

Rest on Every Side

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*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	5
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<i>Chapter 1</i>	7
------------------------	---

PUTTING UP THE FENCES

<i>Chapter 2</i>	11
------------------------	----

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

<i>Chapter 3</i>	15
------------------------	----

BUILDING AND PROSPERING

<i>Chapter 4</i>	19
------------------------	----

ENTERING INTO HIS REST

<i>CONCLUSION</i>	25
-------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

“So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God” (2 Chronicles 14:1-2).

“Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD.” This is a beautiful and precious statement. So many people are trying to do what is right in their own eyes, just as the Israelites did, in Judges 17:6, “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” As a result, they have no quietness in their land; they cannot enjoy the rest God has provided for them in the Finished Work.

On the other hand, I know many people who bow down before the Lord in prayer every

morning and live their lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. They live right, in the eyes of God, through the Spirit of God. Living right brings a certain conviction, a certain confirmation, a certain peace that nothing else can bring.

Why do some have joy, peace, and rest? Because they have ceased from their own works and have entered into God's rest. Why do some have their personalities changed while others do not? Why do some continue to live in the personality of Adam's nature? It is because they do not believe this message of freedom that guarantees us a life of rest on every side.

Chapter One

PUTTING UP THE FENCES

“For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him” (2 Chronicles 14:3-5).

“Strange gods” speak of anything that is strange to the Holy Spirit, to prayer, and to fellowship with Jesus Christ and His Body. Asa took away these things. Strange gods are things that are contrary to the perfect love of God that motivated Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. Strange gods include negativity, criticism, negative moods and thoughts.

Asa broke and cut down anything that had been used or could be used as an idol. The Holy Spirit, in the same way, wants to cut down any-

thing evil in your life.

After all the high places and images had been removed, “the kingdom was quiet before him.” When we get rid of sin—and the strange thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that go with it—our hearts become quiet. When we cut ourselves off from strange legalism and strange people who don’t love Jesus, and we enter into fellowship with Jesus Christ and His Word, then we will be quiet. But, there is no quietness as long as there are strange things going on in our lives.

Selective Reception

“And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest” (2 Chronicles 14:6). These cities weren’t opened to just anyone or anything. It wasn’t easy to enter these cities because they were surrounded by high fences topped with sharp points. If a person wanted to get in, someone had to let him in.

This is the problem for many Christians—they have no fences around their cities. As a result, just about anything can come in. The garbage dump is only place I know of that isn’t selective about what it takes in. But, if our city is

fenced, nothing can come in unless we go to the door and open it.

It is so vital for us to control what we listen to. For example, there are scores of Christians who live in soul power, using Christianity as a crutch to get what they want through fleshly relationships. Don't get involved in trying to minister to these people, because you will only get hurt by listening to them.

Put up your fences and be selective about what goes into your mind and fills up your emotions. Then, you will experience quietness in your land. When we let the wrong thing in, restlessness takes over; but if we keep the wrong things out, the presence of Jesus Christ remains and keeps us quiet.

A Barrier of Promises

The fenced cities of 2 Chronicles 14:6 speak of the Body of Christ, as well as individual believers. The fence is a picture of the promises of God all around us. These promises are what make up my fence. The devil comes knocking at my gate, saying that I should be discouraged because my finances are bad. But I have a promise that God will meet all my needs, according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19). This

promise is a part of my fence to keep the devil from making me depressed. When Satan comes along and starts accusing, I have a promise: No condemnation! (Romans 8:1). When he says, "You have tried before and failed; and you'll fail again this time," I have a promise that tells me I can do *all* things through Him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13), and that I am more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37). The devil may say, "Persecution will come and God will not intervene." Yet, I've got a promise that God will never leave me nor forsake me (Hebrews 13:5). These promises are my rest. All of the promises of God are yea and Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20). Give the devil a promise of God and dismiss any further thoughts.

Near the end of Jesus' forty days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness, the devil came to tempt Him. In Matthew 4:3, Satan challenged Jesus to turn the stones into bread. But, in verse 4, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." What did Jesus give the devil? The Word of God! This is exactly what we are to give Satan. When he comes around, put up those fences. Then, glory to God, your land will have rest.

Chapters Two

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Some Christians seem to think it glorifies God for them to live in discouragement, fears, anxiety and frustrations. “I had a bad week, but I guess that’s what God wanted for me,” you may say. No, beloved, God did not want you to have a bad week. The Lord wants your land to have rest.

God wants my mind, my will, and my emotions to be at rest. God wants to see my mind change and be renewed, because I’m a Christian. He wants me to be quickened to enjoy the purity of the promises and the joy of defeating the devil through faith in Christ. God wants me to be able to see a situation change—because I’m a Christian.

The Spirit vs. the Flesh

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh

lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:16-17).

When the Holy Spirit is filling me, there is no lusting. If I am saved, I have the Holy Spirit and I can walk in the Spirit if I choose to. If I choose to walk in the flesh, there will be constant lust. I will pray, but I won't get an answer. I will sing, but my singing won't make a difference in anyone's life. I will testify, but it won't do any good. I will read the Bible, but it won't help me.

