

07.31.11 / Joshua 21:43-45

Implications of God's Faithfulness – Part 2: Rest

Passage Insight

As we further consider the implications of God's faithfulness, this week we will examine rest as an outcome of the faithfulness of God, particularly rest in the day to day and from the work to which we've been called in this life. In our increasingly fast-paced society, it is more common than ever to hear, "I'm just so busy..." or "I feel like I don't have a free minute in my day." While there are many motivators for these words, often at the heart of this busyness is a belief that we can somehow add something to our lives or that we are somehow in control of ultimate outcome. The Lord in His grace and mercy allows us to work because work is good – we see this in the fact that it was done by God as He created the world we know, and we also see it in creation itself as Adam and Eve worked before the fall of humanity. Work itself is not bad at all, but the outcome of our labors drastically changed post-fall. We now experience toil as part of our work efforts (Genesis 3:17-19), toil in the form of frustration, failed efforts, physical pain, thwarted attempts at productivity, and more.

Such frustration of our efforts should point us to a constant remembrance of our need for a Savior, and it should drive us to continual repentance, obedience, and a seeking of holiness. Often, however, this frustration leads us not to Christ, but to ourselves. This manifests itself in working harder, working more, ignoring stress, skewing priorities, and ultimately working to try to make ourselves feel better about ourselves, which was never the point of work. All of our value exists in Christ, who gives us our new identity. This new identity, the entirety of what we already are and at the same time are becoming, is ours for one reason: God in Jesus Christ did the work to make this possible. If our entirely new identity is wrapped up entirely in the work of someone else, then that should change everything about the way we work in the day to day. Our work should no longer reflect or be driven by fear, panic, or desperate attempts at defining ourselves through what we do. Our work should no longer drive us to "success" at the expense of others. Our work instead should be motivated by and should reflect the nature of the God who has done ALL THE WORK necessary to bring us back to Himself. Regarding this work, as He fulfilled every last prophecy spoken about Him, Christ Himself said in John 19:30, "It is finished." The work that Christ came to complete has indeed been completed.

Jesus tells us that the Law and Prophets speak of Him (Luke 24:27) and that He is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17) as well. When Moses is used by God to give the Law to His people in Deuteronomy 4, he says in verse 2, "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you." Nothing we do will add one thread of value to the work of redemption that has been done in Christ, which is actually quite freeing. This faithfulness of God show us that He alone does all the work of redemption on our behalf, living for us, dying for us, being resurrected for us, destroying our sin, teaching us obedience, preparing a place for us, preserving and protecting us, leaving us to simply respond in obedience to Him and faithfulness to Him. His faithfulness destroys anxiety (Philippians 4), frees us from worry (Luke 12), and ultimately allows us to rest while we are still on earth, trusting completely in HIS finished work on the cross. So we may work, and we SHOULD work, as He commands. And we may rest, and we SHOULD rest, as He commands, because our hope is in complete faithfulness and obedience to the Faithful One, not in the efforts of our own hands.

Finally, rest only happens when we see what WE CANNOT do. So often in our culture, even as Christians, and certainly in the world at large, humanity's focus is on what WE CAN do, leading to self-evangelism and glorification of the flesh. But if we humble ourselves and focus on what HE can do, measure ourselves by HIS standard, contrast our

capacity for righteousness with HIS capacity for righteousness, and humbly see what WE CANNOT do, we are freed up to worship the One who gets all glory, laud, and honor, who died for us when we were sinning against Him, and who has completed all the work that ever need be accomplished for our redemption. Praise to the One who Has saved us for His glory. Praise to the One who alone is faithful.

Application and Prayer

What Work Reflects

- 1) How does your way of working in the day to day reflect something other than God?
- 2) Check your heart – in what ways do you work, live, communicate, etc. as though Christ’s work on the cross was not enough?
- 3) How does this affect others, painting an inaccurate picture of God?
- 4) PRAY
 - a. For greater faith in Christ
 - b. For the capacity to better understand the depth of Christ’s finished work

Rest

- 1) Where do you struggle to rest in the finished work of Christ?
- 2) What does this lack of rest lead to in your life?
- 3) How would your life more accurately reflect God if you could truly rest in the finished work of Christ?
- 4) What do you need help with (emotionally, spiritually, tangibly) to bring about such rest?
- 5) PRAY
 - a. For a greater faith in Christ
 - b. For restorative rest that happens in full recognition of what Christ has done

Sources

- Prayer