

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Chapter 4 **"No More Excuses"**

During the presidency of Andrew Jackson, There was a true story of a postal clerk that robbed a federal payroll train.

In the process of this robbery, a guard was killed.

The court found the man guilty of murder and sentenced him to hang.

Because of public outcry against capital punishment, a movement began to secure a Presidential pardon for the convicted man as this was his first offense.

President Jackson issued a pardon but the convicted man, a Mr. George Wilson refused to accept his pardon.

Since this had never happened before, the United States Supreme Court was asked to rule on whether someone could indeed refuse a presidential pardon.

Chief Justice John Marshall handed down the courts decision:

"A pardon is a parchment whose only value is determined by the receiver of that pardon. It has no value if the receiver will not accept it"

George Wilson has refused to accept the pardon that has been provided for him. We cannot conceive of why he would do so, but he has.

Therefore George Wilson must die."

George Wilson was convicted of his crime, pardoned for his crime, yet hanged for his crime.

As we began our study in the Book of Hebrews, we were told that God has spoken to all people in times past, through over 3,500 prophecies, 3,000 of which have already been fulfilled perfectly. (No other Religion or Religious Book can make that claim)

☞ **God has spoken** in times past by angels, and we know that what Angels warned man of, came to pass exactly as the Angel said.

In these last days, God has spoken to all of us Through His own Son.

Hebrews 2:1-3

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

2 For **if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast**, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation**, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

George Wilson, amazingly was given a Presidential Pardon, and yet he was hanged by the neck until he was dead.

- ⊖ There was a plan to save George Wilson's life.
- ⊖ His Crimes had been forgiven.
- ⊖ All he had to do was say "Yes" to the pardon.

Even though everything had been done that could be done to save Wilson's life, he was the one ultimately responsible for his life or his death.

- ⊖ **The book of Hebrews** begins by declaring to us that we also have received, not a Presidential Pardon.
- ⊖ **We have received** A Pardon from the King of the Universe.

We were tried for our crimes, found guilty of breaking Gods Law, and sentenced to Eternal Death.

James 2:10

For whoever shall keep the whole law (10 commandments), and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

- ⊖ **1st**: No other gods except the Lord. (Anything else, object of time, attention)
- ⊖ **2nd** No Images. (A Car, A house, A Possession)
- ⊖ **3rd** Not taking the name of the Lord in vain. (Cursed, Disregarded)
- ⊖ **4th**: Sabbath
- ⊖ **5th**: Honor Father and Mother. (Disrespect)
- ⊖ **6th**: Murder. (Anger)
- ⊖ **7th**: Adultery. (To Look)
- ⊖ **8th** Steal: (Ever took anything)
- ⊖ **9th**: Lie: (Half Truth)
- ⊖ **10th**: Covet, (Desire something that belongs to someone else.)

The Bible reveals that the purpose of the these 10 commandments was not to be a list of rules for you to perform for God to accept you.

- ⊖ **The purpose** of the giving of the 10 commandments was to shut our mouths.
- ⊖ **Every person on this planet** that has ever been born is guilty of every single one of these.
- ⊖ **The purpose of the 10 commandments** was that as we would read these 10 requirements of the God of the Universe, our boasting would be stopped, and we would be found guilty.

Romans 3:19

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, **that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty** before God

- ⊕ **That we would just be honest** with the Lord and say: *“I am guilty Lord of breaking all of your law, and I am not capable of keeping this law”*
- ⊕ **That we would realize** that we are guilty and be driven to find another way to be acceptable to God.
- ⊕ **That we would find** that the only other way we can be Pardoned, is through Jesus sacrifice.

George Wilson was found guilty of his crimes. The only way his life could be save was by Presidential pardon.

- ⊕ **We have been found guilty** this morning of breaking these laws of God.
- ⊕ **The only way we can be saved**, is by a Pardon from the maker of the laws.
- ⊕ **What is Truly amazing**, is this same King of the Universe, not only Pardoned us for all of our crimes, forever, He also became the means by which our Pardon was possible.

Jesus, the Bible says, is the Creator of the Universe, and yet, because of His great love for us, He was willing to die Himself to secure our freedom from judgment.