I must realize that the only way to be satisfied is to walk in the Spirit. If I don't walk in the Spirit, then the flesh will lust and the Spirit will fight against it. I won't be able to do the things I want to do. I can't live in the world because the Spirit won't let me; yet, I can't live in the Spirit because the flesh won't let me. I'll go back and forth, growing weak and sick, and I will want to quit being a Christian. I'll dislike my home and the people who try to fellowship with me. Eventually, I will just say, "I don't want to go on with God. It's not worth it. He hasn't done anything for me, even though I've really asked Him!"

The most miserable person in the world is

one who has the Spirit, but doesn't walk in Him. There is no other way to be free. Walking in the Spirit is the only way to be at rest.

Unfailing Provisions

Some people are always occupied with what they need, instead of thanking God for what they have. Hundreds of Christians worry about why they are not better, instead of thanking God, the only One who *is* better.

I don't know why so many count it such a privilege to be miserable. There has never been a problem in the life of a Christian that Jesus Christ's life didn't solve before it happened. In His unfailing love, Jesus has made a provision for every believer, before the foundation of the world. We don't have to be filled with the devil's garbage when God's provisions are on the table, and anything outside of God's provision to build you up is garbage.

"Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered" (2 Chronicles 14:7).

Glory to God! Raise your hands! By the grace of God, *there is rest on every side of the believer*. He is on my left and my right (Job 23:9); He is before me (John 10:4), and behind me (Isaiah 30:21); He is above me (Psalm 33:14), and underneath me (Deuteronomy 33:27). Still, there are dear people who don't want this kind of practical Christianity.

Chapter Three

BUILDING AND PROSPERING

The last part of 2 Chronicles 14:7 says, “so they built and prospered.” When there’s rest on every side, then you are able to build. Too many believers never get around to building upon their most holy faith (Jude 20). What would you think of a contractor who began tearing down an old house and was still at it, five or ten years later? He has the blueprints for the new house, but he hasn’t started building because he’s still tearing down the old one.

God wants us to thank Him that *old* things are passed away and *all* things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). He doesn’t want us to keep trying to tear down the old things, but to start building on the foundation of our new life in Christ.

I know some people who are in such need of victory, but they are always trying to work on their old houses. Every time I have a conversa-

tion with someone like that, he gets mad at me for telling him he can have a *new* house. He doesn't come to church services regularly because he will hear how he's supposed to be victorious, while he still can't see the way to live in victory. He gets miserable, even though he knows Jesus Christ died for everything he's ever done. All he has to do is accept the Finished Work, enter into His rest by faith, and begin to build and prosper in Christ forever.

It is so important for us to confess every known sin. As long as we continue in sin, we are working on the old house instead of enjoying the new. You wouldn't believe how many people are always working on their guilt and the consequences of not getting right with God. I know there are those who are weak—God is very patient with all of us. But my attitude is this: Bring your weaknesses to an end through Jesus, and start building your life, building for other people, prospering in the Master.

This attitude takes on a whole different dimension. I leave that old building program and simply accept what Jesus said and did about it. I step into the land of faith-rest and, by the grace of God, I begin to build and prosper. 2 Chronicles 14:6 says that for ten years, Asa did not have any

wars. Why? Because he got rid of the things that should not have been in the land. The old things in our lives shouldn't be there any more, because they are what cause our wars.

I know times of persecution and trials will come, but many times it is not persecution for being godly. Instead, it's simply the ignorance of not accepting what Jesus did and a failure to enter into faith-rest. When the apostle Paul was put in prison, his heart was at rest. Persecution didn't do a thing against his faith-rest. In fact, it became an opportunity for Paul to manifest faith-rest. If we experience persecution because of godliness, then it will just reveal perfect peace coming through us. But if something about our old lives or our unbelief is bothering us, then we are going to struggle, strain, and react instead of entering into the land of God's rest.

Rest in the Valleys

In 2 Chronicles 14:9-10, Zerah the Ethiopian came to battle Asa and his army in the valley of Zephathah. The land had been filled with rest and quietness, but even this king would be threatened with a battle—and this battle was in the valley.

We may have faith-rest; we may have ac-

cepted the Finished Work of Jesus Christ, but we will all have our battles in the valley. Every one of us will have our valley experiences.

“And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee” (2 Chronicles 14:11). In 1 Kings 20:27-28, God proved that He was not only the God of the mountains, but also the God of the valleys. Asa didn’t cry unto people; he cried unto the Lord. He didn’t go to an arbitration board, or become anxious; he went to the Lord.

The enemy was coming upon Asa; he and his army were outnumbered. They had no power. But Asa said so beautifully, “Help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee.” The Lord had to love that kind of language from His precious king! Every child of God has the privilege, just as Asa did, of coming to God in faith-rest, crying out to Him and resting his case.

Chapter Four

ENTERING INTO HIS REST

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Hebrews 4:1-3).

