

No Work to Keep the Sabbath Holy + Glorify Your Creator & Redeemer

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at Christchurcheastbay.org. This scripture reading is from the book of Exodus, chapter 20, verses 1 and 2, and verses 8 to 11, and the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verses 12 to 15, as printed in the liturgy.

And God spoke all these words. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the 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.

For 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.

[1:28] Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. As the Lord your God has commanded you, six days you shall labor and do all your work. But 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.

Remember 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.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God stands forever. We're in the fourth commandment today, but let's do some memory, hand memory, all right?

Hand motion memory. What's the first commandment? You shall not have any other gods before me, all right? There's only one God. The second commandment, right? You shall not make a graven image or bow down to it.

[2:43] The third commandment, the Father, Son, and the Spirit. You shall not use the Lord's name in vain. And today we're at the fourth commandment. Honor the Sabbath, right?

Keep it holy, all right? Get that nap in. Now, with the fourth commandment, I wonder, if it were up to you to write the ten words, the ten commandments, the top ten words from God to serve as the foundation for a flourishing people, do you think you would have thought of this fourth commandment as an absolute essential?

I mean, even amongst faithful, thoughtful Christians, this is probably the most debated of the ten commandments with regard to its meaning and its application. When to do it? How to do it?

Whether we still need to do it?

And then add to that our fast-paced, modern, industrial world in which it almost seems like a requirement to break this commandment. And many businesses, even churches, might reward their staff for breaking this commandment.

Because, like, to Sabbath, to Shabbat, right, which literally means to stop, to cease and desist, for one full day a week, how could that possibly be morally essential?

[3:55] Like, yeah, of course, we all agree, don't murder, don't steal, don't lie. Of course, those belong to the foundation of a healthy society. And, you know, even the first three commandments, you know, don't have any other gods, no idols, don't take God's name in vain.

I think even an atheist could probably understand and sympathize with why those would be good and foundational for people who did believe in God. But with this fourth commandment, it's like, why this one too?

It just seems so much more negotiable than all the others, right? Is this really up there with thou shalt not murder? Shouldn't it be somewhere else with the civil and the ceremonial laws?

Doesn't it belong, you know, maybe next to the one about not eating pigs or shellfish or what to do when you borrow your neighbor's donkey and it gets killed? Shouldn't it be somewhere else? How'd this one make the famous ten?

Also notice of all the spiritual disciplines, God could have put in the Ten Commandments, read the Bible, memorize the Bible, meditate on it, pray, fast, give to the poor, practice generosity and hospitality.

[4:56] This is the one he puts in here, Shabbat. Stop. And not just stop, but make this stop holy. Keep Shabbat holy.

It's curious, isn't it? So what exactly is God giving us by giving us the fourth commandment? Well, what I hope to convince you of this morning is that that's exactly it.

He's giving us something. In giving us the fourth commandment, what he's giving to us is a gift, the gift of rest, and in particular, his rest, his perfect, eternal, soul-satisfying rest.

When God says here, starting in verse 8, remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, holy, this fourth commandment is actually far more a gift of rest than the burden of restriction.

A gift of rest to us and to those over us, to those under us, to those beside us. This is so much more than a limit. This is so much more than a restriction. The fourth commandment, really what it is, is it's a declaration of liberty.

[5:59] Because remember who this was given to. This was a liberating invitation to weary former slaves whose every waking hour was once devoted to propping up the empire of another nation, Egypt.

In the very first chapter of Exodus, we're told that when Pharaoh saw the Hebrews becoming fruitful and multiplying and filling the land, in his insecurity, he put slave masters over them. And it says they made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and worked them ruthlessly.

And what it says in chapter 1, verse 11, is that what they're forced to build for Pharaoh are these supply cities, these store cities. Basically, Pharaoh, like every other tyrant, was trying to exploit their labor for the sake of socioeconomic security through accumulation.

And so, when in chapter 5, when Moses asks Pharaoh for, he doesn't even ask him to let his people go. He just says, can we go on a three-day journey into the wilderness to have a festival to worship the Lord?

What's Pharaoh's response? He calls them lazy for wanting to worship. Get back to work, fulfill your quotas, and in fact, increase my margins, less straw, more brick. To Pharaoh, festival and worship are threats to his agenda for labor and production, threats to the stability and security of his empire.

[7:15] So here at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20, when God is giving this fourth commandment, what he's doing is he's revealing himself to be an anti-Pharaoh. While Pharaoh is threatened by people who stop working, God actually commands his people to stop.

