

# Sabbath

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Those of us joining after already being a part of Advent will know that we're in the middle of a series. Those joining for the first time tonight, I would like to welcome you again.
- As I said at the beginning of the service, if we've not met, I hope to do so after the service. The series that we're in we're calling Foundations, because we're asking foundational questions about ourselves, about our world, and about our God.
- And we're doing that believing that if we understand these foundational things about our life and our world and our God, that that will shape how we live.
- It will help us make sense of a world that is frankly quite chaotic and divided in terms of how we make meaning of our experiences. It will give us an orientation and a direction for the lives that we're living here in D.C. on a day-to-day basis.
- So we're going to the Foundations. And a lot of what we've been talking about, for those of you who have been here, is what it means to be a human being, which is pretty foundational.
- [ 1 : 1 2 ] What it means to be human. With the understanding that we can't seek to be human unless we know what it means to be a human. And so we talked in the previous weeks about the centrality of relationships.
- Our relationship with the world around us, our relationships with one another. And this week we're shifting to focus on our relationship with God.
- And this comes in an interesting way because at this point in our section of Scripture that we've been looking at, the first few chapters of Genesis, the first book in the Bible in the Old Testament, we see that God in creation establishes a rhythm.
- A rhythm of rest and work. And that part of what it means to be human is to live lives patterned after this rhythm.
- Working all of the time is dehumanizing. Not working is dehumanizing. There's a rhythm that is essential to our humanness. And so today we're going to spend our time talking about the first half of this, which is rest.
- [ 2 : 2 0 ] What the Bible calls Sabbath. So we'll look tonight at Sabbath rest. What is it? Why do we need it? And how do we get it?
- What is it? Why do we need it? How do we get it? The passage is Genesis chapter 1 verse 31 through Genesis chapter 2 verse 3.
- Let's pray for the Lord to lead us. Lord, of all the topics we could consider tonight, this is not one many of us need convincing on.
- We look at our lives. As we look at the chaos of our daily routine and many of us know we need rest. Lord, help us find it.
- Help us through your word. Help us through the power of your spirit to illuminate your word. And help us through your son to which your word points. We pray this in your son's holy name.

[ 3 : 21 ] Amen. So the first question to consider is this. Simply, what is the Sabbath? What is Sabbath rest? I'll read again this passage from Genesis chapter 1 verse 31.

And God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good. Up to this point he's just said good, but now he says very good. And that was evening and that was morning, the sixth day.

Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God finished his work that he had done. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Because on it, God rested from all of his work that he had done in creation. So here, as God is establishing, he's laying the foundational elements of our world, of the universe, of our very existence.

He builds into this, this thing called a Sabbath rest. And what we've seen all along, if you look back in the earlier part of Genesis chapter 1, you see that God is creating in a specific way.

[ 4 : 34 ] God encounters chaos. And then God speaks into that chaos and he brings order to the chaos. And he does that by differentiating, organizing, ordering.

He takes and he divides day from night, light from darkness. He divides water from sky. He divides sea from land. He's ordering and he's giving form and function to chaos.

And he also orders time. He establishes here a rhythm, as we said a moment ago, a rhythm of rest and work, of Sabbath and work.

And we need to notice that God finishes his work of creation and then he actually blesses this day. And this is the only place in creation where God actually blesses time.

He blesses a demarcation of time. So in the creation story, the Sabbath is this climax when God has finished his work. And if you've been keeping score at home over the last few weeks, you know that creation isn't just stuff that God is hurtling out into existence.

[ 5 : 48 ] That the purpose of all of this is actually that God is building a temple for himself. That all of creation is a temple. And so the creation story climaxes with the Sabbath where God has finished building the temple and he moves in.

So this isn't God just saying, I'm tired, I need a breather, I'm going to take a day to rest up and then we'll get started. Rather, this is God, he's built his temple, he's built the throne, and now he's taking his seat in the throne.

Or we might think of a president-elect that when that president finally moves into the White House, right? They're moving in, they're setting up, they're sitting in the throne from which they will then begin to rule.

And this is what's happening on this Sabbath. So this is why God builds this into the life of God's people.

It begins to make sense when you understand that. Because on the one hand, I don't think that we're meant to interpret the creation account as a literal six days. We've talked about it in the past, and we can get into that in more detail.