- ⊕ **This would have been like** Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, pardoning George Wilson for his crimes, and to secure that Pardon, being hanged himself.
- ⊕ **That sounds ridiculous** to us, there is no way that any President would ever do something like that.
- ⊕ **And yet**, this is exactly what Jesus has done. someone far greater than any President.

So, this morning, this Promise of a full and complete pardon, is still available to all of us.

- ⊕ **Some of us** have eagerly accepted Jesus pardon, and are eternally grateful for what Jesus has done for us.
- ⊕ **We have devoted our lives now**, to growing in our Love for Jesus.
- ⊕ **We have devoted our lives to following** Jesus and trusting Him, because **He earned that right by dying for us.**

And yet, amazingly, there are some of here this morning that have still refused to accept the pardon that has been offered to us.

- ⊕ **Even as people were amazed** that George Wilson could refuse so great an offer to have his crimes forgiven and not suffer the penalty of death, **there are some here that have done the same thing to Jesus.**
- ⊕ **They Will not Accept** Jesus offer of a full pardon.
- ⊕ **They Will not surrender** their lives to His Lordship.

So, a question, who is it that is responsible then for their Death?

- ☞ **Can God be blamed** for their punishment?
- ☞ **Is it His fault** that they will suffer for eternity?

I say NO, it is not the Lords fault, it is the fault of those who were offered a pardon, yet refused it.

Chapter 4 of The book of Hebrews this morning, takes up this same subject.

- ☞ **The book of Hebrews** calls receiving this full pardon from Jesus, “*Entering into Rest*”
- ☞ **Why** is that?
- ☞ **Because Sin**, Guilt, and living with it, knowing what you have done, is the heaviest burden in the world.
- ☞ **To be free** of the guilt and the Penalty for what we have done, is the greatest freeing experience of your life.

Hebrews 4

1 Therefore, **since a promise remains of entering His rest**, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

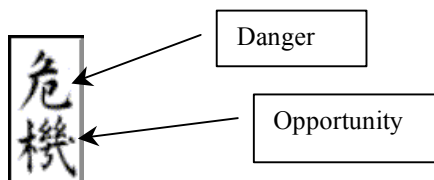
There is still this amazing promise from the Lord of the Universe, that all of your sins can be forgiven and you can be free of the burden and guilt of them and enter into Rest from trying to be acceptable to God.

- ☞ **Like George Wilson**, all you have to do is say yes to the pardon that has been Provided.
- ☞ **All you have to do us say** “Yes” to Jesus, and what He died to give you.
- ☞ **At the very moment** that you do this, your heart, your soul, your mind, your Spirit enters into a wonderful Rest.
- ☞ **Rest that** “*All of the Work of my life is already complete in Jesus*”
- ☞ **Rest that** “*I am completely acceptable to God now, and I will spend Eternity in Heaven*”.

“...Let us FEAR lest any of you seem to have come short of it...”

It is interesting to me that the Chinese symbol for “Crisis” is made up of 2 symbols:

1. Danger
2. Opportunity.



The entire human race has been in a catastrophic Crisis since the fall in the Garden.

- ⊕ **In this Crisis**, there is both “**Danger**”, and “**Opportunity**”
- ⊕ **Danger**, that if you hear the message that a Pardon has already been provided, you might do what verse 1 here in Hebrews chapter 4 says: “...**Let us FEAR lest any of you seem to have come short of it...**”
- ⊕ **Opportunity**, that a person can be just 18 inches away from Eternal Life this morning.

18 inches is the distance from your Brain to your Heart.

- ⊕ **I have had people** tell me many time: “**I believe in Jesus**”.
- ⊕ **Well, may I say to you** this morning, “**So What**”.
- ⊕ **The Bible says** that even “*The Demons believe in Jesus, and they tremble*” at the thought of His Judgment.
- ⊕ **I can believe in Jesus in my mind**, but unless that falls down 18 inches into my heart, **and I translate this believe into some kind of action** that is seen in how I live the rest of my life, sorry but that kind of belief doesn’t save you.

Hebrews 4

1 Therefore, **since a promise remains of entering His rest**, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it

The second area that people come short of Entering into Rest with Jesus is their life, is in the ability to receive from the Lord His promises to them.