While Pharaoh treats worship as an interference with production, God makes worship the essential cornerstone in the rhythm of his people's lives. And therefore, while Pharaoh increases burdens and dehumanizes the Hebrews, God gives rest and rehumanizes them.

See the difference? While Pharaoh is an anxious, finite ruler, right, whose power depends upon exploiting others, God is contrasted as the self-sufficient creator who doesn't need our labor to sustain his kingdom.

So in the fourth commandment, what God is saying is he's saying, hey, I'm a different kind of Lord, and I'm inviting you into a different kind of life in my better kingdom.

Whereas your last Lord called you lazy for wanting to stop, rest, delight, and worship, you know what I call that? I call that holy. And in fact, I'm not just offering this to you.

[8:23] I'm commanding you to receive this gift, commanding you to Shabbat, to once a week stop, rest, delight, and worship. And notice, God doesn't just aim this Shabbat at individuals, but at whole

households and communities, even the oxen and the donkeys, even slaves.

Look at verse 10. Your sons, your daughters, your male and female servants, the foreigners living among you, even your animals. We aren't just responsible for observing Shabbat individualistically, but we're responsible for ensuring that everyone else around us gets to Shabbat.

Isn't that remarkable? Here are these former slaves who knew what it was like to work endlessly for somebody else's benefit, and now God is commanding them, don't do to other people what Pharaoh did to you.

In fact, when Moses repeats this commandment here in Deuteronomy 5, we have both of them here, Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5. You can see it just right here in chapter 5. This is, what he's saying is, he's doing this 40 years later.

Just imagine that. Exodus 20, right, to maybe the parents. 40 years later, Deuteronomy 5 to the children, the grandchildren of these former Hebrew slaves, these children of Israel who are about to enter into the promised land.

[9:38] And as they are about to enter this land flowing with milk and honey, God is warning them, when you come into prosperity, when you come into abundance, don't just remember the Sabbath like it says in Exodus 20, but here in Deuteronomy 5, it's a different word.

It's shamar, which means observe or keep watch over or even guard and protect the Sabbath. It's almost like God is building a kind of scheduled social justice right into the weekly rhythm of his people.

Every seven days, you make sure that everyone stops, not just the powerful, not just the privilege, not just the people who can afford to stop, because God didn't rescue his people from Pharaoh so that they could enter the promised land and become their own Pharaohs to everyone else.

See, Sabbath isn't just God's gift to me, it's God's gift to us, to our families, our neighbors, the whole community. And when we practice it together, we help make rest a reality for whole societies.

In the fourth commandment, the creator is commanding his people to return to the rhythm of his good creation. This isn't just some practical correction to rebalance the scales after all the endless toil that these former slaves endured back in Egypt.

[10:52] No, it's a factory reset. That's what this is. And that's why in verse 11, the Sabbath commandment is rooted not in, hey, it's been a tough 400 years, so, you know, just have some R&R. No, it says here in verse 11 that the Sabbath is rooted in something far deeper.

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. For 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.

The basis of Shabbat, the basis of our weekly rest, is the God who rested from his creation work. And not because he was exhausted, but because his work was done. Everything he intended it to be.

God saw all that he had made and behold, it was very good. It was finished. For God, rest isn't recovery. It's him sitting in the satisfaction of doneness and goodness.

And I think that's why he blessed that day and made it holy. This was an incredibly special and unique occasion. The first time in the Bible that something is designated as holy.

[11:59] And what's so interesting is that he doesn't call a particular object holy, like, you know, a person, a place, a thing, the garden, a temple, a mountain. He calls a particular period of time holy.

This momentous occasion in the history of the world when the God who preexisted creation, who preexisted time itself, the never restless, always satisfied God, who's never known incompleteness from all eternity, he rests on the seventh day of creation.

The God who had forever enjoyed eternal rest in and of himself from before time began, he now brings and enjoys that rest in time, in history, in creation.

And he invites all of creation to enter and experience that eternal rest with him and in him. This rest that only Father, Son, and Spirit had ever known and enjoyed throughout eternity.

He is now giving his creatures a taste, a taste of eternity, of completeness, of satisfaction, of delight on this seventh day. Which was, by the way, if you think about it, the day one experience of Adam and Eve, right?

[13:07] God made them on the sixth day. Yes, calling them to be fruitful, to multiply, to exercise dominion, to rule, right? But this is the first full day for them. As soon as they woke up, the day after they were created, it wasn't a day to hit the ground running, no.

