

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI



SIX-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Enter the Rest:

Living and Working Inside a Finished Work

HEBREWS 4:1 (NIV)

“Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.”

Based on the Sunday message by Dr. Stan Archie

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DAY ONE

“I HATE ADULTING”: THE REST YOU DIDN’T KNOW YOU WERE IN

SCRIPTURE READING

HEBREWS 4:1–2 (NIV)

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie opened with the anthem of a whole generation: “I hate adulting.” He named the irony in it. These are the same young people who, back in the house, bragged about how well they would do if somebody would just get out of their way — if they did not have to follow mama’s rules, if they just had enough freedom. They were certain the house was holding them back. What they could not see is that they were not being held back at all. They were resting. There were still chores and curfews, but every one of them sat inside a structure somebody else had already paid for and finished. Most never knew it was rest until the rest was over.

That is the doorway into Hebrews 4. Nearly every time we hear the word rest, our minds go straight to stopping — a nap, a day off, an empty calendar. But this chapter is not a conversation about doing or not doing. It is about location. There is a rest and there is an outside of it, and the only question is which side of that door you intend to live on. God’s rest is living and working under His authority, inside a work He has already finished.

Think of moving into a house you did not build. Somebody else poured the foundation, pulled the permits, and handed you the keys. Moving in does not mean you never lift another finger — you cook, you clean, you raise children, you repair. But everything happens inside a completed design, and the wise resident works with that design rather than against it. Rest is not the absence of labor; it is labor that has finally come into agreement with what was already built.

“God is not having a discussion with you about doing or not doing. He is asking you to enter into a rest — or stay out of it. And most of us never knew we were resting until the rest was over.”

Which makes verse one more urgent than it sounds. The promise still stands and the finished work is still finished. And in the same breath comes the warning — be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. You can stand within arm’s reach of a rest God completed and never step in, not because you were unloved, but because you kept building on the vacant lot next door.

So begin the week honestly. Somewhere in your life is a room God already furnished that you are still trying to build from scratch — a marriage, your finances, a wound from thirty years ago. Before you pick up another tool tomorrow, ask whether what you are straining to build is something the Father already finished.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Where in my life have I mistaken God's guidelines for restriction — treating His boundaries as something holding me back rather than a house He already built for me to live in?*

2. *What have I only appreciated after it was gone? What does that pattern reveal about how I recognize God's provision while I am still standing in the middle of it?*

3. *If God's rest means working inside a finished design instead of drafting my own, what would change this week about how I approach the responsibility that weighs on me most?*

4. *What is the one wall I keep knocking out because I want it my way? What is the Lord asking me to stop building and simply move into?*

DAY TWO

THISTLES AND THORNS: WHAT LIFE COSTS OUTSIDE THE REST

SCRIPTURE READING

GENESIS 3:17–19 (NIV)

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you... By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie walked us through three places where God finished a work and then invited people to live inside it. The first was creation. God made the heavens and the earth, and when He was done He rested — and Adam and Eve did not earn their way in. They opened their eyes inside a rest already complete. They still worked; the garden had to be tended and kept. But the work was easy because it was aligned with a finished design.

Then read the consequences slowly. They are not arbitrary punishments; they describe what labor becomes on the other side of the door. Be fruitful and multiply was spoken inside the rest, and inside the rest there is no hint that bearing children would be an agony. Outside it, the same assignment comes with great pain. Work the ground was spoken inside the rest, and the ground answered; outside it, that same ground answers with thorns and thistles and sweat. God did not change the assignment. What changed is that they were attempting a kingdom assignment outside of kingdom authority — and what was effortless in there is exhausting out here.

The second was Israel. God finished a deliverance: He broke Pharaoh, split the sea, and walked a nation out of four hundred years of bondage. Then He brought them to a mountain and said, in effect, let us live here together. Moses went up to receive the parameters of that shared life, and by the time he came down the people had sunk so far into unbelief that a whole generation forfeited the invitation. They lost more than land. They never found out what it would have been like to worship at Sinai.

“In My rest you were in a garden. Outside My rest, thistles and thorns. What was easy in here is going to be very difficult out there — same assignment, different authority.”

The third is Christ, and that is where we live. Under the old order there were rituals and sacrifices repeated endlessly because they could never finish anything. He came, did the work once, said it is finished, and opened a rest that does not have to be re-earned. The pattern across all three is identical: God completes, God invites, and people decide.

