

# Hebrews 4:1-13

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hebrews chapter 4 verses 1 through 13. I had a great opportunity this past week, actually it was a Friday, I had the opportunity to go sit down with some teenagers at the invitation of one who facilitated the group and got to answer questions, just blind questions given to me by these teenagers and I always enjoy that because it seems like they're honest and open and willing and bold.

But teenagers, like especially teenage boys, love the opportunity to question pastors because they will ask them anything and they're always asking them leading questions, trying to stump the pastor, which is fine, I get stumped quite a bit, I definitely don't know everything but I love that opportunity just to sit down and talk about the things of scripture.

So I was thinking, tonight, and some of you said, well I'm not going to come, maybe we'll ask you to come, I'm ready to preach tonight, I'll preach tonight, but I'm going to ask you, for those of us that gather together on Sunday nights, if there is a burning question you have about the Bible, why don't you bring it tonight and we'll just ask it and we'll see if your questions can outdo these teenagers who asked me their questions and they were tough ones, I'm not going to lie, they were tough ones. But we'll just discuss it together and if it takes the whole time it will, if nobody has a question, which is scary to me if we don't have any questions as they pertain to scripture, if you don't have any questions as it pertains to the Bible, you and I need to sit down and talk because you've got it all figured out and I need to know what you know.

Okay, so, and we'll just discuss it together and if it takes the whole time it'll take the whole time tonight, if not, we'll be back in our, what we would call our regularly scheduled program, right? We'll stay in the book of numbers, but do you have any questions?

[ 1 : 47 ] And it doesn't, hey, I'm wide open. When I was asked to go to that with the teenagers, they said, is there anything off limits? I said, no, you can ask me anything because if I don't know the answer, I'll tell you, I don't know the answer. Okay, but I do know the Bible has an answer to every question we may have.

So, and I also know that when we come together and we discuss those things, often we can work that out among ourselves. So, that's what we'll do tonight as we get into our Bible study time tonight at six o'clock after we meet this evening.

But this morning, we are in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter four, starting in verse one, reading down to the 13th verse. So, if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God recorded for us in Hebrews chapter four, starting in verse one.

The author of the book of Hebrews writes, being moved of the spirit of God and writing the word of God says this, therefore, let us fear if while a promise remains of entering his rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

For indeed, we have had good news preached to us just as they also, but the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed entered that rest just as he has said, as I swore my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

[ 3 : 04 ] Although his works were finished from the foundation of the world, for he has said somewhere concerning the seventh day and God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And again, in this passage, they shall not enter my rest.

Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it and those who formerly had good news preached to them fail to enter because of disobedience. He again fixes a certain day today saying through David after so long a time, just as has been said before today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for the one who has entered his rest has himself also

rested from his works as God did from his.

Therefore, let us be diligent to enter that rest so that no one will fall through following the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as a division of soul and spirit, both of joints and marrow and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this privileged opportunity which you have given us this morning to read your word together.

[ 4 : 29 ] And we pray, oh God, as we have read it, Lord, that it would not be the thoughts or the opinions or the interpretations of man, but it would be the very word of God that penetrates our very depth.

Lord, that it would search us out, that it would try us, and that it would know us better than we know ourselves, and that by your word we would be changed. God, that we would be conformed more to your image, more for your glory and honor, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. We've been making our way through the book of Hebrews, and we have seen as the overall theme of the book of Hebrews is that Jesus is greater. It is the superiority of Jesus Christ.

He is greater than all things. He is greater than all which has went before Him, and He is greater than all which comes after Him. Because He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the beginning and the end. Really, there is nothing that precedes Him, and there is nothing that comes after Him or precedes Him.

There is nothing that was before. There is nothing that is after. But Jesus is greater. And the ultimate question that the author of the book of Hebrews is answering is, is Jesus greater than what His audience was trusting in?

[ 5 : 34 ] And the emphatic answer over and over and over again throughout the letter of Hebrews is yes. Now, we do not know who the author is, but we do know who the audience is. And the audience would be the Hebrew people or the Jewish people, more than likely those living outside of Jerusalem, because He writes it in the Greek language.

He does not writing in the Hebrew tongue. So He is writing to those who were scattered and those who were throughout the Roman Empire and those who were familiar. He uses the Septuagint translation, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament in His cross references.

And He uses those to highlight passages of what the Hebrew people were trusting in. And He is pointing these or using these passages to point, as all of the Old Testament does, to the fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

That while we have trusted in these things for a while, this is the one that the passage is pointing to. And over and over again, the author is showing us that Jesus is greater than anything else.

He is greater than anything we are trusting in. Now, none of us, to my knowledge, some may be present to they that I'm not aware of us, are of the Hebrew descent. We are not of the Jewish nation.

[ 6 : 41 ] And therefore, we are not living in Old Testament doctrine. But, much like the Hebrew people, all men of all places, of all times, are trusting in something. They are putting their hope and their assurance and their faith and their confidence in something, rather themselves or something of this world or something which they can attain or something which they can maintain or something which they can hope to reach or a goal or an ambition or a God with a lowercase g.

They are placing their hope in something. And what the author of Hebrews is doing throughout this letter is saying that the greatest thing that we can ever trust and hope in, as he will say later, the hope that is the anchor of our soul is Jesus Christ.

He is greater. So we have seen throughout this book the greatness of Jesus and what he offers. And here we come to Hebrews 4, verses 1 through 13, and we see an invitation to a greater rest. An invitation to a greater rest. Now, we know that when the book of Hebrews was written, it was written in letter form. As a matter of fact, every book we read in the New Testament was written in letter form.

It was a letter written from an individual to a group or an individual person. And thus, it was not written with chapter and verse breaks, right? It was written just the same way you would write a letter. It was written to be read in its entirety from beginning to end at one sitting.

[ 8 : 03 ] It was not written to be read as we read through it in bits and portion pieces. But we understand the depth of scripture that you can read it in one sitting, and then you can pause and

read it verse by verse.

God can speak to you in a magnificent way. But the author here ties everything together as it should be. So we cannot properly understand what we find in Hebrews 4, verses 1 through 13, and subtract it or remove it from what preceded it in Hebrews chapter 3.

And if you remember in Hebrews chapter 3, the author is using the nation of Israel and their wilderness wandering as an example of disobedience. He poised to them in the wilderness, and this is why it is recorded.

You know what's amazing? I love the book of Hebrews. Because in the book of Hebrews, I love all the scripture, by the way, but when we read on throughout the book of Hebrews, we will find people mentioned in Hebrews that seem to just have a random mentioning in the Old Testament.

We say, why in the world were they even introduced? Like, if you ever ask yourself, why did Abraham have to meet Melchizedek on his way back from slaughtering all those kings? And where did Melchizedek come from?

[ 9 : 06 ] And why does Melchizedek just show up out of nowhere? And why did Abraham give Melchizedek a tenth of his foal? I'm sure you wondered that, right? And when you read the Old Testament, you say, where did this man come from?

And what made Abraham pay him ten percent of his foal? Well, the answer to that, found in the book of Hebrews, is because Melchizedek's pointing to someone other than himself. He is pointing to Jesus.

So we see these fulfillments, right? And we see here, why did the nation of Israel rebel? Why did they wonder? Why did they spend so long? You know, it took God. We're going through the book of Numbers on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, right?

Those of you that are with me, we're going through. And Numbers is the English, or what we would say, the modern day name of the book. And we get it from the numbering of God's people. The censuses were taken.

It's actually the reason why so many people open the book of Numbers and go, well, I'm not reading that because they're just counting people in the first few chapters. But the Hebrew title for the book of Numbers was In the Wilderness.

[ 10 : 05 ] Because the book of Numbers tells us what happens in the wilderness. And it tells us about their rebellion and their rejection and their disobedience and all those things. Why did that happen? Well, the New Testament answers that because it is an example for us.

And the example that the author of Hebrews gives us in Hebrews chapter 3 and continues it on into Hebrews chapter 4 is this. It is quite possible for God to do a miraculous work in your midst.