Their first full day of existence was simply Shabbat. So like, yeah, Adam, Eve, go exercise dominion. Build, cultivate, produce, fill the earth.

But you can start tomorrow. Because today, on your first full day of existence, we're starting with stopping. We're starting with rest, delight, and worship.

Receiving before achieving. Being human beings with me before going out tomorrow as human doings for me. Because this is what you were made for.

To glorify me by enjoying my restful presence forever. You see, Sabbath, from the beginning, it was always so much more than just taking a day off.

[14:08] The gift of Sabbath was never meant to just be a day without work. The gift of Sabbath is that it's a day with God. The holiest, most sacred, and also most restful, delightful day of the week.

And this is a super important distinction. Like, receiving the gift of Sabbath versus just having a day off. Because, you know, more commonly, we can tend to have this way of dividing up time. Don't we? We always say this. We say, work hard, play hard. Right? Work hard, play hard. Like, either time to grind, time to hustle, time to produce, or time to kick back. Right? Time to let go, relax, indulge.

Those are our two basic operating categories for understanding time. Right? But, see, Sabbath defies this simplistic self-centeredness of work hard in order to play hard.

Unlike work hard and earn your right to play hard, God's Sabbath commandment says no. No matter what, on that seventh day. No matter what you have or haven't finished. No matter who you are.

[15:08] Stop. Rest. Delight. Worship. And not because you earned a break. And not even because this rhythm will make you more productive the other six days. But simply because this is my gift to you and what you were made for.

See, the fourth commandment, to remember the Sabbath, it's preaching a message to us. It's preaching a message to the world. And it's not just a message about what to do or what not to do on a particular day of the week.

It's preaching to us a message about who and whose we are. What the fourth commandment says to us about who we are is that we were made for receptivity before productivity.

For communion before contribution. You know, on sabbatical, I read this book by a Catholic philosopher. His name was Joseph Pieper. It was called *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*.

And it wasn't fun. It wasn't light. But it really struck me. Because what Pieper, I think, rightly argues is that while our modern society has come to understand the main activity of human life to be labor and production and thus viewing leisure as a mere luxury, Pieper flips that.

[16:19] And he argues that, no, actually, leisure isn't just a luxury, but leisure is the basis of culture. Leisure, not labor, is what we were most basically made for.

And by leisure, he doesn't just mean, you know, kicking back, doing nothing, binging on YouTube and Netflix. By leisure, he means being able to stop and receive and enjoy what is good in and of itself without needing to accomplish anything else.

Just receiving and enjoying what is good. And think about it. Isn't that what we do at a festival? We set aside our ordinary work not to produce something, but simply to celebrate the good, right?

And when is festival the biggest? When does it make the most sense to celebrate for celebration's sake? It's when that festival, when that celebration is inspired by worship.

And that is exactly what Moses was asking Pharaoh to let them do in Exodus chapter 5. He was asking Pharaoh for a break from their labor in order to hold a festival, to worship the Lord in the wilderness.

[17:27] But Pharaoh, he couldn't understand or appreciate this ask because to him, festival was frivolous. Leisure, a luxury, right? But here in the fourth commandment, God says, no, worship isn't an interruption to the life you were made for.

It's at the very heart of the life you were made for. And that's the gift of Sabbath. Again, it's a factory reset with the good news that the default factory setting has always been set to rest and delight again and again, week after week, from beginning, from the beginning of time, right?

No matter what. But maybe you're wondering, if Sabbath is such a good gift, why does it feel so hard to receive it?

Because let's be real, we're constantly wondering, constantly fearful, will there be enough, right? Enough time, enough money. If I don't work, if I don't prepare, if I don't produce on that seventh

day, will there be enough to survive and thrive?

Or like, won't I fall behind at work, in school, in parenting, while everyone else and their kids keep advancing? Living in the breakneck society that we do, where you have to keep running faster just to stay in the same place, where standing still means that you're probably going to fall behind, especially in our K-shaped economy, where we're all just trying to get on top or stay on top?

[18:46] How can we afford to Shabbat when everyone else keeps moving forward? And even for the most privileged of us, those of us who aren't even concerned about having enough or falling behind, maybe when we think about Sabbath, we're wondering, but won't we miss out on opportunities, experiences, once-in-a-lifetime moments?