[ 7 : 00 ] If you'd like to talk about that, I'd be happy to talk to you about it after the service. But even as far back as St. Origen in the 3rd century or St. Augustine in the early 5th century, you have church fathers who never saw this as a literal 24-hour day after day after day of creation, six days of creation.

So on the one hand, I don't think we're meant to interpret creation as a literal six days. But on the other hand, God actually does command his people to observe a seven-day week. In other words, to pattern their time after this account of creation.

And so when God gives the law to Moses, he includes Sabbath observance among the Ten Commandments. Exodus chapter 20. It says in verse 8, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. And what's fascinating about this is, it's not just applied to, you know, the men.

It's not just applied to the husbands and wives or the family. It's applied to all of the people who might be in the house. It's applied to the servants and the day laborers.

[ 8 : 12 ] It's applied even to the animals. Even the animals get a Sabbath. And then a few chapters later in Exodus 23, God says that every seven years, the land takes a Sabbath.

Even the land. So this is a picture of all of everybody. Men, women, children, free, slave. Animals. The land itself.

All following this pattern of Sabbath rest. So when we think about the meaning of Sabbath, we realize it's not just about taking a day off.

In many ways, taking a day off can become a kind of counterfeit Sabbath. A cheap knockoff Sabbath. It's not just about making sure we take vacation every so often.

It has very little to do with that. Fundamentally, we see that the Sabbath is actually about ceasing from our work so that we can celebrate God's work.

[ 9 : 14 ] It's about ceasing from our work so that we can celebrate God's work. It's about an entire reorientation of our focus and our attention and our perspective and our time and our very identity.

And we'll talk more about that in a little while. But a way to think of that is maybe this. We have cathedrals in the spatial dimension. Beautiful cathedrals.

And you walk in and you cross the threshold. And immediately you realize that you feel as though you've entered another world. A kind of holy ground. And there are places that are so beautiful and transcendent that make you feel like you want to take your shoes off and tread lightly.

And speak only in hushed whispers. Because this is a holy place. Not so much this place, but... There are places like that in the spatial dimension.

The Sabbath is a cathedral in time. And when we cross the threshold of the Sabbath, something fundamental changes. That's what the Sabbath is all about.

[ 10 : 17 ] The Sabbath is God's cathedral in time. A time set aside where we celebrate God's work and we rest in the fact that God is on the throne and not us.

So this is what the Sabbath is. When we ask, what is Sabbath? When we look back at this creation story, this is what the Sabbath is and how it came to function in the life of the nation of Israel.

Now we're going to pause there because we want to ask, why do we need it? We've just described what it is, but why do we need it? And how does that actually apply to us living at this point in history? We're not Israelites.

Why should we care what happened thousands of years ago in a nation that's very far away? I don't think I actually need to convince anyone why you might need rest.

As I prayed a moment ago, I think that in terms of kind of making a pitch, this is a pretty easy pitch. It's an easy sell. You know this. We all know this.

[ 11 : 13 ] We all crave. At every party I go to, at every wedding I go to, at every dinner I share, when the question inevitably arises, how are you doing? Almost always people talk about how busy they are and how they really need a rest.

I very, very, very rarely talk to somebody who says, you know, I'm just kind of itching to do more. I've got all this free time. I don't know what to do with it. I have one friend who says that. One friend.

And everybody else in my life says the opposite. Right? Yeah. Believe it or not. But most of us say the opposite. You know, we know, I think, I don't have to quote the stats to you, We know that chronic stress leads to the breakdown of our health, the lowering of our immune system, the developing of all kinds of mental and physical diseases, shortens our lifespan.

We know that. You know, 75 to 90% of physician visits are related to stress-related illness. You know, that's a pretty compelling statistic, 75 to 90%.

And yet, you know, the Washington Post in March of this year reported that Washington, D.C. has the second highest average work week of any city in the country.

[ 12 : 33 ] Washington, D.C., the second highest average work week of any city in the country, topped only by San Francisco, surprisingly. New York was 12th. Go figure.

But we work a lot of hours. And here's the thing. Some of us work less, and some of us don't work at all, and we're wanting jobs. And we're praying for you to get a job because unemployment is equally harmful, and we'll talk about that next week.

But most of us are working long weeks. The majority of us are struggling with this. And the problem with such statistics is they account for hours at the office, sort of official reportable hours that you might put on a survey, but they don't account for what technology has done.