It is quite possible for you to see Him daily provide for you. It is quite possible to have all the intelligent, you know, saying yes, yes, yes, all the faculties of the mind that say, yes, God has provided because every day they walked out, there's man on the ground.

They saw the Red Sea part. They saw water come out of the rock. Not once, but twice. They saw quail come out of nowhere enough to make them sick. They saw the serpents come and then they could look at the bronze serpent and all of a sudden they were healed if they were bitten.

All these things, they saw it in their mind. And they could say, yes, these things really happened.

But it is quite possible to have all the mental faculties involved and to go, yes, yes, yes, and never really accept it in your heart and believe it by faith.

[ 11 : 16 ] Because it says in Hebrews 3, the problem was not a mental problem. They knew God was providing. The problem was they never believed it in their hearts. And they failed to enter in because of disbelief, not because of disproof.

Disbelief. And now we carry that theme into Hebrews 4, verses 1 through 13, because of their example, of their example, there remains a rest to be offered.

There remains this invitation to a greater rest. And we'll work out which type of rest this is. Well, let's just go ahead and state it.

This rest is not our rest. It is not man's rest. It is his, with a capital H. That is God's rest. It is the rest he enjoys.

It is the rest that Jesus invites us to, where he says, come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and take my yoke upon you, and I will give you rest. Because he says, it's in me.

[ 12 : 20 ] It's not in me, right? And the invitation is not where you can find ease and where you can find comfort and where you can find peace. It is where you can live in his rest, his peace, his

comfort, his cessation from all work.

And we'll get to that in just a moment. But it is an invitation to a greater rest. This world says, you can rest and take it easy when you have done blank this.

I remember my great-grandmother. My great-grandmother passed away at age 96. Mammal Bush was her name. She's a little bitty lady.

Very, very little bitty lady. Petite lady. She was legally blind. Couldn't see for my entire life. I never knew her to a point where she could see. She had lived most of her life around Cocoa Beach, Florida, or around Orlando, Florida.

She had lived places where it was hot. So when she moved up here, right before Carrie and I got married, her and my great-grandfather moved up here. And she used to keep her house roasting at about 98 degrees.

[13:19] So I didn't much like going over there. Carrie loved going over there. But Mammal never went to the hospital. Her whole life, she never went to the hospital. Never spent any time in the hospital until two weeks before she died. It's the only time she'd ever stayed the night in the hospital.

I mean, this is my grandmother who had lost a sibling crossing the Appalachian Mountains in a covered wagon, right? She never, she was tough as nails. And I remember she told us one time, she said, well, I beat the system.

I said, what do you mean, Mammal? She said, I've been retired longer than I worked. So I beat the system. They've paid me more in retirement than I paid them while working. So that's pretty good. She was taking it easy. She was resting a little bit, you know. But this world will always tell you, you can rest when you do this. But what Jesus is offering us here, and what God's invitation is, here's a rest you can enjoy now and for all of eternity.

It is an invitation to a greater rest that begins immediately. We see, first and foremost, there is a word of caution. There is a word of caution.

[14:23] The author says, therefore, since we have the example of the Hebrew people seeing what God had done, of the Hebrew people agreeing that God was doing miraculous deeds among them, of the Hebrew people seeing God physically provide for them and still did not accept it in their heart.

Therefore, let us fear if. Let's just stop right there. Therefore, let us fear if. Now, all throughout the scripture, and so many times you've said over 365 days, 365 times the Bible says fear not.

People say, well, that's going for every day. And the Bible tells you not to fear, not to fear, not to fear. Over and over again, the Bible tells us not to fear. It says, don't fear about tomorrow. Don't worry about tomorrow. Don't fear if you don't have any money.

And you say, well, wait a minute. The world takes money, right? But the Bible says don't worry about that because all the lilies are taken care of and the birds are taken care of. Don't fear about your hair falling out, even though that seems to be a point of concern every now and then.

Don't fear those who can hurt you. Don't fear those who can kill you. Over and over and over and over and over again. The Bible tells us not to live in a spirit of fear. But do you know there is one thing the Bible says you should fear?

[15:29] And that one thing is you should absolutely fear where you stand with the holy God. Do not fear him who can kill the body, but rather fear him who can kill the body and the soul.

