**“Rest”**

Psalm 95

# Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

Hebrews 4:1-13

Mark 10:23-31

Pentecost 21, Oct. 16/17, 2021

From Hebrews, chapter 4: “So then, there remains a **Sabbath rest** for the people of God, for whoever has **entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from His**.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

**I’m** discovering that I may have (what they call) sleep **apnea**. I don’t (apparently) **rest** through the night as well as I should, so probably **neither does my wife**. I’m about to get **tested for it** so then hopefully some “fix” will happen since it’s my doctor says it is a potentially serious issue. Among things **jeopardized** by **unrestful** sleep is the heart and, so, what the heart can handle in days where **it’s** insufficiently rested. Plus, **my wife’s rest** absolutely gets interrupted (and many times throughout the night) by my irregular snoring (or the catching of my breath, stopping breathing for a bit periodically).

**Others** (beyond having **rest** challenged that way) get **rest-inhibited other ways**. Some can’t quite **quiet-down their thinking of the cares of their daytime** so as to, then, **let their mind rest enough** to **allow their** **body some rest**. Those **retired** (and in the supposed **resting years after careers of work**) can have other things unrestful. Some can, simply, change jobs in retirement (still working hard) or many stress over kids and grandkids and health issues, so even the retired don’t find **enough** **rest** in their **presumed resting years**. And **hectic schedules before retirement** (with its **stresses both allowed and accepted**) makes restfulness illusive. Even **vacations** aren’t **restful** till since (shortly after starting one) we begin **thinking about how they’re almost over-with**.

**Text**

But **“rest”, “rest”, “rest”, “rest”, “rest”** is all that you hear from Hebrews Epistle. **Ten times** the verses **demand of us what the world can’t (by much of any means) provide**. There was a time where **I** used to “sleep like a baby”. And we’re all familiar with the beauty of a **sleeping infant** … and remember that we’re (here) in close context to the Gospel account of Jesus blessing children and saying that “whoever doesn’t receive the kingdom of God **like a child (in other words, also able to rest)** shall not enter it”. The **connection between peaceful sleep in children and God’s kingdom** must be noteworthy. And Hebrews 4:1-13 is a commentary on the 95th Psalm that we began the service with, and that’s all about Godly “rest”: “Oh come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!”, all of which infants do far better than adult or, even, teens. “Do not **harden your hearts**, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness. Therefore God swore in His wrath” over us who are growing less childlike and unrestful, “‘**they shall not enter my rest**.’” I always know the newest and freshest baby barely dried off from the waters of baptism’s promise, touching of God in that **Divine action**) the purest among us, (the **most AT REST**) not, yet, **rebelling against it, grumbling and complain against God** which **removes the rest that baptism grants. A child receiving God’s rest ALWAYS RESTS BEST**, which was Jesus’ point.

Young **Mark** wanted to **remember that rest**. Chapter 10 in the Gospel he wrote is his **self-testimony** (he likely the young rich man who we heard of last weekend who was **self-sufficient** and **self-righteous** yet **unable to rest**, missing what he knows has to be the **MORE** **of this life onto the next: “eternal life” and “how can he could know he has it**”. **“TRUSTING ME INSTEAD OF YOUR OWN SO-CALLED STRENGTHS” Jesus answered**. And **Mark “went away from Him disheartened and sorrowful, for he had” (and counted as way too much) “great possessions”**. …..

But there’s an **ending to Mark’s testimony**. Here he leaves the account for the yet then returns **evident** on the “night the Lord was betrayed”, there in an upper room probably serving the Meal that was to be the Lord’s Supper (Jesus giving with the elements of bread and wine His body and blood, given and shed that next day on a cross. Mark helped serve the Meal in (what was probably) his well-to-do house, then **followed Him** **to and through the entire Passion**, **him** **the boy in Gethsemane’s Garden** who ran away scared and without clothes when guards grabbed him also, but probably **returning to watching all that would happen** (the whippings and crucifixion he could account **later**), and then all the **results of the resurrection (again a few of those in his “locked” upper room of his house, then “selling all that he had for a treasure in heaven and following Jesus**” to a mission with Paul and Barnabas. Mark, the “rich young self-reliant man” God **made to** **REST and enjoy (even through challenge) in the kingdom of God**.