Right? They don't take into account the impact of the Internet and our laptops and mobile tech. See, technology, as we talked about last week, technology is both very good news and very bad news for our work.

Here's the good news that technology brings, your smartphone and your tablets and all of those things. The good news is this. We can work from anywhere, anytime.

[ 13 : 43 ] So much flexibility. Here's the bad news. We can work everywhere, all the time. And I think that that's more often the case for us, that there's no clear division between work and rest.

There's no clear line drawn in our lives. Many of us, I think, if we're honest, are always at work. If you're not physically at work, then you're virtually at work.

If you're not virtually at work, then you're thinking about work, even when you know you shouldn't be. For most of us, I think this is one of the last things we think about when we fall asleep, and it's one of the first things we think about when we wake up.

Because you wake up, and the thing that's waking you up is your iPhone alarm. And then you turn your alarm off, and then your hand betrays you, and you open your email. And then immediately, before you're even fully conscious, your to-do list is forming in your brain.

And it's crazy-making. There was this brilliant Onion article. It came out a few years ago. But I think it speaks very insightfully to this. We like to quote authoritative sources here.

[ 14 : 53 ] The title of this, some of you may have seen this, man on cusp of having fun suddenly remembers every single one of his responsibilities.

I'll just read one opening paragraph. I can just read the whole thing. While cracking open his second beer as he chatted with friends over a relaxed outdoor meal, Platt was reportedly seconds away from letting go and enjoying himself when he was suddenly crushed by the full weight of work emails that still needed to be dealt with, looming deadlines for projects that would take a great deal of time and energy to complete, an upcoming wedding he had yet to buy airfare for because of an unresolved issue with his Southwest Rapid Rewards account.

And phone calls that needed to be returned. It's great to see you guys, said the man who had been teetering on the brink of actually having fun and was now mentally preparing for a presentation that he had to give on Friday and compiling a list of bills that needed to be paid before the 7th.

This is awesome. So the question is, what drives this insanity? I mean, if I say this is wrong, nobody should live like this, you'd all say, I agree with you.

Why do we all live like this? Well, something's driving it. We can blame culture. You know, we live in a capitalist consumer society. It is true.

[16:17] And our culture overvalues productivity in a way that very few cultures have in the past. Our society does very strongly reward overachievement.

You know, and we attach status to overachievement. We do. We are proud of our overachieving, even if it's killing us.

We love to put that on display in subtle ways. And even if we don't think that way, even if you know that this is no way to live, your employer expects this of you.

And you know that if these hours are expected of you, the nature of your job is such that if you were to refuse, there are at least 100 equally, if not more qualified people in line who would love your job and who will work whatever hours are asked of them.

And we sense this, and so we feel trapped. But I do believe that the blame can't entirely be placed on culture. I think that there's more going on under the surface, that there is a kind of work that is happening underneath our work.

[17:32] In the New York Times a few years ago, Judith Shulovitz wrote a wonderful piece. I tagged it. I've read through it a number of times. It's been very helpful for me in thinking about this from a different perspective.

because she was a mostly secular New York professional, very successful. And she began to notice herself at the end of the week just winding down into a kind of paralyzed depression, social withdrawal.

She didn't know what was wrong, and she said she did the last thing she ever thought she would do. She started going to synagogue again. And as a result of this, she starts to recover this practice of Sabbath.

And she says that as she begins to do this, she realizes more and more that Sabbath rest, there's much, much more to Sabbath rest than actually meets the eye. She says this, On that weekly holiday, not only did drudgery give way to festivity, family gatherings, and occasional worship, but here's the thing.

The machinery of self-censorship shut down too, stilling the eternal inner murmur of self-reproach. On this day, something happened that was able to still the eternal inner murmur of self-reproach.

[18:50] She realized that there's something under all of this drivenness in us. And the reason I wanted to quote her is because I love the phrasing, the eternal inner murmur of self-reproach.

That sense that no matter how hard you try, there are always people that you're letting down. There are always people that are angry at you. There are always people that are critical of you.

There are always people that feel like you should have done more. The eternal murmur of self-reproach. There's that sense that no matter how hard you try, you're not really making a difference. You know, you've got a really nice degree.