Therefore, let us fear. Now, this fear is not a shaking in my boots type of fear. This fear is a holy reverence. It is a pause of caution. It is a pause and a call to attention.

Because the reality in Scripture is that if we live in this fear, then all those other fears will take care of themselves. If we have addressed this fear, all those other fears are removed.

Because if I do not fear where I stand with the holy God, or if I take time to pause and take stock of where I stand with the holy God, then every other fear is removed.

Because if I am accepted in his sight, then so what if this world gets rid of me? I am welcomed in his presence. As a matter of fact, the reason I believe so many people fear secondary issues is because they have never addressed the fear of the primary issue.

[16:45] The leading fear is the fear of death. And I get that. I acknowledge that. And I used to lie awake every single night being afraid of dying. I remember when Carrie and I got married. We were very young when we got married. And the first couple years of our marriage, I would lie awake every single night.

Scared to death. What if something happened to me? What if something happened to me? I don't know. Maybe it was God putting something inside of me. Because Carrie says any time that anybody works with me, they're taking their life in their own hands. Because maybe I'm a little bit of a risk taker.

Maybe I'm a little bit, woo, throw it to the wind and just go whatever. So maybe that was kind of, I knew that I wasn't the most cautious individual. That I could sometime hurt myself. But there was always this fear, what if something happens to me?

What if something happens to me? But the Bible says that we shouldn't live with that fear, right? So, and I remember when I addressed the root fear that was where I was standing with the Holy God. And the moment I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, that fear was gone.

Removed. I mean, I would lie awake every single night. And I've told you that story that the Bible says in the book of Proverbs that the sleep of the righteous is sweet. It is sweet.

[17:44] Because the Bible says that one word of caution we have is, Therefore, let us fear, if while a promise remains of entering his rest, look at this, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

By the way, this word of caution is not given like, yeah, I need to let my neighbor know this. This is if any one of you, that includes me, let us fear, lest any one of you seem to have come short of it.

The caution is this. Paul would word it this way. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. That doesn't mean, again, to be scared to death of fear and trembling, but to be careful. Paul says that I discipline my body. I box as if not beating the air. I want to get right, but lest I preach to others and fall short. Paul says I'm constantly looking at my life and making sure it doesn't seem as if I'm going to fall short of it.

I'm living in this reverential fear of the reality that there is coming a day where I will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And Paul says, therefore, I'm going to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling and persuade other people to do the same.

[18:53] The author of Hebrews says, let us fear, if while that promise remains, any of us would seem to have come short of it. And you say, well, what do I do?

We look at ourselves and we're constantly examining ourselves and we're opening ourselves up saying, oh, God, is this me? Because what it says here in verse 2, look at this. This is the word of caution. Because many of us dismiss this fear and say, well, I do this and I do that and I do this and I got that and, you know, I'm all this part.

But look at what it says. For indeed, we have had good news preached to us. It says, for indeed, we have had good news preached to us. Well, okay, well, so if I attend the right church and I hear the right messages or I listen to enough good preaching, I'm okay, right?

Well, look at what it says. We have had good news preached to us just as they also. I mean, who had better news preached to them than the Jewish people leaving Egypt where Moses says, God's going to set you free.

I am that I am. It's appeared to me that he's going to set you free. Oh, that's great news. I believe it when I see it. And then all of a sudden, they're plundering the Egyptians and they're walking across the Red Sea. And Moses says, see, I told you, he took note of you.

[19:54] He's going to provide for you. Well, yeah, I believe it when I see it. And over and over and over again, they hear the good news. Moses walks before him and says, God's heard that you want meat. He's going to provide you meat. Yeah, I'll believe it when I see it. All of a sudden, the wind blows and meat shows up.

They had good news preached to them over and over and over and over and over again. If you come back tonight, if we don't have a lot of questions, we'll end up in Numbers 13 and we'll see where God told them to go into the promised land for I have given you this land.

Let me go ahead and just kind of give you a forerunner. That was good news, right? Go look at the land I'm giving you. Guess what? They didn't believe it. I don't mean to be a spoiler here, but they didn't believe it.