Every single child of God who builds a fence around his city by mixing faith with what he hears will have rest and a quiet heart. Even when there is a battle in the valley, God’s rest is there. It is a rest that Jesus Christ has provided “from the foundation of the world.”

“And on the seventh day God ended his

work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Genesis 2:2). God rested on the seventh day. In Genesis 1, we find that on the first six days of Creation, there was “the evening and the morning” (Genesis 1:5-31). But there was no evening on the seventh day. This means that God entered into His rest, and this rest goes on and on.

Likewise, we enter into the rest of the Finished Work, “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (Hebrews 3:14). We are not partakers of problems, trials, anxiety, or accusations. We are not partakers of Adam, religion, or lies. But we are partakers of the glorified Christ because of the Finished Work. We have entered into His rest because His work of paying for our sins has been finished. By the grace of God, we’ve been made partakers of the glorified throne ministry of Christ.

In Moses, we have a representation of Jesus Christ’s ministry in His humanity. But Joshua pictures Christ finishing the work, as he entered into the Promised Land. Aaron, the high priest, represents Jesus’ priestly work on earth; Melchizedek is a picture of Christ as our High Priest in glory. Following this analogy, I want Joshua, not

Moses, as my Savior. I want Melchizedek, not Aaron, as my High Priest.

Joshua went into Canaan, conquered the land, and rested. He completed what Moses had started. The glorified Christ has finished in heaven what He started on earth. We no longer know Jesus after the flesh; we know Him according to His glory as our High Priest. We are partakers of what has been perfected. We are partakers of Canaan.

As partakers of Canaan, we now cease from murmuring. We cease from complaining, from lusting after what our flesh wants. We have divorced ourselves from the life of the wilderness; we've entered into the Finished Work rest of Jesus Christ. His peace, joy, love, kindness, righteousness, promises, and quietness are all ours—when our land is at rest.

Rest: More Than Just a Day

“For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest” (Hebrews 4:4-5).

We are to enter into what God is resting in. He is resting in His Finished Work, and the shed blood of Jesus. When we become partakers of

the Finished Work, we graduate from an elementary Christian experience into a throne ministry, a reflection of the Master's glory.

Some people are hung up on an emphasis of the seventh day. I say, "How about emphasizing the Finished Work?" This is more than just a day, it's a *place* of rest—eternity, the empty tomb, the heavenly sanctuary, my heart, where Jesus Christ lives.

"Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day" (Hebrews 4:7-8).

They had a day, but we have Jesus. They had a day, but we have a place. Our rest isn't in a day; it's in the person of Christ. We are partakers of a living Person who brings in rest as a *life*, instead of limiting rest to a certain day. I feel sorry for those who limit the rest of God to a certain day. They are wrong. Seven days, seven nights a week, we can rest in Him.

Rest that Remains

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he

also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:9-10). God established His rest before the foundation of the world. Thank God it remains! Thank God the seventh day remains!

I cannot change circumstances. My works cannot bring home that unsaved nephew; they can't draw the backslidden spouse back to God. My efforts can't make the one I think I'm in love with fall in love with me. My emotions can't do it. My talking and my depressions can't do it. Only Jesus Christ can do it.

I have everything that eternity has, because I've got eternity in everything. I'm not going to insult eternity by being occupied with time to limit eternity. If God wants to take time to reveal eternity, I will glory in eternity while I am waiting in time.

He who enters into God's rest ceases from his own works. If I do the work and things turn out badly, then I'll be depressed with what I see. If I think, but don't think with God, I'll become awfully weary of my thoughts. If I pray, but don't pray in faith, I will become restless in waiting.

When I enter into God's rest, I enter into the mind of God which rested from before the foundation of the world. When I enter into His rest, I

cease from working, trying to define peace. Jesus Christ died for me. He was resurrected for me. He went to heaven and took me with Him. He sent the Holy Spirit. He lives inside of me. It's eternal life through an eternal work by the eternal Spirit in an eternal body. I have eternal joy because I've entered into an eternal redemption. I have an eternal purpose, given in grace for eternity. When I enter into His rest, I am a partaker of God's glory for ever and ever.

CONCLUSION

I have received the baptism of love by the Holy Spirit. I don't need added experiences, because I am at rest in the Finished Work. I rest in Jesus Christ who came into my heart, not in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I thank God for these gifts; I will experience them to the fullest—in the order and purpose of God. But I'm not going to make a doctrine out something *I* have done; instead, I am going to make a life out of Someone who lives in me.

I can picture the devil having a good time as he stirs people up to argue over the diversity of gifts God has given. These things aren't the issue. Simply receive Jesus. When I am filled with the Spirit and yielded to Jesus Christ, then whatever He gives will be glorious.

If I cease from my works and enter into His rest, which was accomplished from the foundation of the world, then there isn't much for me to worry about! God had everything about me

planned and figured out in a Person, Jesus Christ, before I was born. All I have to do is become a partaker of His life by faith, enjoy God's rest, and experience the glory of life in Him.