- ⊕ **Sometimes**, we look to much at ourselves and not enough at Jesus
- ⊕ **We begin to think**: “*The Lord can’t bless me because I fail all of the time.*”
- ⊕ **This focus on our self** and the areas of sin that we still struggle with **prevents us from having the faith to receive all the Lord has for me.**

If your being forgiven and saved by the Lord did not depend on your ability to keep the commandments before you are saved, it surely also does not depend on you being able to be blessed by the Lord depending on your ability after he has saved you.

- ⊕ **How many of you** this morning that have your own child or someone else’s child that is in your life...
- ⊕ **How many of you only want** to love and bless that child when they are doing good things?
- ⊕ **Don’t you always** want to love them and bless them?
- ⊕ **Sometimes you are mad at them** or disappointed in what they might have said or done, but you never stop loving them or wanting to give them good things.

Luke 11:11-13

11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

- ⊕ **When the Lord does bless us**, because we still feel so unworthy of His love and Blessing, we start making promises that we cant keep.
- ⊕ **We just cannot seem to accept** that the Lord is not blessing us because of our good behavior, He is blessing just because He loves us.

“...Let us fear lest any of you seem to come short of it...”

- ⊕ **I cannot remember** any other place in the Bible where it tells us to “Fear”.
- ⊕ **Every time** Jesus began to tell us or teach us anything, He almost always began with “Do not fear”.
- ⊕ **There is one thing that we are to fear:**

That some of you may miss out on heaven and all the Lord has for you, because you wont follow Jesus or Believe Him.

An Atheist once said: *“If I really believed what you claim about Jesus, that He is the only way to heaven, and that without Him a person is lost forever, I would crawl across broken glass on my hands and knees to reach just one person...”*

Hebrews 4

2 For indeed **the gospel was preached to us as well as to them;** but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

This is an interesting verse because It tells us that the people in the Old Testament were saved in exactly the same way that we are saved today.

- ⊕ **By believing** in the salvation that Jesus gave to us through His death on the Cross.
- ⊕ **No one has ever been saved** in any other way except through Jesus Cross.
- ⊕ **According to the Bible**, Not one person can make it into heaven without Jesus Cross.

Today we “Look back to the Cross for our Salvation”

In the Old Testament Times, they “Looked forward to the Cross for their Salvation”

Hebrews 4

2 For indeed **the gospel was preached to us as well as to them;** but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

- ⊕ **The People in the desert for 40** years that we studied last Sunday, all of the people in the Old Testament, heard about the same salvation that you are going to hear about this morning.

Yet they did not take their hearing to the next step and “Mix it with Faith”

☞ **It is not enough** to “Hear about Jesus.

☞ **It is not enough to** “Believe in Jesus”

Romans 10:9

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Think about this: Right now, everyone in this sanctuary is being offered the same thing.

1. Forgiveness of every sin you have or ever will commit in your entire life.
2. Being made **Totally and completely Righteous.**
3. Becoming a Brand New Creation, by being “**Born Again**”
4. Becoming a **Son or Daughter** of the God of the Universe.
5. Becoming a “**Joint Heir**” with Jesus.
6. Becoming a **King and a Priest** that will rule with Jesus over the Nations, when Jesus returns.

But there will be many of us who will not accept the Lords offer of a full and complete pardon.

☞ **Because they love** their sin too much.

☞ **Because they don't want** to submit their life to Jesus.

I have discovered that people have allot of excuses for almost everything, Have you notice that?

“Where the heart is willing, it will find a thousand ways, but where it is unwilling it will find a thousand excuses”

The great D. L Moody once said that “*Excuses are the cradle that satan rocks men off to sleep in*”

In 1992, a Los Angeles County parking Control Officer came upon a brown El Dorado Cadillac illegally parked next to the curb on a street sweeping day.

The Officer dutifully wrote out a ticket, ignoring the man seated behind the drivers wheel, and placed the \$30.00 citation on the dashboard of the car.

The driver of the Cadillac never made one single Excuse, He never argued with the officer...

There was a good reason the driver never made an excuse, He had died there sitting up in the seat of the car.

It is not until we “Die to our self” that we will stop making excuses for why we cannot give our life to Jesus.

As Long as we are still full of our self, we will never be willing to surrender our life and allow Jesus to take over.

- ⊕ **People ask me all of the time** “*Why bad things happen to us, if there is A God of Love*”
- ⊕ **It is very simple**, This God of Love has to bring you to the end of yourself, before you will come to the place that you realize how great your need is for Him in your life.

