

# In SPIRIT and TRUTH



## Entering Into God's Rest

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find REST unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

Have you ever found yourself striving to make something happen, but it seemed like no matter how hard you tried, you just kept spinning your wheels, getting nowhere? Well, I've "been there and done that" too. And from experience, I now know that when this starts happening, it's my signal to stop what I'm doing and wait on God. According to Matthew 11:29, when we understand God's ways of handling the difficulties we face, there should be *rest for our souls... peace of mind*.

Early on in my Christian walk, I came across a passage of scripture in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 11, that became life-changing for me; it revealed how the heart and nature of God is so contrary to the mindset of the world. Deuteronomy 11 gives a recount of the great acts of God, when He delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, sustained them in the wilderness and prepared them to enter into "the promised land". In verse 10, God reveals how *the land that He prepared for them was not like the land of Egypt*, where they worked as slaves, sowing seeds into the ground, and had to water them by foot, toting buckets "as (with) a garden of herbs". Now, isn't that much like the way prosperity is accomplished in the world? You only get back from the world, that which you have labored hard to achieve; then you can boast of being "self-made".

The sad truth is, though many have success in this manner, it is usually a very slow, tedious process. And often, those who have labored so intensely to attain their prestige on earth, usually do not live long enough to enjoy the fruit of their labor. However, Deuteronomy 11:11-12, describes the contrast of blessings in God's kingdom...

*His is a land of hills and valleys, where the LORD rains from heaven to bring forth growth; the Lord Himself cares for it, "from the beginning of the year, even until the end".*

Quite contrary to the ways of the world, in God's kingdom, the struggle for provisions *should* cease; there should be no more toting of water for those whom God has chosen to bless. For we are told, in Deuteronomy 11:13, *if we will diligently obey the commandments of the Lord, love and serve Him with all of our heart and soul, then He promises to release His blessings upon us in the seasons that they are due.*

## A Testimony of the Lord's Blessing

*"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers." 3 John 1:2*

I am reminded of a time in my life when my husband and I were living in Washington, DC with our first four children; we were in a 2-bedroom apartment with a den (which served as our third bedroom). We obviously needed more space, and prayed (preferably) for a house. So we began searching all over the city for a house that we could rent, just to give the children a little more space and a yard to play in; however, we found nothing. Then one day, the Lord directed us to move back to Miami (my hometown). At the time, our ministry to students on two college campuses in Washington, DC was thriving, so my husband especially did not want to leave. Nevertheless, we obeyed.

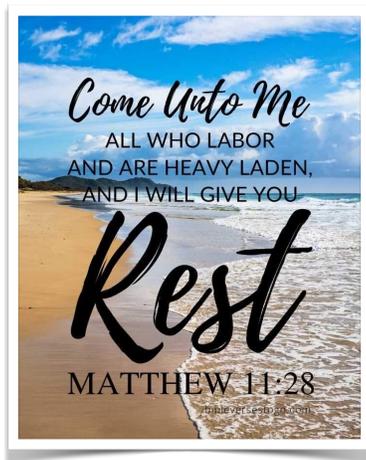
Well (long-story-short), once relocated back to Miami, we immediately found a house to rent, and just a few months later, we were *buying* our very first home! And just as stated in Deuteronomy 11, *there was no struggle*. The Lord just decided to "rain on us", blessing us to easily secure a house, when we obeyed the word to move. Everything happened so quickly that it surprised us both; and it was the result of my husband's simple act of faith...

Not long after returning to Miami, while at the library, my husband discovered a special mortgage program for first-time home-buyers. There was no money required up-front; all he had to do was to show proof of eligibility and apply. So he did, then actually forgot about it. There would be only 50 people chosen for the loan by random lottery, from (perhaps) the hundreds that applied in Miami-Dade County.



Much to our surprise, our names happened to be #1, *the very first selected!* Once chosen, we had to find a house and be ready "to close" within two months. Of course we did, and we soon were blessed with a very nice 4-bedroom house with a den, and a large yard with lots of fruit trees! However, several years later, our home was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew, but even *that* was part of the Lord's plans for us. After rebuilding, we were told to sell the house and move to Georgia. The Lord showed us the "blessed place" that He had prepared for us. It was a much larger and even nicer house than we had in Miami, and was on 5-acres with six bedrooms, four full bathrooms, and 2 half-baths... more than enough space for our (now) six children! Unlike the way we were striving to make things happen in Washington, DC (to no avail) God's yoke was easy, and the burden for *that* home-search was very light.

*"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Hebrews 4:10*



“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

There have been other times in my life when I have lost sleep, being perplexed by issues of life. I believe that when we allow everyday stressors to cause us to lose our peace, it is an indication of a more serious spiritual condition... **a heart of unbelief** in the God of our salvation. The key to continual rest in the Lord is **trust**. We must have faith in God, to perform His will in our lives according to His word (promises). *This is not just trusting God for provision, but also for physical healing, mental health, finances... for every aspect of our lives.* And when all that we do is in agreement with His word (which is His will for us) then we will find a *rest for our souls*. For God is faithful to those who put their trust in Him.

Once the Lord has spoken in the Spirit or by His word, we must guard our hearts against *the spirit of unbelief*. In Hebrews 3:12, we are warned: **“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an EVIL HEART of UNBELIEF, in departing from the living God.”** As a matter of fact, it was unbelief (manifested by constant murmuring and complaining) that displeased God most about the Israelites in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:10-11,19). How could they ever forget the miraculous acts God performed in delivering them from the bondage of Pharaoh? If God could demonstrate His power under such dire circumstances, surely it is a small thing for Him to intervene likewise on our behalf.

When my husband and I were told to move back to Miami, we had to trust God enough to obey Him, even though the timing for the move did not seem right. But once we took that initial step of faith, God began to direct our paths to the places where our prayers would be answered. As we were being led by the instructions we received from Him, His word became “a light unto our paths, and a lamp unto our feet”; however, it was not a spotlight. God revealed just enough for us to take one step at a time, one day at a time, requiring that we trust Him all along the way. In other words, we had to walk by faith; and we know according to Hebrews 11:6, that... **“without faith, it is impossible to please God”.**

Now the “rest” that I have focused on is actually the peace that is available to every believer in the kingdom of God. However, hearing the gospel preached, without obedience to God because of unbelief, will be of no profit (as with the Israelites). So for those who have not yet received the indwelling Spirit of God, which is the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-18), be careful not to let unbelief cause you to forfeit a life of rest... rest, not only in this life, but also ETERNAL REST with our Lord and Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ.