**I Want It**

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Pastor Moses Khan

**Scriptures**

Hebrews 4; John 5:1-17

**Hebrews 4**

The letter of Hebrews is intended to remind the original audience, and us today, that what we have in Jesus is far superior, greater, and better compared to the old convent that Israel had.

**Spiritual Rest**

**Ancient Israel**

* God rescued them from slavery and Pharoah but because of their unbelief and disobedience they did not enter the promised land
* What was available to them was given to the next generation
* They heard the word, but it did not benefit them (Hebrews 4:2)
* This means hearing is not enough
* Their hearing lacked faith
* They had witnessed God perform miracles and experienced the rescue from Pharoah so all that was required at this point was to continue to trust God through the wilderness to the promised land.
* They were where God wanted them to be, but they were not who God wanted them to be.
* They were on their way to the promised land, but they became people who grumbled and complained and did not trust that God could pull this through
* They were in the right place but were becoming the wrong people.

**2Samuel 6:1-7**

* David retrieved the ark, but he did not follow God’s instructions
* The ark was supposed to be carried in a specific way and by specific people
* The instructions were clear—it was to be carried by the Levites using poles
* David decided to have the ark carried by oxen without the poles.
* As they are celebrating the return of the ark, a bump in the road caused the oxen to stumble and Uzzah reached out to steady the ark, but the ark was not to be touch (hence the poles) and therefore, Uzzah died.
* Catch the overall picture—they are having a parade and functioning outside of God’s design, but they are having a blast and people are dying.
* They are having a parade and people are dying; they are having church and people are dying. They have dead joy and dead peace.
* They are where God wants them to be (with the ark) but they are not who God wanted them to be
* They are not trusting that His ways are better.

If we are not careful, we will permit our experience to inform our theology rather than allow our theology to inform our experience. The result is that we will see God based on our circumstances rather than seeing our circumstances in light of who God is. An example of this is Moses; he allowed his anger to get the best of him as he grew more irritated. He was asked to strike the rock once for water, but in his anger, he struck it twice and he was restricted from going into the promised land.

**Hebrew Audience**

* The writer of Hebrews encourages his readers not to follow in the footsteps of ancient Israel
* They missed the lesser rest – do not miss the greater rest found in Jesus
* Their rest was the promised land – our rest is Jesus—our relationship with Jesus
* Our rest is greater because it transcends time and space
* This spiritual rest is not just a good nap—it is becoming whole in Christ, functioning without anxiety, fear, and unbelief and it is becoming who God has created us to be in Jesus.
* This rest is still available today.

**The Response**

* The writer of Hebrews tells us to “strive to enter the rest” because we have a high priest, Jesus, who understands our weaknesses.
* So, we can come with confidence to the Throne of Grace
* The supply of grace is unrestricted, the only condition is our willingness to receive it. The question is: Do we want it?

**John 5**

* Jesus asked the infirm man of 38 years, “Do you want to be healed?”
* The man gave Jesus excuses, but Jesus ignored his excuses and told him to, “Get up, take your bed, and walk”.
* Jesus ignored the man’s lack of faith!

**The Sabbath**

* The Pharisees noticed a man walking with his bed and were frustrated because under the law an individual was not permitted to carry a load on the sabbath—the law required rest not work.
* The irony is that this man was not working; he was walking in his rest that Jesus provided. Work was what he was doing for 38 years trying to get to the pool for his miracle.
* I would argue that this man, for the first time in his life, was resting from his work.

**Conclusion**

* Jesus stands at the middle of all of this; and His grace is visible
* We are told that there is a porch, and the porch is held up by five pillars
* Five is the number of grace
* The place is called Bethesda – this word means “house of mercy”
* Mercy and grace!

**Hebrews 4:16**

Let us then, with confidence, draw near to the Throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.