How can I set aside an entire day when there's so much life to live? Now, Augustine, he tells us that the Roman philosopher Seneca criticized the Jewish people for wasting one-seventh of their lives. But that fear is real, isn't it? We can sympathize with that, can't we? Seems like quite a sacrifice. One-seventh of your entire existence.

And honestly, Sabbath is costly. It is. It does mean that when you're afraid, you won't have enough. You have to live by faith. Ask your father for daily bread and trust the manna to come when you need it. Sabbath is an exercise in faith. But isn't that also good news?

[19:56] Isn't it so much better to receive bread from heaven by faith than to anxiously try to make it grow from cursed dirt amidst thorns and thistles by the sweat of our brow and in competition with other hungry strugglers?

Wouldn't you rather depend on your loving, almighty father in heaven than on yourself? And wouldn't you rather live at his pace than trying not to fall behind in a race that you weren't even designed to run in?

That's why I love Psalm 46 in this season. He says, And sure, this does mean that we will miss out on many things.

But you know, what if that's actually what it means to be human? Like what if being human is just as much about missing out on stuff as it is experiencing stuff? The sociologists, Jacques Ellul and Hartmut Rosa, they help us see how our technological society has convinced us that we can somehow do and experience all of it.

But Rosa argues, he argues that we're trying to cram more and more experiences into our short lives almost as a substitute for eternity. As if by living faster, we could somehow overcome our finitude, even our own mortality.

[21:24] But you know, here's the wonderful paradox of Sabbath. It frees us to embrace our finitude, while at the same time, it gives us a taste of real eternity in the presence of God.

We can't cram eternity into 4,000 weeks, but when we stop to worship and commune with the living, eternal God once a week in worship, we are tasting the rest and delight.

We'll enjoy with him forever. Whereas Apostle Paul likes to talk about it, we are seated with him in the heavenly places. And you know, the more I recognize these pressures that keep producing, getting ahead and consuming, the more I realize that Sabbath is a way of resisting them.

And as I've been learning to acknowledge that the Lord is Lord over my time, that my time is not my own, I'm beginning to see Sunday differently. Not as the last day to squeeze all my fun and before the Monday grind recommences, and not as one last opportunity to catch up on everything I didn't finish in the past week or to get a strong head start on the week ahead.

But as the most highly anticipated day of the week, a day that stands alone all by itself, the best day of the week. Now, I don't think everyone's Sabbath necessarily has to fall on Sunday, but I do think we need a weekly rhythm of setting apart a whole day to stop, rest, delight, and worship.

[22:52] And for our family, that is Sunday with gathered worship at the center. And you know, this isn't about trying to create some picture-perfect Sunday. It's about actually resisting the pressure to keep going, to keep working, to keep getting ahead.

So in our household, this is what we do. We try to stop. So there are only certain kinds of emails and messages that I'll read and respond to. We don't make our girls do their homework packets on Sunday.

They don't have to do their piano and violin practice on the Sabbath. And sure, what work might mean to you is something that you honestly have to work out and discern before the Lord. Like for me, I actually find doing dishes relaxing and therapeutic or going outside to water my fruit trees.

But gardening, vacuuming, fixing something around the house, drafting an email to send to Jonathan, no thanks, man. So I try to let those things wait, right?

Even if it means a messier house to wake up to on Monday morning. Even if it means a more daunting inbox to get to on Monday. Again, I can't tell you though exactly what this should look like in your context and considering how you're wired.

[24 : 05] But the point is, we all have to figure out what knows God wants us to say in order for us to fully embrace and say yes to the gift of his Sabbath to us.

And the main question is, are we making room to stop our ordinary work to rest and to delight in God and his gifts? Or are we still looking to fill all our days with, you know, never-ending lists of things that still need to be done?

For us in my family, we try not to make Sabbath a big chore day or a big shopping day. So we might pick up something urgent at the supermarket, but we try to plan ahead and minimize our commercial activity.

Because remember, Sabbath isn't just about my rest, it's also about guarding the rest of others, my neighbors, my community. I don't want my rest and convenience to depend unnecessarily, right, upon someone else's having to work.

Otherwise, I'm becoming a Pharaoh of my own. Similarly, you know, we are, you know, not anti-TV on the Sabbath, but we are more careful about how and why we use the TV, not just as an escape, as, you know, mindless entertainment consumption or to distract our kids so we can get more done, but we use it as a tool to knit us together, to stir our hearts, take in stories that humanize and stir us.

