GET BACK TO YOUR RESTING PLACE

Jeremiah 50:6-8, "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks."  
  
Surely we live in a world where there is little time to rest and relax. The fast paced society in which we live, place demands upon us that are often overwhelming. There are never enough hours in a day or enough days in the week to accomplish all that we must accomplish.  
  
How many of us look forward to the end of the work week and wait with great anticipation for the weekend so that we can get a little rest and perhaps do some of the things that we enjoy, but when that weekend comes, we don’t get anything accomplished and the little time off that we have is consumed by so many responsibilities that before we know it, Monday has come again and we [start](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=1) the same process over again in a never ending cycle?  
  
Somehow I don’t believe that this is the kind of life that God had in mind for His children when He created the first man and woman upon the earth. God intended for man to enjoy life and not just endure it. Life was meant to be a wonderful, eternal existence with long walks with the Lord in the cool of the evening. Everything in life was to be a wonderful and [learning](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=1) experience and the work of your hands was meant to bring satisfaction and abundance in all things desired or needed for your happiness.  
  
Somehow man, through the fall in the Garden of Eden, has fallen from that state of blissful life into the miserable and wretched condition that we see around us today.  
  
More than in the physical sense, I believe that God intends for all of us to enjoy a Resting Place in the Spiritual sense.  
  
Hebrews 4:9-11, "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. Let us labor therefore to [enter](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=1) into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."  
  
As we look around us it becomes obvious that God’s People are not always resting in the Lord for we are always laboring in attempt to prove our own self-worthiness to be called a Child of God.   
  
These verses in Hebrews tell us that Jesus has [completed](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=2) His work of Redemption and Salvation and has now entered into a place of rest.   
  
Hebrews 1:3, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"  
  
Hebrews 8:1, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"  
  
Because Jesus has completed the work of our salvation, we can enter into that rest with Him.   
  
Why do we feel that we must try so hard to be a Christian? Trying to do something to be a Christian does not give me any indication that we are “at rest” in Jesus. We are still “trying” to do something that we can’t seem to ever finish.  
  
When will you ever be good enough?

At what point in your life will you feel that you have done enough to be called holy?

How many prayers must you pray and for how many hours?

How many sacrifices must you make before you will feel that you have paid enough?

How many times will you ask for God to forgive you of sin before you will believe that God has really forgiven you?

How many things must be removed from your life before you will consider yourself perfect in the sight of God?  
  
THAT KIND OF PERFECTION WILL NEVER COME BECAUSE IT CANNOT BE PURCHASED OR EARNED THROUGH SELF-SACRIFICE!  
  
Oh Child of God, when will we realize that Jesus has done it all for us and that there is nothing we can do to earn anymore than what Jesus has already given us? When will we learn to “rest” in His salvation?  
  
I cannot remove the responsibilities of your [job](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=2), home and family. Neither can I remove the amount of work and effort that must be done in order to provide for these things. We all have our cross to bear in this life for we are living under the effects of sin in this present world and there is no escaping the power of sin in this fleshly tabernacle. Even in this world of great time and work demands there is hope. Jesus has promised that He will never put upon us more than we can bear. We can run to our Heavenly Father in our moments of frustration and depression and He will hear our cry and He will make a way where there is no way for us to get our mind and heart back into balance. Jesus’ presence in our lives always brings us the power and the energy to do what we must do in this life.  
  
When I say that Jesus has done it all for you I don’t mean to say that you have an excuse for sin in your body. If you are truly born again then sin has no power over you and you can live a sanctified life. Surely sin abounds and it is easy to become a victim of our own desires and be drawn away from God but we have an advocate with the Father and when we simply turn to Him and ask for His forgiveness in repentance, He is always faithful to forgive us and [cleanse](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=2) us.  
  
Jesus went to the Cross and died for you so that sin cannot reign and rule in your life. When sin enters your heart, the Holy Spirit within you will immediately prick your heart and let you know that you have grieved Him. That’s the moment when we must look up to Heaven and repent so that the sin can be washed away. it preached that even one sin will keep you out of Heaven and that is true because the scripture says that sin cannot [enter](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=3) into Heaven at all. That leaves us in a dilemma! If I sin, even without my knowledge of that sin, how can I be assured that Heaven will be my home if Jesus comes for me before that sin is revealed to me and before I have a chance to repent of it?  
  
Now we come to the place where there is no resting in Jesus because we are constantly attempting to “work out” our salvation. We are caught in a constant battle between sin and repentance, being forgiven, then walking out the door of [the church](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=3) and, BAM, sin enters us once again. On and on it goes and we feel like a squirrel in cage going round and round but never getting anywhere; wearing ourselves out physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually because we can never find a place of rest.  
  
If you are in that cage I just described this morning – it’s time to [quit](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=3) running. It’s time to stop and see that Jesus has removed the cage and paid for the sin and given you a place in Him where you can feel secure.  
  
…My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place…  
  
So many Christians are living as though they were lost sheep. They are sheep. They are a part of God’s family, but they don’t know that they are safe in the arms of the Great Shepherd and they are constantly looking for a place to rest but never find one.  
  
