

Refresh

Part 3

Isaiah 28:12 – *To whom He said, “This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest,” and, “This is the refreshing”; yet they would not hear.*

Introduction:

In the Hebrew language, the word ‘rest’ is ‘*menoocha*’ which means: resting place, place of stillness, consolation, peace, the condition of restfulness. This word ‘*menoocha*’ is also used in Psalms 23:2 – “*He leads me beside still waters*” – restful, refreshing waters of quietness. God leads us: He always points us in the direction of rest, refreshing and restoration.

I want to talk today about ‘rest’ because in Hebrew, the words ‘rest’ and ‘refreshing’ almost mean the same and they’re often together in the same sentence, like here: *This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest,” and, “This is the refreshing”;*

As we saw in the first message of the series, in the beginning, God visited man in the cool of the day. Right from the start, that’s always been the intention of God towards men – to walk with him in an environment that is perfect, away from the heat of the sun.

However, something went wrong. Something happened that interfered with God’s plan: Adam and Eve, the first humans, made the wrong decision and broke relationship with God. From that point onward, we see man exposed, living outside God’s umbrella of blessing and eating bread *in the sweat of his brow*. Man exchanged a garden for the desert that this world is.

That is why Peter preached “*repent and be converted (...) that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*”. Being in Jesus restores us to that place where we can enjoy God again in the cool of the day.

Toil

As a consequence of the fall, man lost the rest that the garden offered. Genesis 3:17-18 speaks of thorns and thistles growing in the ground. It also speaks of ‘toil’: “*in toil you shall eat of it*”

- a) The word “toil” in Hebrew is *amal* and means “anguish, troublesome work, misery”. We find this word 18 times in the book of Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 1:3 - “*What profit has a man from all his labour in which he toils under the sun?*”

- b) In the NT is also used in **Mk. 6:48 KJV** – “*48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.*”

The word 'toil' denotes torture, torment, distress – all that came from the fall of man, because of the events of Genesis 3. Toil replaced rest and that is why it is so common to be stressed out, worn out and tired in this world. Rest and peace are such rare commodities. The truth is that we were not originally created to live in such harsh environment and bear the burden of the pressures we face. But that is why Jesus came:

Jesus

- **Matthew 11:28-30** – “Come to me all who labour [toil] and who are heavy burdened and I will give you rest.” - [‘I will give you what you lost, I will restore it to you’]

In Adam we received toil, in Jesus we received rest!

- **Hebrews 4:9** – “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God”

You may ask, ‘but how do you live in the rest of God, how do you stay fresh living in a world that is more of a desert than a garden?’

3 ways to escape the curse of toil and appropriate the rest and refreshing that God promises:

1. Living a Word-centred life

In the heat of the battles, in adverse circumstances my normal knee-jerk reaction is ‘well, what does the Word says about this?’.

Luke 5:5: “Peter said, we have **toiled** all night and caught nothing but **at your word** I will cast out the net”

‘Toiled’: can you see that word there again? In this passage, something apparently so hard, became easy and the result was abundance. How did something difficult become easy? Not by any effort or ‘toil’ from the disciples, or trying harder but by obeying and believing a *rhema* word from Jesus.

Your heart finds the sweet spot of rest when you find what God says.

Daniel heard the word of God from the lips of an angel in Daniel 10:

Daniel 10:19 - *19 And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” So, when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”*

God’s word has that power to encourage, refresh and strengthen us!

2 Peter 1:4 - *By which have been given to us exceedingly great and **precious promises**, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having **escaped** the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

2. Living a lifestyle of faith

Luke 12:22-31

Verse 27: “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither **toil** nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”.

Hebrews 10:38 – “The Just shall live by faith”

Rest and refreshing are obvious by-products of a heart confident in God, a heart full of faith.

Isaiah 26:3 ³*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

3. Living in the presence of God

Both refreshing and rest come from the presence of God.

Exodus 33:14 – “My presence will go with you and I will give you rest”

Isaiah 63:14 NLT ¹⁴*As with cattle going down into a peaceful valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. You led your people, Lord, and gained a magnificent reputation.”*

Living in the presence of God is a lifestyle. You cannot appropriate this if you visit God occasionally.

Psalms 91:1 - “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”

Psalms 27:4 - *One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.*

Another metaphor that is used in the Word to signify the refreshing and rest that comes from the presence of God is ‘dew from heaven’.

Genesis 27:28 – *Therefore, may God give you of the **dew** of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine.*

Hosea 14:5 - *I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall grow like the lily, and lengthen his roots like Lebanon.*