[25 : 25] So that's how we try to stop and slow down in our family, mark time as, you know, set apart and holy and different from all the other days of the week. But in terms of what we pick up and how we fill the other, you know, the 24 hours of Sabbath, for us, Sabbath begins on Sunday morning, usually with sleeping in, the girls, you know, piling into our bed for cuddles.

There's no rush to get to school by 8.15, no rushing to pack lunches. We receive God's rest.

Usually, our Sabbath also begins with the best breakfast of the week.

Chelsea and the girls in the kitchen, Ubi pancakes, right, bacon, matcha lattes. My girls are into matcha lattes, man. Millennial kids, man.

Avocado toast, man. Smoothies, all that stuff. And I'll usually just take the dog out, talk with, talk to God, walk with God. For some Jewish families, they'll light two candles, right, and those reflect Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5.

Remember, observe. As one Jewish theologian put it, A.J. Heschel, he said that Sabbath is a cathedral in time. Like, imagine a moment of entering into something holy and different, just as we might enter some sacred space, but in time.

[26 : 44] For my family, we don't have that kind of ritual yet, but on Saturday night, in our family's normal time of prayer and Bible reading together, I usually will try to thank God for the upcoming Sabbath and ask him to help us, to help us observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Or when I wake up, I'll often pray on the Sabbath, Lord, this is your day, not mine. My time is not my own. Lord, today I will be still and know that you are God. But the point is to set this day apart as holy, different, and distinct unto the Lord.

Also, on many Sabbath mornings, I might quiz my daughters girls, what day is today? And they are trained to say, the Lord's day. And then I will say, and what do we do on the Lord's day?

And they will say, we worship God. And so that's what we do. We drive to church, they'll request Hamilton, Wicked, K-pop demon hunters. We'll say no. No Harry Potter on Audible this morning and no news or, you know, podcast to help daddy level up either.

On the way to church, it's worship music and we're singing together, trying to, ready our hearts for worship. I'm trying to train my girls as worshipers.

[27 : 54] And then of course, we come here, we join God's people, all of you for worship. This is a non-negotiable for us. We're committed to never letting sports or activities or even vacations get in the way of worship.

And if for some super special reason the girls have to miss Christ Church here at 10.30, we'll find another service. 8 a.m. at Resurrection Oakland, 4.30 at Redeemer in Castor Valley. But for us, worship isn't optional on the Sabbath.

It isn't some kind of flexible default for us. It isn't the thing we squeeze in at the mercy of other commitments we've previously made. Even when some super special occasion comes up, we don't

not worship because a special rare opportunity or event has presented itself.

We don't think to ourselves, hey, worship will always be there, but this concert, that birthday party, that basketball tournament, that championship game, that trip is a once-in-a-decade experience.

No, worship is the commitment that commands and conditions every other commitment and decision about how we order our week before God.

Again, on the Lord's Day, we recognize that we are not our own and our time is not our own and that the Lord's Day is the Lord's. All of it. Sabbath is a whole day for us, not just from 1030 to noon.

[29:12] On Sabbath afternoons, after lunch, hopefully we've had lunch with maybe church family. Chelsea usually likes to take a long nap. It's beautiful. And I might take one too or read, but I've had to, you know, discern in myself, I need to make sure that what I'm reading is not for the sake, again, of leveling up.

I'm not opening up a commentary to sermon prep ahead, right? But what I will read is for my soul and for enjoyment, delight and worship, devotional books that convict, fiction that keeps me grounded and makes me feel more human.

I try to fill my Sabbath with things that will stir my heart and affections, draw me nearer to God, fill me with gratitude toward Him, peace with Him. Like, you know, one of the most restful, relaxing, and indulgent things that I do, I wish I could do this way more often, but it just feels like such a waste of time, is I'll sit on my couch, I'll look into my dog's eyes, and I'll pet him for like an unlimited amount of time.

And I swear, I sense the presence of God, the peace of God, the gratitude fills my heart, because on Sabbath, I'm freed from the fear of wasting time.

Don't you want that? The Sabbath is God's gift of abundance to us, to sit in the shade of our shepherd, to know that we shall not want, right?

[30:40] To sense Him anointing our head with oil, to watch our cups overflow, to let His mercy and goodness that are following us all the days of our life catch up to us and embrace us.

And we are invited to just receive these seemingly wasteful and unproductive moments as good gifts from our good Father. What might those gifts be to you and your family today?

Sabbath is a day for delight. And that's what I want my girls to remember. So like on Sabbath, Cammie last week was like, Daddy, can I pop open this can of Pringles? Go for it, girl.