Why is this so? Why is it that so many never learn to rest in the salvation that Jesus has given to us? Why are we always under condemnation and never feel that we are good enough?  
  
I think that the greatest reason is that, we, as ministers of the gospel and shepherds of the flock of God’s people, have not preached and taught the gospel the way that Jesus intended for it to be taught to His people.  
  
We preachers love to be “Lords” over the flock by telling the sheep where they can go, what they cannot do, and how they must dress, act or talk. We love to make up our own little set of by laws, rules and regulations that force people to be under bondage or face the wrath of God from the pulpit. That is never the [job](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=3) of the shepherd!  
  
Nowhere in nature, nor in the Word of God, do I ever hear or read of a shepherd who beats on the sheep when they go astray, or cast them out of the fold because they say, “BAA” in the wrong manner. I’ve never heard a shepherd say to His sheep, “If you walk past that line in the sand, then you aren’t my sheep anymore, you are a goat.”  
It is the job of the shepherd to love those sheep, [care](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=3) for those sheep, seek them out when they are lost and provide for their safety. Sometimes that requires that the shepherd gives a warning or calls the sheep back, or even carries them back to the fold, but those warnings are given with love and compassion, not with judgment and anger!   
  
How can the sheep find rest when the shepherd is constantly screaming at them, condemning them, pointing fingers of accusation and telling them how terrible they are?  
  
I know that we must work to be like Jesus, but that “work” is not what saves us or condemns us. There can be no rest for those sheep who must ever be attempting to earn the love of their shepherd. The shepherd loves them simply because they are sheep and He expects only their love and obedience in return, nothing else.   
  
What does a shepherd require of His sheep? What part must they [play](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=4) in the life of the shepherd? Earthly sheep accomplish their “work” by simply existing and producing the wool and mutton for the income and food for the shepherd.  
  
God’s flock accomplishes it work by producing new sheep through witnessing and praying for others and working in the vocation where God has placed us. I think we should remember that the shepherd doesn’t produce lambs. That’s the [job](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=4) of the sheep. I’ve often heard this used as an excuse for Pastors who don’t lead others to Christ because they are the shepherds. I have to remind myself that we are all sheep in God’s pasture, no matter what position we hold. God knows that His sheep are not perfect and that they will often fail to produce all that He would desire but He never quits loving them, never quits caring for them, and never casts them aside.  
  
Just as the shepherd provides a place of safety and rest inside the sheepfold, Jesus has provided a place of safety and rest for his people.   
  
Our rest is secured when we realize that God isn’t going to kick us out of the fold every time we make a mistake or do something wrong. Our Great Shepherd loves us for we are bought with His own blood and that was no cheap price for Him to pay. None of us would buy an expensive puppy, learn to love that puppy like one of the family, and then cast it out at the first sign of trouble and you matter so much more to your Heavenly Father than any dog. God loves you and wants you to live with Him in a place of rest for all eternity!  
  
Don’t allow the Devil to lie to you and convince you that you can never be “good enough” to make it to Heaven. That’s only a half-truth! No, you can never be “good enough” within yourself, but in Jesus Christ, you will always be “good enough” for His blood washes your sin away and makes you perfect in the sight of God.  
  
There are so many people who have left [the church](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/get-back-to-your-resting-place-james-may-sermon-on-assurance-of-salvation-50830.asp?Page=4), turned away from God’s house, and ran off into the Babylonian system of this world’s pleasures because they felt that they could never measure up to what some preacher requires. God help those preachers who make it so hard to live for Jesus that people think it’s impossible to do so!  
  
How quickly we forget that Jesus paid it all. There is nothing we can pay to make our salvation any surer or to make Jesus love us any more than He did before we were even saved.   
  
He loved us so much as lost sheep that He died for us. He loves us just as much as sheep of His fold, children of His family, sons and daughters of God.  
  
…All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks…"  
  
Those who have run from God are fair game and prey for every demon of hell. The devil rejoices because he has stolen some of God’s sheep and claimed them for his goatherd. He brings every conceivable distress upon those who run from God and Satan will do everything he can to see to it that God’s lost sheep never find their way back home. He brings accusations of unfaithfulness, telling us how unfit we are to be called a Christian. In that fashion he justifies to us why we should not come back to God. What a liar He is! Whether we have made mistakes or not, we are still God’s people and God desires for us to come back and rest in His place of safety!  
  
Oh, but friend, we have a Great Shepherd this morning! Jesus Christ, our Savior and the Holy Spirit are ever reaching out to God’s lost sheep and no devil can stop them from finding those who are His.   
  
The only way that the Great Shepherd will ever let you go is if you decide that you don’t want to be a part of his fold any longer. If you reject Him and decide to walk away then He loves you so much that He will also let you go and do your thing. At the same time he will always love you and want to see you come back. He is quick to forgive and restore those who come to him.  
  
If you have lost that place of rest and you need to leave Babylon and come back to Jesus, now is the time. The Great Shepherd is standing and waiting with arms outstretched. He is lovingly reaching out to you and saying, “Come Home, Come Home!”  
  
Come back to Jesus and enjoy that place of Rest that Jesus has so wonderfully provided for all of us!