

Hebrews 4:9-13

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account

Dear brothers and sister together with Christ in God's family. Amen

Are all of you getting enough sleep? That seems to be the question that everyone asks. Maybe the question needs to be how much is the right amount to sleep? I went to the trusted old Internet and found the Mayo Clinic's website and it said:

- 3-5 year olds need 10 to 13 hours of sleep.
- 6-13 year olds need 9 to 11 hours of sleep.
- 14-17 year olds need 8 to 10 hours of sleep.
- 17-? Adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep.

With those guidelines in our minds, how many of you are getting enough sleep? People say it over and over again, I am always tired. They are quick to point out that they never feel rested. People say they have trouble sleeping at night. We have a nation of people who are getting too little sleep. Maybe you could say we are a nation that doesn't know what true rest and peace is.

Well everything I've been saying up to this point has been talking about physical rest. But let me ask the more important question, How many of you are getting enough spiritual rest? To answer this question, I couldn't google the Mayo Clinic's website to find out the recommended amount of spiritual rest we need each day. So what is the correct answer and do you feel you are getting enough spiritual rest each day? The real question is what are God's recommendations for the right amount of Spiritual rest? I bet I am safe in saying that most of us would say that we are spiritually rested like we need to be, or are we? It is with those words in mind that the writer to the Hebrews gives us some wonderful words to encourage us. The writer plainly and clearly tells what it means for us to have true peace and rest. The writer to the Hebrews gives us some wonderful words to remind us using the picture of the Old Testament Sabbath rest and then guides us where to find this true peace and rest in God's Word. To guide our discussion today our theme will take the form of a question:

Sermon Theme: Where Can We Find True Peace?

- 1. In God's rest**
- 2. In God's Word**

The writer to the Hebrews, as we said last week, likes to use comparisons to help his readers understand God's wonderful truths. That would be the same for us today. God tells us in our text today that there is a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the Jewish Christians hearing these words written 2000 years ago, they would immediately know what the words about God's Sabbath rest means. They knew that the Sabbath day was a physical day of rest and that they were make every effort to enter that rest. Listen again to these words, **“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.”** Why would they understand these words? Because they were Jewish Christians who knew of the Old Testament regulations that God had set up for the Old Testament Israelites concerning their worship life. They knew that the 7th day was a day of rest. They knew they were not supposed to work because God had commanded it. The writer of the book of Hebrews reminds us that the New Testament Christians have a similar rest.

It is pretty clear that we as New Testament Christians do not have to worship on the 7th day or rest on the 7th day, but we are able to worship and receive spiritual rest on any day. Does that make sense? Just think for minute what this day of rest is for us today. What is our day of worship? What is our day of spiritual rest? To a New Testament Christian, the day of rest or spiritual rest is any day that we can come and hear God's Word. Spiritual rest is coming to Church on Sunday morning. Spiritual rest is coming to Church on Thursday evening. Spiritual rest is coming to adult Bible class on Sunday morning, Thursday morning or any other time it is offered. Spiritual rest for our children is coming to Sunday school to hear and learn God's wonderful plan of salvation. Spiritual rest is coming to our Trinity-St. Luke's school to hear God's Word as all things are taught in the light of God's Word. Spiritual rest is opening our Bibles over and over so that we see and experience that Jesus is our Savior and his forgiveness is given to us as a gift. In its simplest form, spiritual rest is believing through our hearts of faith that we are saved by grace alone, faith alone through scripture alone.

For anybody who exercises, the idea of rest is real important. If you run or bike or partake in any other form of exercise, you know that you need rest to regain your strength. Even the person who runs a marathon can't run multiple marathons all in a row. They need rest. Even the best swimmer needs rest. Even the best football player needs rest. Even the strongest Christian needs rest! Even if you have been a Christian who comes every Sunday to church, you need rest. Even someone who's been a Christian for 100 years needs rest. And what is that this rest bring? It is Jesus' precious saving Gospel found in Jesus. It brings true peace. It brings to a rest for a sinful soul. It brings true forgiveness to hearts that are by nature lost and condemned.