They had good news preached to them. But the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

So let's go ahead and just say it here and let's say it clearly. It really doesn't matter how much good Bible doctrine you hear. It really doesn't matter how much we say it quite often that the need of the day is for great, true, biblical preaching.

[ 20 : 59 ] And with that, I would answer an emphatic yes. But accurate, true preaching is not enough. Because it is absolutely true and it is absolutely possible for individuals to hear the word accurately divided, to hear the word accurately told and not benefit from it.

You know there is no benefit whatsoever in just hearing the Bible? Other than making yourself more accountable to what it's been said?

Because what does it say? It did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Do you want to know where the Bible begins to profit?

It's when you hear what is the truth of Scripture. Not what Billy Joe says, not what any other pastor says. But when you hear the truth and you determine that by faith you're going to live out that truth and you're going to unite that truth with faith in your life, then it is profitable.

Until then, it is judgment. Because to whom much has been entrusted, much will be expected.

When we hear the truth, yes, amen, that's absolutely true.

[ 22 : 26 ] Preach it, pastor. Yes, I love these things. But if we do not unite that by faith, we do not unite that in our lives, then it has no profit whatsoever to us.

I've shared this with you many times. You have to be very, very cautious in attending our higher institutions of learning. You young men who have graduated high school and the number that will come behind them, when you're choosing your course curriculums at school, there are some things that seem to be accurate.

And you say, oh, this is a class on the Bible. I'd love to take a class on the Bible. And the sad reality is, is that most of our mainline universities have Bible professors who are non-believers.

Because they can teach the Bible as a historical document, and they are absolutely content with that, but they have no uniting of faith in their lives to live it out. I've read books by these individuals. They are agnostics, at best, atheists at worst. Agnostics saying, well, I can't tell you if there is a God or not. An atheist denies the existence of God. But yet they can sit and teach at doctorate levels the Bible as a historical document.

[ 23 : 37 ] Why? Because the Word can profit nothing if not united by faith in those who hear it. Here is the word of caution. Make sure. Make sure.

That the truth we hear is united by faith in our life. For we, it says in verse 3, For we who have believed enter that rest.

A word of caution. Number two. Not only is there a word of caution, there is a window of opportunity. You say, well, that's fine. So the more truth I hear, the more I'll begin to make this decision.

You need to understand this. There is but a window of opportunity. Because look at what it says. We who have believed have entered that rest. Just as he said, as I swore my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

Although his words were finished from the foundation of the world. For he said somewhere concerning the seventh day, and God rested on the seventh day from all his works. That's in Genesis, right? So let's just stop right here and answer this question.

[ 24 : 36 ] Because this is a great biblical question. And I can sense from you this morning that you are willing and ready to think deeply about the things of Scripture. And I know you're so excited about this because this is good stuff, right?

Because Bible scholars will tell you that on the seventh day, not Bible scholars will tell you. Some may say, and some may say this. And since you're going to check my text out, I want to make sure that we're all in the same agreement here. And we need to be saying the same thing.

Because the question before us is, God rested on the seventh day. God saw what he created. And behold, it was very good. When he created man, he said, and behold, it was very good. And on the seventh day, God rested.

And the wording in the original language is that God's work was finished. He rested. He stopped. Some Bible translators, Bible scholars will tell you that, well, then man fell. And at the fall of man, God had to pick up his work again.

That is the work of redemption. So God is offering here and extending here a rest after that. Now, I'm going to say that's not absolutely accurate because of these texts. I always want to let the Bible be that which justifies the Bible, right?

[ 25 : 35 ] You say, well, when man fell, God had to work towards the redemption of man. Yes, but don't think that God ever sat on the edge of history and was taken by surprise that man did this.

God is not confined to space and time.

The omniscience and the omnipotence of God. Omniscience means all presence, all powerful is omnipotence. Now, just stay with me. God does not see yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

He is above all those things. It is always a present today in God's mind. Okay? I know that seems kind of deep, but that's okay. Because if God does not know what's going to happen, then he is not God.

