still had a hard time risking the comfort?

Leader's Note: Be prepared with an answer to encourage the group to share.

Read Joshua 1

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"

And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.' Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

And they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we

will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

? Can someone recap for us the Israelites journey from the flight from Egypt until Joshua 1?

Leader’s Note: You can touch on:

- *How long had they been traveling? 40 years.*
- *Which generation of Israelites were these? 2nd generation. The first generation didn’t believe the spies who were sent in to scout the Promised Land. See Numbers 13.*
- *Why was Moses not entering the Promised Land with them? Moses disobeyed God and hit a rock to produce water instead of speaking to the rock. See Numbers 20.*

? What repeated command or exhortation does God give Joshua as he’s about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land?

Possible Answers: Be strong and courageous. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do so according to the Law. Do not turn from the right and the left.

? Are the two commands, “Be strong and courageous” and “Keep my commands” linked?

Possible Answers: The command “be strong and courageous” is in reference to entering the Promised Land and in reference to keeping His commands. They are not to be strong and courageous in whatever they themselves will to do but in what He calls them to.

? With success already guaranteed from the Lord, how does being strong and courageous fit or not fit with entering the Promised Land?

Possible Answers: God has repeatedly proved himself faithful. Yet God still knows that when Joshua and the Israelites come up against armies that seem well protected, trained, and strong that His people will need to be strong and courageous to believe in God’s goodness, faithfulness, and power.

? If God is giving the land to the Israelites, why does it seem that it’s going to be such a fight to take it?

Read to the group: Entering the Promised Land is referred to in the New Testament as “entering God’s rest”. We will also refer to it this way in the rest of the study as well.

? What requires strength and courage on a regular basis in your walk with Christ?

Possible Answer: Trusting Him on a daily basis to lead you, fulfill his plans for you and to not stray from His commands requires strength and courage.

If God has already called us, adopted us, and lead us out of sin,
why is it such a fight for us to take our rest in Him?

? What promises did God give Joshua?

Possible Answer: Every place your foot treads on I have already given you. Just as I was with Moses, so also will I be with you. No man will be able to stand before you. The Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

? Do you see any parallels between the gift of eternal life that God gives us when we become believers and the gift of the Promised Land God gives the Israelites?

Possible Answers: We are promised eternal life but do not come into eternal rest until living out God's purposes for us first on earth.

Read to the Group: Read Hebrews 3:7- 4:3 and 4:11-14. Here the writer is addressing Jews who were already believers in Jesus Christ, and he draws parallels between the Exodus and our faith and service to Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 3:7-4:3

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,
"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,
where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.
Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, 'They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known my ways.'
As I swore in my wrath,
'They shall not enter my rest.'"

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said,

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were

disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

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. 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. 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.

Hebrews 4:11-14

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. 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. 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.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

?

In verse 7-19 what is the rebellion and provocation the author is referring to? And, what is 'the rest'?

Possible Answers: The rebellion is referring to the revolt after the report of the spies in Numbers 13-14. Basically, when the Israelites saw that taking the promised land would be going up against giants they did not believe or trust God's promises to them and rebelled by staying in the desert. The rest is entering the Promised Land.

?

How did the Israelites have unbelieving hearts? How were they hardened by the deceitfulness of sin?

Possible answers: They didn't believe that God could and would take down the giants for them. The way into the Promised Land looked hard and they stopped believing in God. Sin makes God and his promises seem impossible, unlikely, and unworthy of our trust.

?

How do our hearts get hardened by sin?

Possible answers: when we stop living by the Word of God and start following our sinful passions and desires, we stop believing that God and His way for us is best and we start a cycle of disbelief and hardening.

?

What is the promise of entering God's rest for believers today?

Possible answers: Peace with God, heaven, adoption into His family now.

? In Hebrews 4:3, the verb enter is present and not future. Is that a big deal?

Possible answer: Yes. It's the 'already but not yet' aspect of our faith in Jesus. We are saved now, we are made right in His sight, we are at peace with God, but the New Heaven and New Earth are not yet, and we are not fully sanctified yet.

? Even after the Israelites enter the Promised Land, there is a lack of finality to their story. What does this imply?

Possible answers: That the Promised Land wasn't the final rest for the people of God. God's rest is more than the Promised Land, and it is for more than just the Israelites who wandered in the desert. God directed the Israelites to take more land and conquer more nations - their belief that the "rest" was simply about the Promised Land led them to disobeying God in His continued guidance of how they were to obey His plan.

? Verse 11 implores us to "Strive to enter that rest."

- How do we strive to enter it? What does it have to do with the Word of God, mentioned immediately after, in verses 12-13?

Possible answers: Immediately following verse 11 it talks about the Word of God, and prior it talks about not having an unbelieving heart and not being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. So, we strive by listening to God and His Word, believing and obeying His commands, and most primary of all, pursuing knowing our Savior.

- By contrast, what did the Israelites do that prevented them from entering their rest the first time?

Possible answers: They did not listen to God or believe or obey his commands. They rebelled against Moses and God and they did not trust God and his promises.

Read to the Group: After reading about striving and hardening of heart, entering rest and falling away, it comes down to Jesus.

? Read Hebrews 4:14 again. Why does it say we hold fast to our confession?

Possible Answers: Because of Jesus. Because he intercedes for us, because He has provided for us the adoption into His family.

? How is it important to you that Jesus is the driver for your obedience and persistent faith?

Possible Answer: If Jesus isn't the driver then you're just religious. 1. We cannot obey on our own effort, it is the Spirit working in us that transforms us. 2. The entire Christian life is about Jesus Christ, knowing and following Him.

Pray to close your time: Use this prayer if you'd like:

Lord please give us the continued and increasing desire to commit to you as the Israelites committed to Joshua saying "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go." Only help us to be strong and courageous, always taking direction and comfort from You and your word.

Please soften our hearts in the areas in which they have been hardened and help us to continue to strive for your eternal rest while continuing to discern and do your work here on earth!

For Discussion and Accountability

? In what aspect of your life and faith in Jesus Christ do you need to boldly trust God's victory?

? Where do you struggle with believing God's promises to you as His child?