

Hebrews 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Fred Jr. ended his sermon last week with these words: “Fullness of joy’ and ‘pleasures for evermore’ sounds like a pretty good deal to me; certainly far better than anything the suffering saint experiences in this lifetime.” It is a pretty good deal indeed. He did not know that I had been reading up on what a good deal it is. Today I hope to convey some of the details of the goodness of it.

Fred Jr. got those words from Pslam 16:11 **Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm 16).**

Psalm 16 concerns the election of the church, and the death and resurrection of Christ. Verse 11 speaks to what our Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected to: fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. As joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, his elect inherit the same kingdom and the same blessings, including fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. Romans 8:17: “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Luke 12:32: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” In John 17:20-24, our Lord Jesus Christ is praying to His Father: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” And those who are in Christ Jesus have inherited all that love.

John Trapp pithily says of Psalm 16:11: “For quality, there is in heaven joy and pleasures. For quantity, a fulness, a torrent, whereat they drink without let or loathing. For constancy, it is at God’s right hand, who is stronger than all, neither can any take us out of his hand; it is a constant happiness without intermission. And for perpetuity, it is for evermore. Heaven’s joys are without measure, mixture, or end.”

“Every soul shall there enjoy an infinite happiness, because it shall enjoy an infinite goodness. And it shall be for ever enjoyed, without disliking of it, or losing of it, or lacking any of it. Every soul shall enjoy as much good in that presence, by the presence of that good, as it shall be able to receive, or to desire to receive. As much as shall make it fully happy. Every one shall be filled so proportionably full; and every desire in any soul shall be filled so perfectly in that presence of glory, with the glory of that presence, that no one shall ever wish for any more, or ever be weary of that it has, or be willing to change it for any other.” Edward Willan.

“Mark, for quality, there are pleasures; for quantity, fulness; for dignity, at God’s right hand; for eternity, for evermore. And millions of years multiplied by millions, make not up one minute to this eternity of joy that the saints shall have in heaven. In heaven there shall be no sin to take away your joy, nor no devil to take away your joy; nor no man to take away your joy. ‘Your joy no man taketh from you.’ #Joh 16:22. The joy of the saints in heaven is never ebbing, but always flowing to all contentment. The joys of heaven never fade, never wither, never die, nor never are lessened nor interrupted. The joy of the saints in heaven is a constant joy, an everlasting joy, in the root and in the cause, and in the matter of it and in the objects of it. ‘Their joy lasts for ever whose objects remain for ever.’” Thomas Brooks.

Today I hope to describe some of those joys and pleasures which constitute this rest in heaven for the people of God. Hebrews 4:9: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

One thing contained in heavenly rest, is, the ceasing from means of grace. When we have obtained the refuge — we are done sailing (Hebrew 6:17-20). When the workman receives his wages — it is implied he has done his work (Matthew 20:1-15). When we are at our journey's end — we are done with the way (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Whether prophecies, they shall fail; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it also, so far as it had the nature of means of obtaining grace, shall vanish away. (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

There shall be no more prayer, because no more necessity — but the full enjoyment of what we prayed for (Jeremiah 31:9; Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:1-4): neither shall we need to fast (Matthew 9:14-15; Mark 2:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:5), and weep (Jeremiah 31:9; Revelation 7:17; 21:4), and watch (2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:26) any more — being out of the reach of sin and temptations. Preaching is done; the ministry of man ceases; ordinances become useless. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ of which we follow represented by our ordinance of water baptism has come to fruition for the saints. The time has arrived for which Christ spoke in Matthew 26:29: “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” The laborers are called in, because the harvest is gathered, the tares burned, and the work finished (Matthew 9:38; 13:30, 39); the unregenerate past hope (Luke 16:21-31), and the saints past fear, forever (1 Corinthians 2:3).

There is in heavenly rest a perfect freedom from all evils: from all the evils that accompanied us through our course (Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:7), and which necessarily follow our absence from the chief good, besides our freedom from those eternal flames and restless miseries which the neglecters of Christ and grace (Hebrews 2:3) must forever endure — a woeful inheritance, which, both by birth and actual merit, was due to us as well as to them (Ephesians 2:1-10).