Leah, Daddy, can I have some chocolate? Yes, it's the Lord's day. Savor the sweetness of the Sabbath. And that's especially our experience twice a month on Sunday evenings when we're with our Alameda community group.

I love it when my girls ask, do we have community group tonight? They love it. There's food everywhere, amazing potluck, laughter, kids running around, teenagers playing with little kids. And these people who aren't technically our family, they also are our family.

[31:44] We eat, we share life, we celebrate, sometimes we cry together, we open up the word of God, we pray for each other. And then on those Sundays when we don't have community group, maybe we're meeting with other people, having other people in our homes.

I love what Dylan's doing every other Sunday, hosting life together at his place. Or maybe we're just having a simple dinner, just the four of us, enjoying each other's company.

After dinner, we'll try to take a leisurely walk around the neighborhood. And you know, that might be when I most deeply feel the rest and delight of Sabbath in God's presence. When we go for these slow walks, no one's rushing, no one's counting steps, the girls will run on ahead of us, stopping every once in a while to inspect a bug, pick up a stick, play with the dog.

And Chelsea and I will be walking behind them and we'll often just look at each other and share this knowing glance of gratitude. Like, this is it.

This is the life. This is what we were made for. What more could we want? Can you believe that God has given this to us? These girls, this family, this beautiful world He's made and we just soak it in, content to let this moment last forever.

[32:57] And it's like a taste of God's eternal rest and delight. Now listen, I'm not saying that your Sundays need to look anything like ours. And I realize that not everyone has the same family circumstances or privileges that I do.

Maybe you don't have the same freedom over your schedules. Some of you live alone, some of you have different needs and difficulties or you're caring for people with different needs and difficulties. Some of you have work responsibilities that aren't so easily set aside, right?

And some of you may be even going through a season in which it's hard to find even an ounce of delight in the midst of your circumstances. The fourth commandment isn't a command to curate a picture-perfect Sunday once a week, but it is an invitation to pause long enough to consider and receive God's goodness in the life you're actually living before Him.

So what might that look like for you? What might God be calling you to stop doing for a full 24 hours once a week? And where might you be choosing productivity and getting ahead over the rest God wants for you and your household?

Or what are some good things that God might be actually giving you permission to delight in as gifts from Him but that you maybe often just tend to brush aside as indulgent and luxurious?

[34 : 21] And most importantly is worship, is communion with the living God. Is that what you most anticipate as you move through your week? Is that the journey and pilgrimage of your week?

Is that the central orienting concern of your life and what you allow to order your time? This is what God wants for us. But you know, there's still one more question that I think makes Sabbath so hard to receive.

And it's, how can I rest when there's so much left unfinished, right? Just so much left undone. When there's so much about me that I need to work on, that needs work, that needs change, so much about this world that's broken and far from what ought to be.

Sure, God rested on the seventh day but what He had to behold, it was very good. It was a very good world. I understand why He could rest but how can we? Well, here's the good news.

Here's the gospel. God's resting after finishing His work never meant that we could only rest after finishing ours. From the beginning, Sabbath was a gift to receive, not a reward to earn.

[35 : 33] And even when we forfeited that rest, when we reached for forbidden fruit instead of receiving the abundance God had already offered to us, even when we brought sin and unrest into God's good creation, God didn't leave us to work our way back.

No, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, to accomplish a new and far more costly work, one we could never accomplish for ourselves. And on the cross, He bore our sin.

He bore our curse, entering into the deepest unrest to secure for us the eternal rest that we forfeited and never deserved in the first place. And when that work was done, what did He say?

He cried out, It is finished. And that is why we can Sabbath, even when everything inside and outside of us feels so unfinished, like so much work is required.

Our work is unfinished. Our lives are unfinished. The world is unfinished. But the ultimate work that secures our eternal rest with God, even now, in time, in creation, has been secured for us in Jesus Christ.

[36 : 46] Jesus said, it is finished. It is finished. And that's why even in the midst of our unfinished lives, we can stop, rest, delight, and worship.

Not because we've finally done enough, but because He has. Will you pray with me? Oh, Lord, I pray that Your law would bring great conviction to us, Your people, and at the very same time, great comfort and liberation.

Oh, God, convict us for ways that we have not stopped, rested, delighted, and worshiped You. and Lord, show us the good thing that You are offering to us and how You've made it available to us in Christ who suffered unrest so that we could rest with You forever.

Make us a people striving to enter Your rest, oh God. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. may may may!

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