So here is the sober question. If you are working harder than everyone around you and still harvesting thorns, the problem may not be your effort — it may be your address. Look at the area of your life that produces the most sweat and the least fruit, and ask whether you have been farming outside the garden.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Which part of my life produces the most sweat and the least fruit? Am I willing to consider that the exhaustion is not from working too little, but from working outside of God's established order?*

2. *Israel wanted out of Egypt more than they wanted to arrive at the mountain. Where have I wanted rescue from God without wanting relationship with Him — deliverance without the parameters that come with it?*

3. *What would it look like this week to bring one thorny area of my life back under God's authority instead of managing it on my own terms?*

4. *What promise am I currently holding but not believing? What would obedience — not agreement, but obedience — actually require of me in the next seven days?*

DAY THREE

EVERYTHING IS NOT SOLD AT IKEA: KINGDOM LIVING IS NOT DIY

SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 127:1–2 (NIV)

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for he grants sleep to those he loves.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

“Most of us think Kingdom living is DIY.” That was the line Sunday, and Dr. Archie would not let us off the hook with it. Everything is not sold at IKEA. Some things are too complex to assemble in your living room with an Allen wrench and a diagram. If you needed brain surgery you would not go looking for a kit; if you needed a heart valve you would not be scrolling for a bargain and free two-day shipping. There are categories of need where the only reasonable response is to put yourself in the hands of somebody qualified. And yes, it costs something — but Christ already carried the coverage.

So why do we treat the weightiest assignments of our lives as self-serve? We are trying to parent by ourselves, be married by ourselves, be single by ourselves, manage money by ourselves, handle the difficult people at work by ourselves. We pray about it after we have tried everything else and call that faith. The psalm is blunt about the outcome: unless the Lord builds it, the builders labor in vain. Not partially in vain. You can rise early and stay up late and still be constructing something that was never going to stand, because the issue was never your work ethic — it was whose blueprint you were following.

Notice what the psalm sets against that anxious labor: He grants sleep to those He loves. That is the rest Hebrews is describing. It is not laziness; it is the settledness of a person who knows the outcome does not finally rest on the strength of their own hands. The one who trusts the Builder can lie down at night. The DIY believer never can, because if it all depends on you, every hour you are not working is an hour you are losing.

“If you need brain surgery, you are not going to IKEA to see if they sell a kit. Some things require professionals — and yes, it costs something, but Christ gave you the insurance. He covers you.”

This is also why the structures of this church are not decoration. Who works a job and never attends a staff meeting? Who plays on a team that never huddles? We have all seen what that produces, and it is chaos wearing a uniform. Small groups, Bible study morning and Wednesday evening, discipleship, the counsel of the pastors — these are not programs invented to fill a calendar. They are the pattern that unites people doing the same work. Jesus could have finished the assignment alone and did not. He went and got twelve.

So take an inventory. Name the one situation you are handling entirely by yourself because you are convinced you can figure it out. Then ask the honest question: is this a project, or is this surgery?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *What is the one area of my life I am still handling completely alone — and what have I been telling myself to justify keeping it that way?*

2. *When I look at my week, does my schedule reveal a person who believes the outcome depends on God, or a person who behaves as though it depends entirely on me?*

3. *What would it take for me to bring that self-managed area into the light this week — a conversation with a pastor, a small group, a counselor, an honest friend? Who specifically?*

4. *God grants sleep to those He loves. What am I refusing to put down at night, and what would it mean to hand that specific thing back to the Builder before Sunday comes again?*

DAY FOUR

WHOSE PRESCRIPTION ARE YOU TAKING? FAITH ENTERS THE REST

SCRIPTURE READING

HEBREWS 4:2–3 (NIV)

For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie told on all of us with the prescription. The doctor writes it, hands it to you, and says plainly — take this. Then you go home, find a man on the internet with a ring light and a supplement line who says that stuff does not work anyway, and you do not take it. But watch what happens when you actually believe the doctor. If he says take this or you will die, nobody has to remind you. You will be the one at the Walgreens counter at closing time saying, I know you are about to lock up, but I need my medicine. Faith is what you can be seen doing when the line is long and the store is closing.