In Heaven there is nothing that defiles or is unclean. (Revelation 21:27; Ephesians 5:5) All that remains outside (Revelation 22:15). And doubtless there is not such a thing as grief

and sorrow known there (Revelation 21:4); nor is there such a thing as a pale face, a fatigued body, feeble joints, helpless infancy, worn out old age, painful or pining sickness, griping fears, consuming cares, nor whatever deserves the name of evil (Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Isaiah 35:10: "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorry and sighing shall be taken away." Isaiah 65:19: "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying."). We wept and lamented when the world rejoiced — but our sorrow is turned to joy, and our joy shall no man take from us (John 16:20-22).

Another ingredient of this rest is the highest degree of the saints' personal perfection, both of body and soul. Were the glory of heaven the greatest an omnipotent God could create, and the saints not made capable of it by a personal perfection suitable thereto, it would be little to them. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9). For the eye of flesh is not capable of seeing them, nor this ear of hearing them, nor this heart of understanding them: but there, the eye, and ear, and heart are made capable; else, how do they enjoy them? The more perfect the sight is — the more delightful the beautiful object. The more perfect the appetite — the sweeter the food. The more musical the ear — the more pleasant the melody. The more perfect the soul — the more joyous those joys, and the more glorious, to us, is that glory. 1 Corinthians 2:10 says that those things referred to in verse 9 are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit here. However, the application of this verse to the future glory is proper because if Christians see so much of its beauty here on earth; and if their views so far surpass all that the world sees and enjoys, how much greater and purer will be the manifestations of wisdom and goodness in the world of glory with the highest degree of perfection in body and soul? (John Gill).

The principal part of this rest is our nearest enjoyment of God, the chief good. These words are straight from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ while on earth. John 17:24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Every word is full of life and joy.

And here, do not wonder if I am at a loss for words, and if my understanding comes up short of what the details of that are at this point. If it did not appear to the beloved disciple what we shall be — but only, in general, "that when Christ shall appear — we shall be like him," no wonder if I know little. When I know so little of God — I cannot much know what it will be to enjoy him at that place and time, but I believe the Holy Spirit's report: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of

God: ...Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:1-2).

The saints behold as in a looking-glass, which makes us capable of some poor, dark understandings of what we shall behold in glory. 1 Corinthians 13:12: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” If I should tell a worldling what the holiness and spiritual joys of the saints on earth are — he cannot know; for grace cannot be clearly known without grace; how much less could he conceive it, should I tell him of this glory. But to the saints I may be somewhat more encouraged to speak, for grace gives them a slight knowledge and slight taste of glory. (Hebrews 6:4-5).

If the queen of Sheba had cause to say of Solomon's glory, "Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom;" (2 Chronicles 9:7) then, surely, those who stand continually before God, and see his glory, and the glory of the Lamb, are more than happy. To them will Christ give to eat of the tree of life (Revelation 2:7; 22:14), and to eat of the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17); yes, he will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go no more out; and he will write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, and he will write upon them his new name (Revelation 3:12); and, more, he will grant them to sit with him in his throne. (Revelation 3:21). “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:14-17).

O blind, deceived world! Can you show us such a glory? This is the city of our God, where the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. (Revelation 21:3). The glory of God shall enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Revelation 21:23) And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him (Revelation 22:3), and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. (Revelation 22:4). These sayings are faithful and true, and the things which must shortly be done. (Revelation 22:6).

And now we say, as Mephibosheth — let the world take all, forasmuch as our Lord will come in peace. (2 Samuel 19:30). Rejoice therefore in the Lord always, O you righteous. And again I say, Rejoice. (Philippians 4:4) And say, with his servant David, "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance ... The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. ... I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall

rest in hope. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm 16:5-11).

