

The Gift of Rest

Declaration:

- My eyes are on Jesus
- My heart is tuned to His Spirit
- My ears are listening to His voice
- My mind will believe what He says
- My voice will declare the truth of His word

Today, we are going to continue to focus on stewardship, but we are going to focus in on a few areas. We are going to begin with the Sabbath and we will most likely stretch this out into a few messages because of the depth of this topic.

This is an area that I've only begun to unpack in it's fullness over the past 3 years and there's still so much. I was asked recently on a leadership call, how important is sabbath? How often do you preach or teach on it?

How can we abide in Jesus if we don't understand what that means? At it's core is a life-giving rest found only in enjoying Him and letting Him enjoy us.

What is Sabbath?

In The Beginning...

Genesis 2:2-3 (NIV)

²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Genesis 1:27-31 (NIV)

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." 29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And

it was so. 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

- *God created man and woman in His image, He delighted in them, and the very first thing they got to do was to rest (sabbath) with Him!*

Before our work ever started, we see the Father's heart. We are equipped in the 1st day, the day of resting with Him.

So often, we see our week as work, then recover, and repeat.

We see other examples all around us - babies spend approximately 9 months in their mother's womb, the years of preparation before taking up a vocation. We even see in scripture that much of Jesus' time was in preparation for His years of ministry. It's only in the final 2-3 years that we see Him do things for people to see and yet, He always found time to return to the quiet places and commune with the Father.

Remember & Observe - The 10 Commandments

Exodus 20:8–11 (NIV) - Remember

⁸"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5:12–15 (NIV) - Observe

¹²"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, ***so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do.***

¹⁵Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

As I was growing up, I remember being told - you don't do anything on Sunday! I was never really told why and there was no real teaching or showing of how and why, they didn't even call it sabbath! As we have discussed before, rules or commands, without understanding, are often empty and powerless in the lives of

the ignorant. Through careful examination of scripture, you will find that God made no effort to conceal the beauty and power behind sabbath, nor many other truths, they just required us to go to the source(Him) with hunger.

Instead, most believers have often opted for the short/easier route of don't do this, don't do that, and you'll be blessed. (Mostly rooted in Legalism)

Alternatively, those that were hurt or tried to find another way followed the intentional or unintentional misunderstanding of scripture (Mark 3:4, Is it lawful to do good?) and have endlessly searched for other "good things" instead of assembling together with other believers regularly each week.

Mark 2:23 (NIV)

In context, Jesus was reminding us that Sabbath was made for us (v27) He then connected what was happening to the statements in creation week, God saw everything that He made and proclaimed that it was good. Jesus asked if it was lawful to do good on sabbath.

In Mark 10:18, Jesus reminded the people that God is the only one who is good. So in order to do any good, I believe we must be connected to the source.

I love what Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said,
"Unless one learns how to relish the taste of Sabbath while still in this world, unless one is initiated in the appreciation of eternal life, one will be unable to enjoy the taste of eternity in the world to come...The essence of the world to come is Sabbath eternal, and the seventh day in time is an example of eternity."

Pete Scazzero sums it up this way, "On Sabbath, we practice eternity in time. For a brief moment, we reorient ourselves away from this world, in all its brokenness, and anticipate the world to come - how things on earth are meant to be."

So, in our first few points of discussion I see - **rest, communion, a return to holiness, & praise to God for His goodness.**

Luke 10:38–42 (NKJV)

³⁸Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴²"But **one thing** is needed, and Mary has chosen

that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

****One thing **** the cross-reference shows two verses here:

Psalm 27:4 (NIV)

⁴One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may **dwell** in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

- Do you want to abide or dwell in His home? Looking upon His beauty and splendor just as Mary was doing?

John 6:27 (NIV)

²⁷Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

- Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every WORD that proceeds from the mouth of God. Jesus is the Word made flesh (Jn 1) and (Jn 6:35) Jesus tells us that He's the bread of life.

Closing

I don't think anyone can tell you what Sabbath should look like with a step by step plan (which defeats the purpose), I believe that part was intentionally left out so that You could go to the Father and ask Him. I believe that at minimum it starts with stopping and processing what we've discussed so far in your heart and mind. It might sound something like this - God, your Word says that You made the Sabbath holy and You rested from all Your work. I am to remember and observe everything You did. First to give praise out of the wonder and thankfulness it stirs up in my heart and second to just enjoy being with You.

Story of the heart surgeon - how I love to hold my kids (grandpa story too)

John 13:23&25 - John was leaning against Jesus as if to listen to His heartbeat. Notice how it's there twice? - I believe 2 Ti 3:16-17 all scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us truth... and I believe that God wanted this in the text we have today as a reminder!

As I thought about this, the only answer is **repentance**. It's the only way to move forward.

Acts 3:17&19 (NIV)

¹⁷"Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

¹⁹Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...