Maybe you've got several really nice degrees. And you realize that all that has really seemed to amount to in your life is a way to decorate one of your walls. But you wonder, as you've become a part of this kind of giant mega non-profit that has all of these incredibly beautiful and well-worded vision statements, and then you look at your daily grind and you wonder, how in the world am I making a difference?

Am I having any impact? I've sacrificed so much. I'm paying \$10,000 a month to live in a group house of eight people. I've been living off ramen noodles for six years.

[ 20 : 13 ] I've done four unpaid back-to-back internships. And now I'm wondering, is this making any difference in the world? I thought the sacrifice would be worth something. But I feel like my life is meaningless.

The eternal murmur of self-reproach. The sense that it's never enough, that it's never good enough, that there's always something more expected of you. Or, constant rehearsals of conversations.

Things that you could have said or should have said or should not have said or should never have thought. Things that you should have done. People you should have reached out to. Emails you should have returned. The eternal murmur of self-reproach.

I believe this is what drives us. It's this need to justify ourselves. It's this need to know that at the end of the day, when all is totaled up, we make the cut. That somehow we're okay.

You know, that we cut it. And it's that sense that drives us. There's this need in us. And I believe what this is really pointing to is there's something in us that is looking for a deep level rest.

[ 21 : 25 ] A deep level rest. Not a surface rest. You know, my sister-in-law is a sleep expert. She talks about how we don't just need sleep, you know, to lay down on the couch for a little while here and there.

That we need deep sleep. We need REM sleep. We need our brain waves to change to really heal our bodies. And I think that there's a sense in which this eternal murmur is our soul saying, I need rest.

Our soul saying, I need deep level soul rest to be restored. So this leads us, so this is, I believe, why we need Sabbath.

Why we were created for this rhythm of not only work but also Sabbath rest. And so this leads us to the last point about Sabbath rest. We've talked about what it is, why we need it.

Let's talk about how we get it. One of the most common accusations brought against Jesus in his earthly ministry is that he was a Sabbath breaker.

[ 22 : 24 ] He broke the Sabbath again and again and again and again and again in a way that seemed to almost flound it. In a way that was surely seen as active provocation of the religious authorities of the day.

And in Mark chapter 2, a very flagrant violation indeed, he and his disciples are walking through a grain field and his disciples pick some of the heads of grain and they rub them between their fingers to get the kernels so they can eat the kernels and the Pharisees say, oh, I saw you.

I saw you do that. And you can imagine the disciples, you know, kind of drop it. I don't know what you're talking. And they're like, we saw that Sabbath breaker. And what they're talking about is the fact that the command to uphold the Sabbath was a little unclear.

It was a little broad. And so the Pharisees had taken upon themselves to develop not ten, not twenty, not thirty, but thirty-nine categories of Sabbath observance.

In other words, work that couldn't be done. And one of those subcategories was reaping. You couldn't reap. Picking a head of grain. Sabbath breaker. And so they accused Jesus.

[ 23 : 41 ] They say, you're leading your disciples to flound the law of Moses. Why should we listen to you? And what does Jesus say? Does he say, I'm sorry. Next time it won't happen again.

We really do care about the law. It's very important to us. That's not what I'm about. That's not what my platform is all about. He doesn't say that. Does he say, the Sabbath no longer applies?

The Sabbath was then. This is now. I'm the new thing. It's the new way. Get on my train. And I will not make you observe Sabbath. He doesn't say that. He says something very curious here.

He says in chapter 2, verse 27, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

And then here's the kicker. So the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. What he's saying here is two hugely important things about the Sabbath.

[ 24 : 41 ] One is this, that the Sabbath was always something that was meant to bless us. And you say, well, isn't the Sabbath about focusing on God? Yes. What do you think we need?

It was always something meant to bless us and to serve us, not the other way around. Jesus says, your version of Sabbath has become distorted. It's become twisted. It's doing harm and not good.

And by that, you know this isn't what God intended. But the second thing is even more important, that he, Jesus, is actually the Lord of the Sabbath. That he's the one who made the Sabbath.

That when God declared that the Sabbath would be the seventh day and when that was decreed in creation, it was said in Jesus' voice. He's saying, not only I'm the Lord of the Sabbath, he's saying, I'm the Lord of rest.

I'm the Lord of rest. Sabbath points to the Lord of rest. Why do you think you observed the Sabbath all that time?