How unfitting it would be to talk of being sons of God — speaking to him — having fellowship with him — dwelling in him and he in us — if this had not been God's own language. How much less dared we have once thought of shining forth as the sun (Matthew 13:43) — of being joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) — of judging the world (1 Corinthians 6:2) — of sitting on Christ's throne (Revelation 3:21)— of being one in him and the Father (John 17:22)— if we had not all this from the mouth, and under the hand of God. But has he said — and shall he not do it? Has he spoken — and shall he not make it good? (Numbers 23:19). Yes, as the Lord God is true, thus shall it be done to the man whom Christ delights to honor. (Esther 6:6-11).

Be of good cheer, the time is at hand when God and you shall be near, and as near as you can best desire. You shall dwell in his family. (Ephesians 3:15). Is that enough? It is better to be a door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Psalm 84:10). You shall ever stand before him, about his throne, in his presence-chamber. (Jude 1:24). Would you yet be nearer? You shall be his child, and he your Father; you shall be an heir of his kingdom; yes, more, the spouse of his Son. (Song of Solomon). And what more can you desire? You shall be a member of the body of his Son; he shall be your head; you shall be one with him, who is one with the Father, as he himself has desired for you of his Father: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: ... And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:21-23).

I must add that this rest contains a sweet and constant action of all the powers of the soul and body in this enjoyment of God. It is not the rest of a stone. This body shall be so changed, that it shall no more be flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50); but a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:54). We sow not that body which shall be — but God gives it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed his own body (1 Corinthians 15:38). If grace makes a Christian differ so much from what he was, as to say, I am not the man I was — then how much more will glory make us differ. As much as a spiritual body, above the sun in glory, exceeds these frail, noisome, diseased bodies of flesh — so far shall our senses exceed those we now possess.

Doubtless, as God advances our senses, and enlarges our capacity, so will he advance the happiness of those senses, and fill up, with himself, all that capacity. Certainly the body would not be raised up and continued, if it were not to share in the glory. As it has shared in the obedience and sufferings — so shall it also in the blessedness. (2 Timothy 2:12). As Christ bought the whole man, so shall the whole partake of the everlasting benefits of the purchase (Psalm 74:2; 1 Corinthians 6:20). O the blessed employment of a glorified body. To stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, and to sound forth forever, "Thou art

worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Revelation 4:11). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Revelation 5:12). For thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests (Revelation 5:9-10). Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God. Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Revelation 19:1,6).

This is the blessed rest; a rest, as it were, without rest; for "and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Revelation 4:8). And if the body shall be thus employed — then O how shall the soul be taken up with it all. As its powers and capacities are greatest, so its actions are strongest, and its enjoyments sweetest.

Believe me, friends, you that have known God in Christ here — it is as nothing compared to what you shall know: in comparison of that, it scarcely deserves to be called knowledge. For as these bodies, so that knowledge must cease, that a more perfect may follow. "Knowledge shall vanish away. For we know in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but, when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly — but then face to face; now I know in part — but then shall I know, even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

Marvel not therefore how it can be life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ. (John 17:3 "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.") To enjoy God and Christ is eternal life; and the soul's enjoying is in knowing. Those who savor only of earth, and consult with flesh, think it a poor happiness to know God. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5:19-20).

The memory will not be idle, or useless, in this blessed work. From that height, the saint can look behind him and before him. (Revelation 4:8). And to compare past with present things must raise in the blessed soul an inconceivable esteem and sense of its condition. To stand in Heaven and look back on earth, and weigh them together in the balance of a comparing sense and judgment — how must it needs transport the soul and instruct the soul in the blessed rest it has inherited. And the joy shall flow.

In heaven we will have the capacity to fully understand and enjoy the love of God described at 1 John 4:16: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." God bears an everlasting, unchangeable and invariable love for his elect. Now, our capacities to enjoy that love are weak. Then, our eyes will affect our heart, and the continual viewing of that perfect beauty

will keep us in continual love. We shall be eternally embraced in the arms of that love which was from everlasting, and, will extend to everlasting. That love which was weary (Psalm 69:3; Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46), hungry (Matthew 4:2), tempted (Luke 4:2), scorned (Psalm 22:7; Matthew 9:24), scourged (John 19:1), buffeted (Mark 14:65), spit upon (Mark 15:19), crucified (John 19:25), pierced (Psalm 22:16; John 19:37); which did fast (Psalm 69:10; Matthew 4:2; Matthew 17:21), pray (John 17:9), teach (Matthew 26:55), heal (Matthew 12:15), weep (John 11:35), sweat (Luke 22:44), bleed (John 19:34), die (John 19:30) — that love will eternally embrace us.