Some of you this morning are asking this question: “*Why has all of these things happened to me in my life*”

- ⊕ **The answer** is very simple, The Love of God for you.
- ⊕ **He was willing to do whatever was necessary** to forgive all of your sins and give you eternal life, the only way that could happen was by The God of the Universe Dying for your sins, because you and I were helpless to do anything about it ourselves.

Extreme measures, because of an extreme love for you...

- ⊕ **In the same way**, the Lord will do whatever it takes to get you to pay attention to this “**Great Salvation**” that He is offering to you this morning.
- ⊕ **If you are making some kind of an excuse** for why you cannot believe in Jesus and give your life to Him, **He will do whatever extreme measures are necessary to get your attention.**

What is your own personal excuse for not totally surrendering every area of your life to Jesus this morning?

- ⊕ **Will you just lay down at Jesus feet this morning** and stop making excuses for why you can't just totally Sell out to Him?
- ⊕ **Or will you force Him** to put you into some kind of a situation so that you finally come to end of yourself and realize your need to give everything you are over to His control.
- ⊕ **He loves you so much**, He will do whatever it takes to save you eternally, **even if it requires destroying everything else you depend on in this life.**

Better to just say “**Yes Lord, 'm yours this morning...**”

- ⊕ **The awesome thing is:** When you do this, then you really get to experience the Blessing of life.
- ⊕ **Because then** there is nothing hindering Him from being able to bless your life

The moment that you do listen up and pay attention and surrender your life to Jesus, you then give to Him the excuse He is looking for to pour out on you the fountain of Blessing he really wants to give to you.

Hebrews 4

3 For **we who have believed do enter that rest**, as He has said:

“So I swore in My wrath,

“They shall not enter My rest,” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”;

5 and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”

The people in the desert that saw the miracle of How God provided Twenty-Two 100 car freight trains of Food, Water, Wood and provision to meet their needs EVERY SINGLE DAY, could not ever enter into the rest of being saved and having the peace that comes with that surrender of your life...

- ☞ **Notice that verse 3 says** that “**This great Salvation**” that Jesus died to give us, was “*Finished Before the Foundation of the World*”
- ☞ **You were not an afterthought** to God. Long before you were ever born on this Earth, He was Thinking about you, and Loving you.
- ☞ **He knew** that you would fail, and be lost, so before you were born, in His mind, Jesus had offered up His life in exchange for yours.

Revelation 5:6

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain,

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Hebrews 4

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and **those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience**,

7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,

Do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 **There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.**

One of the most amazing things in the world to me is that after nearly 6,000 years of rebellion against Him, the Lord is still being patient with people.

Verse 9: “*There remains a rest for the people of God...*”

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance

- ☞ **The Lord was patient** with the Old Testament Generation that actually saw all of His miracles and His ability to take care of them.
- ☞ **Today**, *“If you will hear His voice, He is still speaking to this generation.”*
- ☞ **He is still being patient** with you, but there is coming a time when His patience will be exhausted and then it will be too late.
- ☞ **If you harden your heart towards Him** this morning, then He cannot reach you with His love. Open your heart to him RIGHT NOW, because tomorrow you may not have this opportunity.

Today, for those who have already given their lives to Jesus, there is also a REST that is coming...

Hebrews 4

10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Here is the great news that belongs to all of those who have already given their lives to Jesus...

- ☞ **Your work** of being acceptable to God is finished.
- ☞ **Your work of having the assurance** that you are going to heaven is Finished.
- ☞ **When something is finished**, there is nothing else that needs to be added to it.

Colossians 2:8-10

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

In other words: **“Don’t let anyone Rip You Off”** through any other philosophy or tradition of men”

- ☞ **It was not Jesus plus your performance** that saved you.
- ☞ **It is not Jesus and your performance** that Keeps you saved.
- ☞ **It is a total dependence** Upon Jesus and staying close to and attached to Jesus that Saves you.

If someone ever tells you that “You are not really saved unless....”

- ☞ **If that “UNLESS”** is anything except the Cross of Jesus, you are being lied to!

Hebrews 4

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

See, Diligence to enter that Rest, so that none of us fall away like the generation in the desert for 40 years... NEVER FORGET WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM!