If God is ever taken by surprise, by anything, then he is not in control of everything. Therefore, he is not God. Right? So, I'm going to say that when God rested on the seventh day, that God's work was done.

And the reason I'm going to say that is because the Bible tells us that Jesus was the lamb that was slain. And, state this with me. Jesus was the lamb that was slain before the foundations of the world.

[ 26 : 41 ] What do you mean? Before God even created the heavens and the earth, and before he formed all the living creatures, and before he looked down and said, behold, it is good. The lamb was already slain. Yes. It also says your name was written in the lamb's book of life before the foundations of the world was laid.

So, he already knew. So, the salvific work that God had planned for you in your life is a work that is already accomplished. It is finished. When God stopped on the seventh day of creation, he really had already done everything necessary for man to be redeemed.

You say, well, when I read in the Bible, it says that there's this lineage. Right. But God had already done it. That's good news because all you do by faith is recognize and accept what God has already done on your behalf.

By faith, you are responding to what God has already done, not what you are hoping he will do. I want to say that again. By faith, when you turn to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are not hoping he will save you.

You are responding in faith that he has already saved you. And that's important because God's work is done. He has rested.

[ 27 : 54 ] And the invitation, he says, since my work is done, why don't you stop your work and enter into my rest? And when we accept Jesus Christ and our work is finished and we are entering into his rest, we know what man's work looks like.

Pick up Genesis 3 and read it from their own and see what the work of man looks like. It's toilsome and try some and by the sweat of the brow and there's thorns on the ground and all these things. Right. We know what that work looks like.

But God says his work is done. He's finished. He's rested. So here's the invitation. And this is what he says. In verse 5, again, the passage says, they shall not enter my rest.

Now look at verse 6. Therefore, since it remains for some to enter. Therefore, since it remains for some to enter and those who formerly had good news preached to them, that is the nation of Israel in the wilderness, failed to enter because of disobedience.

He again fixes a certain day. God says, okay, you didn't get it. So now I'm going to tell you when to enter that. We're looking at the window of opportunity. He again fixes a certain day.

[ 28 : 54 ] Today. Saying through David. You remember last week I told you the passages we were reading in Hebrews chapter 3 was from an unknown author in Psalm 95. Well, guess what the author of Hebrews does for us.

The author of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 4 tells us who wrote Psalm 95. Even though if you turn to the psalm and you open it up and it doesn't have the author ascribed to it, here it says that David wrote that.

And the word of God is always accurate. It says, he again fixes a certain day. Today. Saying through David. After so long a time as has been said before. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another day after that.

Now stay with me. If the promised land, if Canaan was the rest God was offering, then Joshua would have already given them that rest. Because Joshua, after the disobedience of those 20 years in old, and they died in the wilderness after 40 years of wilderness wandering.

And Moses dies. Joshua takes the nation of Israel and says, oh, well, they can stop from their work now. They can rest. That's not the rest God was talking about. God was talking about a spiritual

rest, an eternal rest, not a physical rest, not attaining a position in this world or in this life.

[ 29 : 58 ] Because after Joshua, many, many, many years after Joshua, David writes the psalm and says, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. So here is the window of opportunity, friend.

And if you don't hear anything else, I want you to hear this this morning. The only time you have to respond to the invitation of rest is today. Because there's no guarantee about tomorrow.

The only opportunity you have to respond to the rest he offers you is when you hear his voice calling out to you. And that is, as scripture says, today.

Today. Today. I think I've told you this before, but I'll tell you again because it's worth repeating. The Great Chicago Fire happened in the late 1800s, which wiped out a big portion of the city of Chicago. Displaced a number of people. Actually, forever changed what happened downtown Chicago. People started moving out to the suburbs. No longer were people living in the great vicinity of this great city.

[ 31 : 11 ] A number of people lost their lives. But on the night of the Chicago Fire, D.L. Moody was hosting a campaign. D.L. Moody.

Moody Church. It wasn't called Moody Church down there. It was Chicago Avenue Church at that time. Was there. And also, there was a big YMCA building. YMCA was huge at that time.