[ 25 : 52 ] Why do you think you made all those sacrifices? Why do you think you needed a high priest? It points to me. So when Jesus dies on the cross and Jesus cries out, it is finished.

What do you think he's talking about? He's talking about all of the striving. He's talking about all of the straining. He's talking about all of the grinding. He's talking about all of the things that human beings are doing to attain that sense of rightness.

That they cut it. That they pass the test. That they're enough. Everything required to meet not just our standards or our parents' standards, but the highest standards in the land.

God's standards. And he's saying, I have now fulfilled the highest expectations in existence. God's own standards. So when Jesus says here, come to me, all who are weary or heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Do you know what he's saying? Come to me. Come to me. And finally, the eternal murmur of self-reproach will fall silent.

[ 27 : 10 ] That's rest. He's saying, I alone can silence that voice. I alone can give you deep soul rest. Sabbath rest. So how do we get this Sabbath rest?

First, you have to come to Jesus. There is no other way. You know, we said earlier that Sabbath is about ceasing from our work to celebrate God's work.

This makes so much more sense when you look at Jesus because you recognize that true Sabbath observance means ceasing from our striving and looking at the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

It's turning from our striving and looking at the finished work of Jesus on the cross. What this means is that being a Christian isn't about us bringing our work to God and saying, look at what all I've done for you.

Look at the work that I've done for you. That's not what Christianity is about. It's not saying, look at all the volunteer hours I put in. Look at all the ways that I've served. Look at all the money that I've given away. Look at all the sacrifices I've made for you.

[ 28 : 15 ] Look at that. That's not what makes you a Christian. What makes you a Christian is this. It's the exact opposite. It's coming to God and saying, look at all that you've done for me.

Not the work of my hands. Look at the work of your hands. Look at what you've accomplished for me. That you've done everything necessary to give me a relationship with you. I don't deserve it. I could never repay it and yet you've done it.

Look at the work of your hands. See, unless we cease from our striving, unless we cease from our ceaseless attempts to silence that voice on our own, and unless we come to Jesus and allow his finished work to become our hope, we will never know Sabbath rest.

It's impossible. It can't be found anywhere but the Lord of the Sabbath. Once that happens, for those of you who have already discovered this in your life, here's the thing.

It can't remain purely intellectual. It can't remain purely ideal. It can't remain theology. It has to be worked into the fabric of your daily life.

[ 29 : 25 ] Again, Shulovitz says this in her article. She says, not even our group leisure activities, or she says this, most people mistakenly believe that all you have to do to stop working is not work.

Now, most of us would say, that makes sense. The inventors of the Sabbath understood that it was a much more complicated undertaking. You cannot downshift casually and easily the way you might slip into bed at the end of a long day.

The rules did not exist to torture the faithful. They were meant to communicate the insight that interrupting the ceaseless round of striving requires a surprisingly strenuous act of will, one that has to be bolstered by habit as well as by social sanction.

So you hear what she's saying? It's not, it's too much to think that we can just stop working, switch gears, flip a switch, and go into Sabbath mode. She says it takes a surprisingly strenuous act of the will that requires both the force of habit over time, doing it again and again and again and again until it becomes more natural, and it requires the support of a community, a whole community willing to do that.

The larger DC community is very anti-Sabbath. This may be one of the most counter-cultural things there is in our city, the idea of Sabbath. The question is, what kind of community are we going to be?

[ 30 : 52 ] I believe we need one 24-hour period every week of Sabbath rest, and I want to suggest four ways as we close to think about what Sabbath might mean to us as we think about building this into our lives.

The first thing it means is this, Sabbath means reorienting our time around God. Reorienting our time around God. Sabbath is not a license to shirk our responsibilities and duties, right?

It's not faithful obedience to say, yeah, I'm sorry I didn't get that project done. Sabbath, find somebody else. That doesn't hold up.

Then we'll be praying for your unemployment, and you'll have a very different issue. So it's not license to shirk our responsibilities. In order to keep a weekly Sabbath faithfully, it requires that you think about that with every other moment of your week.

In other words, you have to restructure your entire week to even make Sabbath possible. So it's not just about the one day. In order to observe that one day, it requires a rethinking and reorienting of all of our time to make it possible.



[ 32 : 11 ] Ask anyone, and there are a number of you in here, who observes a weekly Sabbath, and it affects every moment of every day. Otherwise, it doesn't happen. So it's a holistic reorienting of our time.