Philippians 2:12

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

As we have studied previously, there are 2 things at work that we see demonstrated in the Bible:

1. The total control and Sovereignty of God over everything in the Universe.
2. Human Responsibility to act on what God has said.

The Lord Jesus Acting in His Sovereignty as God, Gave His life so that you would have the opportunity to be forgiven and saved.

- ☞ **You have the responsibility** to Believe, and Accept, the Pardon for your sins, and the surrender of your life to Jesus.
- ☞ **This is what is meant by** “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*”

The idea here is that you already Have salvation, now Work out staying close to Jesus, Surrendering every part of your life, and enduring with Jesus until He comes again for us.

- ☞ **Working out** the surrender, the control, the staying close to, is your part.
- ☞ **Providing** That Salvation was His part

Hebrews 4

12 For the word of God is **living and powerful**, and **sharper than any two-edged sword**, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

What is the way that you will be able to work out the details of Staying close to Jesus and continuing to trust Him the rest of your life?

- ☞ **“The Word of God”**
- ☞ **It is not just words on pages**, “It is Alive, and Powerful”
- ☞ **The only way** you can grow in your new life is by continuing to be taught and learn all of the Word of God.
- ☞ **You cannot possibly** make it to the end with Jesus without becoming a serious student of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 19:11-15

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.
15 Now **out of His mouth goes a sharp sword**, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

13 And **there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

This morning it is time for: "No More Excuses"

- ☞ **Everything that is holding us back** this morning from surrendering our life or the parts of our life to Jesus, he can see right now.
- ☞ **It kind of like** the story of the **Emperor who wore no clothes.**

Everyone knew that he was naked, but He didn't know that they knew that he was naked.

No one said anything to him, because he was the emperor, but they knew, they could see that he was naked.

- ☞ **Every minute detail** of your life is open and exposed to the Judge of the Universe.
- ☞ **Does it make any sense** to offer up an excuse to someone who has the ability to know what is really going on.

Better to just "FESS UP", "Lord, you know what is hindering me this morning, I just give it up to you right now, No more excuses, take my life and make it what you want it to be..."

Hebrews 4

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Here is the closing point of chapter 4 this morning...

- ☞ **If you will be honest with the Lord right now** and just confess to Him that you let HURT, OR BITTERNESS, or DISAPPOINTMENT keep you to this point, of surrendering your life to Jesus, it is time to let go and surrender.
- ☞ **If you will be honest with the Lord right now** and just confess to Him that YOU REALLY LOVE YOUR SIN that you are continuing in right not, but that you are WILLING THIS MORNING TO TURN FROM IT and turn to Him, He is ready to forgive you and take over.

The reason we can trust Jesus with all of the hurt we are feelings, and all of the Disappointment we are feeling...

Hebrews 4

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Even though Jesus is the God who has always existed, the very one that Spoke the Universe into existence, He made Himself just like us, when he took the body of a man.

- ☞ **There is not one single area** of your life that Jesus did not also go through Himself.
- ☞ People Hurt Him.
- ☞ They let Him down.
- ☞ They Disappointed Him.
- ☞ They Used Him.
- ☞ They said all kinds of Unkind and Untrue things about Him.
- ☞ **He was tempted to just call Legions of angels** down to destroy them all, he had the power to do so, but yet He just submitted His life to the Father as our servant, standing in our place, dying for us, and He endured everything that we also go through, and WITHOUT ONE SIN!

This is why you can trust your own weaknesses to Jesus understanding, He went through and was made all of the same things you go through...

Hebrews 4

16 Let us **therefore come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- ☞ **Notice** that Jesus throne is “A Throne of Grace”
- ☞ **Notice that Jesus throne** is not a throne of Condemnation or Judgment, if you have given your live to Him.

This is why, right now you can walk right into the very throne room of God Himself and talk to Him about anything in your life, and He will understand.

- ☞ **You were given access** to the Throne of God, because Jesus death broke down the wall of separation between your sins and God.
- ☞ **Having wiped your record clean for ever**, you now have direct access. You don't have to go through Rob or any other man, you can go into the Throne room of God, and find the Mercy and Grace you need to help you in your time of need.

Mercy: Not getting the punishment we deserve.

Grace: Getting the blessings of God, even though we don't deserve them.

Prayer:.. No more excuses Lord...