**How** **did this happen?** Perhaps Jesus’ teaching on the **justification-offer** to rich men like Mark best answers it: a “camel” that **Jesus said Mark was** (probably an elephant had the disciples **that** frame of reference, but camel being the biggest animal they knew, “camel” it was), **Mark was that trying to “enter God’s rest (if he would) through the eye of a needle”**.

## Application

**You and I** were “camels” who were offered the “eye of a needle” to traverse and, there, gain **rest that really IS rest**. **Our** only hope got expressed by the disciples in the smartest question that they ever asked: “who, then, can be saved?” Now I’ve heard people say that God **makes available** salvation and a repentance that **we can decide upon for ourselves** (we **can accomplish the task**). And I’ve heard people say that faith is an **act of man** (gift **to God** as if **we can offer it**). **Mark** **offered to God** the **good acts of (technical) commandment obedience** thinking this would be thought by Jesus **commendable**, yet “**lacked**” (Jesus said) what could only **be possible if we “camels” could “get through the eye of a needle”** …

… and while we can’t, ourselves, **get** through that needle’s eye, Jesus said we can **be GOTTEN through it**. The amazing thing is that “with man it’s impossible, but not with God, For **ALL THINGS (THIS THING)** is possible with God”. “**Grace**” (the undeserved favor since it can **only be GIFTED FROM GOD … IS GUIFTED BY GOD**), **IT’S** “**amazing**” for **that reason**: because it **ANSWERS** the disciples question: (“who **can** be saved?, with man it’s impossible, but **not with God**, for **ALL THINGS / THAT THING / SALVATION** **is** **possible with God**. …..

Spring Hill’s florist shop had (as its newest saying on their sign) something again fun and cute. It said (and listen closely): “There are only **three** types of people in this world: those who are good at math and those who are not”. …. Well, there **ARE, LITERALLY** only “three” types of people in this world: those “camels” (who are the self-sufficient, self-built and proud of it but not interested or needful of depending upon God entirely, or in despair, sensing that there’s **SOMETHING** **they’re MISSING IN SAVING SECURITY**) and those “camels” who’ve **BEEN** **dragged** **through the eye of a needle (the cross of Christ and IT’S effect)**, offered and given, secured through that tiniest of channels (**ASCRIBED SUCCESS IN THAT** by the Holy Spirit’s re-creating of them by their hearing of the Gospel received as **FOR THEM** by the sacrifice **BAPTIZED INTO THEM**). Baptized believers are ones who’ve been **pulled through what men (or us men) can’t and couldn’t accomplish ourselves and yet God accomplished it for us**. “**REST**” is **THAT FACT**. Not a **feeling** or an ever-**human decision**, but a **statement by God** (a **PROMISE**) that **“YOU ARE THE WORLD HE SENT HIS SON TO DIE FOR SO AS TO SAVE”,** **ALL “BAPTIZED ARE BAPTIZED INTO THAT SACRIFICE / THAT DEATH / THAT CRUCIFIXION / BURIED WITH CHRIST SO THAT, JUST AS ‘HE WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, WE TOO [ALL OF US CAMELS, BUT BAPTIZED AND BELIEVING CAMELS] MIGHT WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE … FOR, CERTAINLY, IF WE HAVE BEEN UNITED WITH HIM IN A DEATH LIKE HIS, WE ‘SHALL OF COURSE’ BE UNITED WITH HIM IN A RESURRECTION LIKE HIS”**. …. Let’s pray:

“Father, **REMIND US of this fact** **by the preaching of Your Word always for our listening-to (Christ crucified and Him raised FOR US)**. May we **know** and **never forget** that **You** ‘**are** the great God and King above all gods”. May **we be ones, then, who with regularity and consistency** “come into Your presence with thanksgiving, making a joyful noise to You with songs of praise!’ In +Jesus’ name. Amen.”