That is exactly the diagnosis in verse two. The wilderness generation heard the same good news we heard; the information was not withheld from them. The message was of no value because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Faith and obedience are welded together here — what you actually believe is revealed by what you actually do. And most of us know precisely what God has told us to do. You own a Bible. You could rearrange your week and be in the room. The obstacle is not information; it is that underneath, you are not convinced it will help.

Faith, at its root, is the willingness to act on what you cannot calculate — the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It begins by admitting you do not know everything, and it requires stepping into space you have never occupied. That is uncomfortable for competent people who have built an identity on figuring things out.

“If you believe what the doctor says, nobody has to make you go. You will be the one at Walgreens saying, I know y’all are about to close, but I need my medicine. Some of us have more faith in the man in the commercial than in the Word of God.”

But be honest about where our trust has gone. We will believe a stranger in a comment section over a credentialed professional. We read what the reference says and then ask a search engine for a second opinion, as though the algorithm knows more than the source. In the same way, many believers now trust other books and other voices more than the Scripture in their hand. Israel’s disobedience began the moment somebody looked at what came down from the mountain and said, I do not believe that is going to work.

So this week, do not argue about faith — audit it. Trace the last three decisions you made about your money, your children, or your body, and name whose voice actually carried the day.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Where am I currently getting my second opinion? When God's Word and another voice disagree, which one has been quietly winning in my life?*

2. *What has God already told me to do that I have heard, agreed with, and never obeyed? What does that gap between hearing and doing say about what I actually believe?*

3. *Faith means stepping into space I have never occupied. What is the specific step in front of me right now that I cannot calculate the outcome of — and what am I waiting on before I take it?*

4. *What is the one instruction I am going to act on this week, before I feel ready, simply because God said it?*

DAY FIVE

STANDING OUTSIDE A DOOR THAT IS ALREADY OPEN

SCRIPTURE READING

HEBREWS 4:3–5 (NIV)

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “And on the seventh day God rested from all his works.” And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie described a Kansas City summer scene everybody recognized. You have tickets, and you are standing outside the venue while they finish setting up inside. It is a hundred and ten degrees, you just took a shower and you are already soaked, your new outfit is ruined, and you do not care one bit — because the moment those doors open, you are getting in. That is a picture of every Old Testament saint. They died in a holding place, the paradise Luke 16 describes, waiting on a work not yet finished. When Jesus said it is finished, He went and told them the doors were open, and they walked in with Him.

We are not standing in the heat. The setup is done, the doors are open, and the invitation is not deferred to the sweet by and by. He planted His kingdom on earth and taught us to pray that it would be done here as it is in heaven — you do not have to die to experience His rest. You can walk in it Monday morning at a job you do not love, in a house that is not peaceful. The question is not availability. It is why so many of us are still standing outside a door nobody is holding shut.

Then the passage says something that should rearrange your week: His works have been finished since the creation of the world. Before there was a you, there was a finished work with your name accounted for in it. There is nothing you have gotten into that cannot be relieved in His rest, and nothing done to you growing up that His finished work did not anticipate. Some of us carry a thing that happened when we were nine as though God got the news late. He is not asking you to repair it with your own hands — He is asking you to rest from that repair and enter His.

“If God has finished salvation for you, why are you still trying to create it? If His grace is already sufficient, why are you still searching for it in other places? He finished it before creation — there is nothing you need that you cannot find in Him.”

And there is no ignorance defense available to us. Get pulled over and tell the officer you did not know, and he will point out that it was written in the book before you ever received your license. The ticket is not really about the speed; it is about your relationship with the book. Everything you would face was addressed in Scripture before you were born — money, children, forgiveness, grief, waiting. We simply never opened it.

So pick up the book this week like somebody who intends to keep the license. Take the situation you have been fixing by yourself for years and go find what God already said about it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *What am I still standing outside of — a peace, a freedom, a reconciliation — that God has already opened the door to and I simply have not walked through?*

2. *What did God finish that I keep trying to manufacture on my own? Where has my striving actually been a quiet statement that I do not believe His work was enough?*

3. *What is the one thing from my past that I have been repairing with my own hands for years? What would it look like this week to rest from that repair and let His finished work address it?*

4. *What situation am I facing right now that I have never taken to the text itself? What Scripture will I open, and when, before this week is over?*

DAY SIX

CLEAN OUT THE ROOM: RESTING FROM YOUR OWN WORKS

SCRIPTURE READING

HEBREWS 4:7, 9–11 (NIV)

God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.”... “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their own works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie confessed to the whole house that he is something of a pack rat. There are rooms in his home that could serve a real purpose if they were not full of his stuff. Most of it is junk and he knows it, but he manufactures reasons to keep it — a memory attached to it, a favorite shirt from back when he was skinny, something he might need one day. Because the junk stays, the room never becomes what it was designed to be. That, he said, is what some of our hearts look like.