He who keeps you so constant in your love to him now, that you can challenge tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, to separate your love from Christ — how much more will he himself be constant in heaven. Indeed you may be persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35, 38-39).

Infinite love is a mystery to a finite capacity. No wonder angels desire to look into this mystery (1 Peter 1:12). And if it be the study of saints here "to know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge (Ephesians 3:17-19);" the saints' everlasting rest must consist in the enjoyment of God by love.

This is "the white stone which no man knoweth, saving he who receiveth it." (Revelation 2:17). This eternal and unmistakable token of our forgiveness of sin is a great replacement for the lumps of black coal we receive from this world. Surely this is the joy with which a stranger knows nothing of and does not have any part. All Christ's ways of mercy, tend to an end in the saints' joys. He wept, sorrowed, suffered — that they might rejoice; he sends the Spirit to be their comforter (John 14:26); he multiplies promises (2 Peter 1:4); he reveals their future happiness (Amos 3:7) — that their joy may be full. He opens to them the fountain of living waters (Song of Solomon 4:15; Jeremiah 2:13) — that they may thirst no more (Revelation 7:16), and that it may spring up in them to everlasting life. (John 4:14; Isaiah 45:8). He chastens them — that he may give them rest. (Hebrews 12:6). He makes it their duty to rejoice in him always, and again commands them to rejoice. (Philippians 4:4) He never brings them into so low a condition that he does not leave them more cause of joy than sorrow. (Hebrews 12:11). And has the Lord such a care for our comfort here? O what will that joy be, where the soul being perfectly prepared for joy, and joy prepared by Christ for the soul — it shall be our work, our business, eternally to rejoice.

Poor, humble, drooping soul, how does it fill you with joy now, if a voice from Heaven should tell you of the love of God, the pardon of your sins, and assure you of your part in these joys (Psalm 35:3). What then will your joy be, when your actual possession shall convince you of your title, and you shall be in Heaven before you are aware (Matthew 25:14).

And it is not your joy only; it is a mutual joy as well as a mutual love. Is there joy in Heaven at your conversion (Luke 15:10) — and will there be none at your glorification? Will not the

angels welcome you there, and congratulate your safe arrival? (Matthew 24:31; Luke 16:22; Psalm 91:11; Psalm 34:7). Yes, it is the joy of Jesus Christ; for now he has the end of his undertaking, labor, suffering, dying — when we have our joys; when he is "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" (2 Thessalonians 1:10) when he "sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied." (Isaiah 53:11) This is Christ's harvest, when he shall reap the fruit of his labors; and he will not regret his sufferings — but he will rejoice over his purchased inheritance, and his people will rejoice in him.

Yes, the Father himself puts on joy, too, in our joy. As we grieve his Spirit (Psalm 78:40; Ephesians 4:30), and weary him with our iniquities (Isaiah 43:24), so he is rejoiced in our good. (Deuteronomy 28:63). O how quickly does he now spy a returning prodigal, even afar off. How does he run and meet him. And with what compassion does he fall on his neck and kiss him, and put on him the best robe, and a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and kills the fatted calf, to eat and be merry. (Luke 15:11-32). This is indeed a happy meeting; but nothing compared to the embracing and joy of that last and great meeting.

Yes, more — as God does mutually love and joy, so he makes this his rest, as it is our rest. What an eternal rest, when the work of redemption, sanctification, preservation, glorification, is all finished and perfected forever. "The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17). We then will rest in our God with joy, and rest in our love, and joy in him with singing.

I love you. Amen