The whole week becomes subject to the Sabbath. You have to make commitments that can be done in a six-day week. You have to say no to things that can't be done in a six-day week.

But the question is, what are we ultimately doing if we're doing that? We're saying, ultimately, with our time, God comes first. We'll start with God, and we'll build out from there.

So it means reorienting our time around God. Second, it means reorienting our perspective around God. This is the last quote from Shulovitz, but I had to include it.

She says, not even our group leisure activities can do for us what Sabbath rituals could once be counted on to do. And here's a great point that a lot of times those of us who are Christians miss.

[ 33 : 12 ] She says, religious rituals do not exist simply to promote togetherness. They're theater. They're designed to convey to us a certain story about who we are.

So gathered worship, what we're doing now, isn't just about entertainment, and it's not just about togetherness, and it's not just a pro forma religious exercise. We come together every week on the Christian Sabbath, the day of the resurrection, the first day of the week, to enter into and tell one another a story about who we are, to remember that we are not our work, we're not our failures, that we're sons and daughters of the King, and that we're part of this great story of redemption, and that all of our hope rests in the work of His hands.

This is the story that's meant to define us, but the minute we walk out of here, there are a thousand other stories attempting to redefine us, and so we have to come back again and again and again, and remember, oh, this is who I am, this is who you are.

So it's meant to reorient our perspective. You know, we talk about keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath keeps us. It keeps our identity as God's people.

The third thing is this, Sabbath means proclaiming our freedom from slavery. Deuteronomy 5, verses 12 to 15, God says, I freed you from slavery in Egypt, therefore keep the Sabbath.

[ 34 : 45 ] And it sounds like He's just saying, I did this great thing for you, now give me a little credit. But that's not what He's saying. What's He saying? What's the connection? What's a slave?

A slave is, by definition, somebody who doesn't get to choose when they work and when they rest. In fact, a slave is somebody who doesn't get rest. A slave is somebody who has to work all the time.

That's what it was like in Egypt. So only a free person can keep a Sabbath. So when God's people keep the Sabbath, they're displaying to the world, we are free people.

And guess who gets the credit for that? God. So if I say, or you say, or anybody says, this is great, but I just literally cannot keep a Sabbath right now?

And maybe you can't right now. Maybe it would take a few weeks or even months of adjustment for you. But if you say, I can never do this, what does that make you? Are you really free?

[ 35 : 49 ] So Sabbath proclaims our freedom from slavery. Lastly, Sabbath means cleaning out our accumulated idols. Things that we worship as God.

It's hard to practice Sabbath. It's hard for everybody to do it. But I can virtually guarantee that whatever it is that is preventing you from maintaining Sabbath rest in your life is probably connected to an idol.

In other words, something that you're looking to to give you things only God can give you. So Sabbath is a time to turn away from those things, to look to the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

You know, when we confess every week, that's a great time to just confess every week. A weekly housecleaning. What are the idols that demanded your loyalty this week? Confessing those, turning our attention to the cross, hearing Christ proclaimed and sharing the meal.

That's what free people do. So Sabbath is a time to turn from our idols to the cross of Christ. Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus again and again and again broke the Sabbath.

[ 36 : 55 ] Do you know what he was doing on the Sabbath? He was giving sight to the blind. He was casting out demons. He was healing paralysis. He was healing withered hands.

He was healing sickness. He was healing disease. He's doing the work of restoration. And friends, Jesus continues to do that on the Sabbath.

So when we as a community, when we as a community set our time apart and enter into this weekly Sabbath, we are creating a space where we can come under the healing touch of the King to have our sight restored, to have our paralysis healed, to have our diseases of our spirit and soul healed, to have our relationships renewed, to ultimately be restored into his image to be made more fully human, the men and women we were created to be.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we ask that as we gather here on this Sabbath, that we would experience the healing touch of the King, that we would, as things are flitting into our minds, perhaps even now, as that eternal murmur of self-reproach seeks to steal our attention away from you, we pray that instead of forcing those thoughts out, we would take them and then we would hold them out to you.

And that we would allow you to deal with them. And that we would allow you and open ourselves to you restoring us from the inside out. We pray this to you, the Lord of the Sabbath, in your name.

[ 38 : 46 ] Amen.