Hebrews names the inventory precisely: today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. A hard heart is rarely a sudden event; it is accumulation. Galatians is blunt about what piles up in there — impurity, idolatry, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, envy, drunkenness. Fits of rage is emotional dysregulation with a spiritual name; we say I went off, as though it happened to us. And even where the sin is long behind us, the damage is still stacked in the corner. You can be positioned in God’s rest and never experience it, because the room is full.

This is why verse ten is not optional: anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their own works. You cannot carry your program in with you. I know how I used to pick men, and how I used to pick women. I know how I used to get quick money, how I hollered when I got upset, how I controlled everything around me so I would never be surprised. Those were works, and they have to be laid down at the door. God finished His work, looked at it, and said it was good. Look honestly at what you are being asked to rest from, and most of us would have to admit it was not good at all.

“Our hearts cannot be used for their original purpose because we have stuff in there that has no value and we will not get rid of it. God finished His work and said it was good — but look at what you need to rest from, and most of the time you would have to say it was bad.”

Dr. Archie also told on his family Sunday, and there is theology in it. When whippings came in his house, the ones standing in line learned by watching, and his youngest brother Lonjo ended up with the fewest — not because he was favored, but because he studied everybody else’s disobedience and decided he did not want that. That is what verse eleven asks of us: two examples stand in front of you every week, and you choose which to learn from. Anyone who has walked with people in recovery knows the other way — you can name your own deterioration and still not change, because it does not hurt badly enough.

So today — not tomorrow, today — clean out one room. Name one work you will rest from this week and one piece of junk you will carry out of your heart.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *What is actually stored in my heart right now that has no value? Which of those things have I built an excuse around so I could keep it?*

2. *What is my program — the strategy I developed on my own that gets me results but cannot come with me into God's rest? Where did I learn it, and what has it cost the people around me?*

3. *Am I waiting for something to hurt badly enough before I change? What am I refusing to learn from someone else's example that I am on track to learn the hard way?*

4. *Today, if I hear His voice — what is the one work God is asking me to lay down this week, and who will I tell so that I actually do it?*

CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer to close the week — pray it aloud, slowly.

Father, we have been bragging for a long time. We told ourselves we could handle it if we just had enough room, enough freedom, enough control — and then we got what we asked for and discovered how heavy it is out here. Thank You for a rest that was finished before we knew we needed it, and for a promise that still stands even now, after all the years we have spent standing outside of it.

Lord, we confess the thistles. We have worked ourselves to exhaustion on ground You never assigned us, and then wondered why the harvest never came. We have wanted rescue from You without wanting relationship with You. Forgive us for celebrating deliverance while refusing the mountain, and teach us to want Your presence more than we want relief.

We admit that we have treated kingdom living like a project we could assemble ourselves. We have parented alone, grieved alone, managed our money alone, carried our marriages alone, and called it strength. Break the pride that keeps us out of the rooms You built for us — the study, the small group, the honest conversation, the counsel of those You placed over us. You did not send Your Son to do it alone; He gathered twelve. Do not let us be wiser than the Savior.

God, examine our faith. We have believed strangers over Scripture and opinions over the Word in our own hands. We have heard everything and obeyed almost nothing. Give us the kind of faith that shows up — that stands at the counter, takes the medicine, makes the call, opens the book, and moves before the math is finished.

And Lord, clean out the room. We have hoarded rage and named it passion, hoarded jealousy and named it ambition, hoarded old wounds and named them wisdom. We have kept works that never produced anything good and defended them like they were treasure. Take them out of us. We do not want to learn this at the bottom; we want to learn it today, while we can still hear Your voice and our hearts are soft enough to answer.

So we are entering. Not managing, not negotiating, not building beside You — entering. We rest from our own works and take up Yours. Let this week be lived inside what You have already finished, and let our labor finally agree with Your design. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