And they had just opened this new YMCA auditorium. And D.L. Moody had been one of the prominent fundraisers for the YMCA building because he was just a great fundraiser. He would go around and just raise funds to build these buildings for the kingdom.

And he was preaching to a huge crowd at this YMCA building. And he gave the gospel in all of its clarity. He spoke of the reality of man needing to repent of their sins and turn and trust in their hearts the work of Jesus Christ to forever give their lives to Jesus Christ so that they may have that rest of eternity.

And D.L. Moody had a habit at that time. And this was the very last day he did it. He told the congregation he got through. He said, listen, we're just going to close in prayer and I'm going to dismiss you. And I want you to go home.

[ 32 : 18 ] And I want you to think about the things that have been said tonight. I want you to think about where you stand before a holy God. I want you to think about who Jesus is in your life. And when we come back tomorrow, you're going to answer that question.

He dismissed the people, sent them out. He didn't even leave the YMCA bill. As a matter of fact, as he was dismissing them, they started hearing church bells ringing across the city. He prayed, sent everybody home.

He said, think about it. We'll talk about it tomorrow. And he sent them home. The bells kept ringing. So he asked Ira Sankey, who was his song leader, said, let's find out what these bells are about.

Well, they found out that the fire had started on the other side of Chicago. And that's where Moody Church was at. So he decided to go over there. Before he got to his house that night, which was on kind of the outskirts of Chicago, the whole city had been swept in flames.

His house had been burned. His kids were taken out. His wife was safe. But he stood there in the ashes of that great city and realized that thousands of people he had told to go home and think about it didn't make it home.

[ 33 : 28 ] Thousands of them died. And he had not given them the opportunity to respond. He pointed back to that the rest of his life, said, never again will I dismiss a crowd and tell them to go home and think about it.

Because the Bible says, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. I read of a lay pastor. A lay pastor who was preaching a funeral.

And he stood up and preached a funeral. He preached a very evangelistic message. Now, this is talking about a funeral that will catch attention. I can't remember exactly what church he was a part of, but it was a very sudden death, tragic death.

And he was preaching to this packed house in his funeral home. And this lay pastor stood up and he said, you never know when your day will come. You don't know your moment, your hour, or your time.

So make sure today you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior. The man closed his Bible, went and sat on the front pew, and died. That happened in the church where I pastored before, First Baptist Normandy, where a retired pastor who was teaching Sunday school class, taught Sunday school

class in the sanctuary, was teaching the great truth, prayed dismissal for his Sunday school class, sat on that corner, the first Baptist Normandy.

[ 35 : 00 ] He walked from the pulpit to that corner, had a massive heart attack, and died. You know what the Scripture says? You have a window of opportunity to accept that invitation of rest.

And this is not a scare tactic. This is a biblical tactic. Because the Bible says that opportunity is today. Today. It's the only chance we have to make sure that we're not falling short, to make sure that we're not going to come short of this risk, to make sure that we have responded by faith and belief in what the Scripture says.

To respond to that invitation, the only window of opportunity we have is today. Now, third and finally, and we'll close with this, and I know I've went over, but it won't take long. You say, well, then, Pastor, how can I know?

What is the way of assurance? What is the way of assurance? Look at what it says in verse 11. Therefore, let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall short through following the same example of disobedience.

Let us be diligent to enter that rest. That is, we need to make sure. Let us be diligent that we are entering that rest. How do you do it? And I'm not going to make my way through this too quickly, but I want you to see it in its clarity, and we'll be just as brief as we can.

[ 36 : 10 ] I appreciate your patience. Verses 12 and 13 are so familiar to us, to so many of us. But how can we be sure we enter that rest? For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and the spirit of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. How can you be assured that you're in His rest? Simply not based on what somebody tells you.

It's not based on what your mama or your daddy or your grandparents told you. It's not based on what you feel. It is what the Word of God says about you. The weight of the assurance is, am I entering into that rest through the way of the Word?

When I can open up my Bible, and sure, it convicts me, sure, it changes me, sure, it knows me, but when I can open up the Bible and say, oh God, show me where I stand with you. Look at what it says.

