

Notes for Study Group Leaders - Hebrews Chapter 4

1 **The promise still stands (v1):**

- Why is it significant for us that the promise of entering into God's rest is still open?
- What would change about our faith and activity if this invitation were no longer valid?

2 **Let us be careful (v1):**

- The community is exhorted to examine itself to verify that none of its members are falling short of the promise. What practically can fellowships do to put this scripture into practise?

3 **The gospel minus faith equals nothing (v2):**

- What evidence is there in our lives that we have combined the gospel message with faith?

4 **The rest of God (vv3-5):**

- Genesis 3 indicates that God, having finished his creative work, is at rest. What do the following verses tell us about the nature of the rest of God (Hebrews 1v3, Psalm 104vv10-30)?

- In Eden, before the fall, man was also at rest with God. Yet neither was man idle (Genesis 1vv26-28; 2v15).

- From both the above we see that rest is not absence of activity, but rather a different relationship to the creation rooted in a profound and intimate relationship with God.

- What therefore does it mean for us to enter into the Sabbath rest of God, both now and in the life to come?

5 **Hearing is not the same as believing (v6):**

Perhaps you could take a moment to bring before God the names of all those who you believe have heard the gospel but have not yet responded to it in obedience.

6 **The rest of God is open to us (vv7-11):**

- If David, 500 years after the exodus, could say in Psalm 95vv7-11 that the rest of God is still open to the people of Israel, then the Promised Land was obviously not the ultimate fulfilment of the promise. Thus for us today this invitation to enter into the rest of God still stands.

- Taking one of the following verses each, discuss what they each tell us about the nature of God's rest (Deuteronomy 12vv8-10, Joshua 1v13, Isaiah 28vv10-13, Jeremiah 6v16, 31v2, Matthew 11vv28-30)

7 **Make every effort (vv12-13):**

- The community is exhorted to expend effort to assure that everyone is entering into the rest of God and failing to enter it through disobedience. How then can we help each other to enter into God's rest?

8 **Our High Priest (vv14-16):**

- What are the differences between our High Priest Jesus and the High Priests of the Old testament?
- How does Jesus' ministry excel theirs?

9 **Mercy and grace (v16):**

- What do the following verses teach us about mercy?

(Luke 1vv76-79, Matthew 5v19, Romans 11vv30-33, 1 Timothy 1vv13-17, James 2vv10-13, 1 Peter 2v10)

- What do the following verses tell us about grace?

(Romans 6v14, 2 Corinthians 9v8; 12v9, Titus 2v11, 1 Peter 5v5)