What does this Sabbath day rest mean to you? Is Sunday or any other day of worship your most important day? What are you doing to get ready for your Sabbath rest? Do you spend time before church getting your hearts ready? Do you go to bed earlier on Saturday night so your heart and mind is ready to hear Gods Word? Do you talk about the importance of this Sabbath rest with your kids at home? Do you show how important Sunday School, Bible Class and Bible Study is for all of us by your words and actions? Is it a priority to have Bible study or devotion at home? Is it important to let others know how God is important to you? All too often we spend lots of time chasing after many other things and spiritual rest takes a backseat. What is the biggest barrier to enjoying God spiritual rest? Is it being too busy? Is it being too lazy? Is it in difference? Is the fact that we've heard it too many times before? Is it that we don't think it's all that important to have God's spiritual rest?

2. In God's Word

In the middle of all this world of little to no peace and worldly unrest, God tells us exactly where to find his true rest. **“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”** ¹³ **Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”** Did you catch all of that? The Word of God is living and active. It penetrates. It judges. It uncovers

God has given us his Word and how many of us truly appreciate his Word? Do you think of God's Word as actually the words of our Almighty God? Do you think of God's Word as living and working each and every day in our hearts in life? Do you really think that God's Word has the power to change not only our heart but give us the strength to live to serve God in true peace and rest? Do we actually believe that God's Word gives us true rest and that it penetrates to the very inner parts of our hearts and our lives?

All too often we seem to be going just through the motions. We attend church fairly regularly. We open our Bibles occasionally. We send our kids to our Lutheran Grade School. We get are children to Sunday School most of the time. We open our Bibles at home at time, especially during difficult times. And yet as we stand before our heavenly Father what would we truthfully tell God about how we have used his most precious tool of rest – his holy Word?

God's Word is the one thing in our lives that never changes. It is the one tool that is able to open our sinful heart and pour the peace of God's forgiveness into our sinful hearts. It is sharper than a double edge sword and penetrates our hearts even to the point of dividing the soul and spirit. Do you truly grasp what the writer of the Hebrews is reminding us of? What does God's law find when it looks into the deepest parts of our heart? What does God's law see when it looks into the deepest corners of our minds? What does God's law find when it turns on its “little camera” to watch the things that go on in our sinful lives? God's Word is penetrating and it sees and uncovers. It opens every corner of our heart or soul in our lives and finds our every condemning sin – and much to our amazement that actually is good.

I can see some already recognizing what this rest is all about. It is the moment that the law opens our hearts of sin and it also opens our hearts to know what true rest is for that sinful heart. The same Word of God which penetrates to the deepest parts of our heart to condemn also penetrates with the wonderful soothing anointment of Jesus' Gospel which heals our wounded hearts. Why do we come to church? Why do we read our Bibles? Why we send our children to Sunday school or our TSL Grade School? Why do we open our Bibles? The answer is simple. It is to see and witness again and again what a sinner I am. The reason we do these things is to surround our sinful selves with the power, peace and love of God's saving gospel. God's rest is given for free. God's rest does not have to be earned, and it certainly is not deserved. This rest is given to us by God's saving Word which we can use anytime and in any place and for anyone.

As I started at the beginning, I asked how many hours of sleep do you need to be rested? I know that it varies by age and each person is a little different. But the real answer is that God created us to need rest and lots of it. How much rest we need for our sinful souls? The answer is more than we can ever imagine. The answer is that we need God's rest as often as possible. As we look around today how many of us are spiritually truly rested? This is hard to answer at times because we can't look in the hearts. This

rest is between you and your God. By faith we realize that we are well rested and ready to serve our heavenly Father in love and thanks. As a church, we are here to work together to bring true peace and rest -- not only to the people of St. Luke's but also to the people of Watertown, and to the people of the USA and to the people around the world. Every soul needs to know rest and this rest needs to be more than just one day a week for one hour a week or when it's convenient. This rest needs to be every day – all the time since we sin all the time and need God's forgiveness all the time.

So as we sit here today, what a blessing to hear God's Word. What a blessing to have a Christian school to send our children to where they can hear this true rest from the smallest child all the way through eighth grade. What a blessing to have our Luther Prep and Lakeside Lutheran High Schools with all their Christian teachers and Christian staff and Christian friends bringing rest for our young people. What a blessing to have a Sunday School with its faithful teachers teaching the truth of God's rest to our smallest lambs. What a blessing to have a Synod which teaches the truth of God's Word in all of its truth and purity and is willing to share it with the world around us. What a joy to know what spiritual rest is and enjoy it both in our hearts and in our lives. May God bless you and keep you strong in your faith until we enjoy the true peace that comes when we enter our eternal rest in heaven. Amen