It says that this Bible judges the thoughts and the intentions of my heart. Which means, if all I'm doing is going through the motions, it's going to show me I'm going through the motions. If it's going to show me that my heart's not in it, it's going to show me.

[ 37 : 23 ] If my heart's really not in it, if all I'm doing is following God intellectually, I'm not really following Him from the very depths of my being, it's going to reveal it to me. It's going to show it to me, because it's going to convict me and make me so mad, I want to put it down, and it's going to bring such an uneasiness.

It says, but even then, I'll know where I stand. Let me put it on the other side. When I know that by faith I've entered into that rest, you know what this word does?

This word shows me where I fail. It shows me where I mess up on a daily basis. It shows me where I stumble. It shows me my faults. But it also reminds me that though you are yet sinner, I have died for you.

Over and over and over and over and over again, I open up this Bible and I find where I fall short. And over and over and over again, I open up this Bible and I find where He is more than sufficient. And I realize through opening up this word, that my heart dare not trust in my works.

My heart dare not trust in my being. My heart dare not trust in my efforts. But I'm going to rest in His completed work. So how do we find assurance?

[ 38 : 27 ] We judge ourselves not based on what other people say about us. People used to tell me I was a pretty good guy. I mean, pretty good guy. He's a good guy. He's a good guy. Being a good guy, I was being a good guy going straight to hell.

I'm just going to be honest with you. You know what we call Scripture in this completed task here. What you have, 66 books from Genesis to Revelation, is referred to theologically as the canon of Scripture.

It's the canon of the Bible. And I'm closing. You ever figured out why we call it a canon? It's not because we pointed to people and go boom, boom, boom. We don't hit them over the head with it,

right? It's not a canon because we're shooting firestorms at anybody. Canon comes from a Hebrew word which was derived out of a Latin word, which a Latin word was derived from this Hebrew word which literally means measuring rod.

What you have before you is the measuring rod of your life. How do you measure according to Scripture? God has given us 66 books to measure our life by.

I fall short at every book, but Jesus is more than sufficient. So I'm trusting Him by faith. Because look at what it says. I go to His word because it says no creature is hidden from His sight.

[ 39 : 47 ] And all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Friend, listen to me. In that great and final day, you'll have nothing to do with me. I won't judge you.

I'll be judged on what I did for you. I'll be held accountable. From what I understand in Scripture, you're not going to be held accountable for me, right? But I will be judged on my accountability because God has called me and put me in this position.

So therefore, I'm held accountable for the things I tell you. But you will have nothing to do with me.

There is but one with whom you will have to do. And in this book, all things of our lives are open and laid bare to Him.

So where do you stand in relation to the book? To the canon? To the measuring line of your life? Do you want to find assurance? You find it here. Now friend, I'm going to tell you.

I'm not one much on altar invitations. But I am one on it. If God's putting it on your heart, and I remember, I used to put fingerprint marks in the back pew back there whenever I was young.

[ 40 : 51 ] And you know, I've seen a lot of pews. If you go in these old churches, it seems like the second pew from the back is always raw on the top because that's where the people who didn't want to respond stood forever and just held on to the back of that pew.

You can go right up the road and see that one just like that. But you know you only have one opportunity. Maybe God's calling you. Maybe you are.

Maybe you do know you have peace that passes understanding. Maybe you realize you are His child. But God calls us each and every day. Maybe He's calling you to something else. Maybe He's calling you to a service. Maybe He's calling you to recommit.

Maybe He's calling you to surrender an aspect of your life. Why not come and just bring it to the altar? Let someone pray with you. Let someone encourage you.

Why don't you stop working and trust in His work? Because that's His invitation. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you. I thank you for this day. I thank you for this opportunity.

[ 41 : 50 ] And Lord, you've given us today. God, I know there's much celebration that's going to take place in just a little bit. We'll be eating a meal together, fellowshiping together, rejoicing together. But Lord, may we take these next few moments and say, search me, oh God.

Lord, may you work in me. Lord, may I fear, lest I seem to fall short of the promises you have given to me.

For may each one of us not look around, but look within. And may we respond to what your Spirit places upon our hearts. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 44 : 40 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen.