

The Beauty of Sabbath

By Brian Flewelling; 12.30.17

Intro:

Happy New Year to all of you. Some of you highly motivated goal setters out there are already shaping up your New Year's resolutions. Procrastinators are saying, I still have 15 hrs to fulfill my 2017 resolutions.

Stopping Points

It's the end of the year. It's always an appropriate time to look over your shoulder. Thank God for His faithfulness. Reflect. Slow down. Rest. There are natural stopping points in life:

- There's a period at the end of every sentence.
- There's a pillow at the end of every 17 hour day.
- There's an exhale at the end of every inhale.
- On the highway there's a rest stop every 20 miles. Unless you really go to the bathroom...
- Every growing season is followed by a season of dormancy.
- At the end of every six days God designed a Sabbath rest.

Why would he do that? That's so inefficient. We could get so much more done, we could have so much more fun if he would just let us. He gave us the earth to rule over. Now why is he meddling with us?

There's something in the Sabbath rest that is a priority to God. You're going to spend a 7th of your precious lifetime Sabbathing. Why? What is so important to God that He interrupts what's so important to us? This morning I want to give you three simple words straight from the Bible that will clarify God's love for you in the Sabbath and will help you encounter the majesty of God in it.

This is my conviction. After 38 years of living. I believe that the Sabbath is the intersection of heaven and earth. Understanding the Sabbath has changed my life, practicing Sabbath has saved my marriage, and it has the power to transform our entire culture.

Exodus 20:8-11

The first of the three simple words that will help you practice the beauty of the sabbath.

- Vs 11. God takes three actions. He rested. He blessed it. And He made it holy.

1. The Sabbath is Holy, it belongs to God.

- Holy--Set Apart. Different. Divine.
- Genesis 2:3. The first instance in scripture of anything being called holy is a space in time. God calls it "mine."
- Vs 8. It already is holy. But we have to not steal from God what already belongs to him.
- Sabbath belongs to the Lord, not to us. I'm already getting uncomfortable. I so often treat it like a vacation day. Day for me to enjoy myself. Do what I want. Belongs to God.
- Abraham Heschel calls it a sanctuary in time. Ie. Like Saint Patrick's Cathedral in NYC.
- God loves you enough to command you to rest so that you can slow down and enjoy him. Because your value to God is more than the service you offer him six other days of the week. He wants you to have the space to practice enjoying him. Like the branch enjoys the vine. Like the bulrush meanders in the meadow.
- One day a week you can stop being tyrannized by motion and commotion. Six days you live under the yoke of being a master and ruler over the earth.
 - Mastering the economy, money, house in order, body and hobbies, emails
- the seventh is mine. Because I want you to learn to become young again, a child. To trust that Father, Daddy is strong and can take care of all of that. And I want us to have us time. I want you to know that I love spending time with you. I want to make memories with you. I want your inner life to be as big as your outer life.

Practical Habits for celebrating the Holy in Sabbath

Leviticus 23:3

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the Lord.

Slide: Practical Habits

1. A day for sacred assembly
2. Linger in the Bible
3. Linger in prayer and meditation (this is the day you are free)
4. Eliminate as much media and technology as you safely can.
 - influence from the world, sacred space
5. Listen to worship music.
6. Read books that develop your relationship with God.

The second and third simple word that will help you practice the beauty of sabbath is

2. The Sabbath is a day the body rests and the soul is blessed!

- Exodus 20:8-11
- Work isn't just employment. Word work in the Old Testament describes all kinds of activities that are important to living ie. Gathering wood, cooking, household chores, mending garments, livestock, managing...
- Illustration: Resting strong eye so lazy eye can.
- Sabbath is a day to rest the focus on mortal things, focus on eternal things.
- body to bless the eternal soul/spirit.
- Invest in relationships. God. Self. Family. Church family. Friends.
- Personal Story of sabbath in NY. (Your body wasn't made for that. Neither is your soul.)

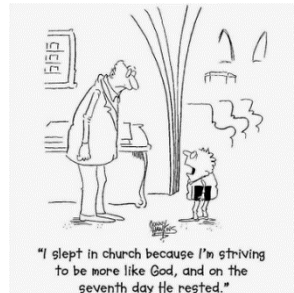
Before we discuss practical habits, Jesus gives us a guiding principle in...

["The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."](#) Mark 2:26

Don't turn this into a list of do's and don't. If you go around telling people you shouldn't mow your grass on Sunday, you missed the point. God created sabbath to bless you. Not to persecute you. His heart is to create a sanctuary in time. And for your body to rest and your soul to be blessed.

Practical Habits (we do need practical boundaries that help us protect that sanctuary in time.)

- **Do things as a family, or church family!** Relaxed walks, bike rides, games, eating
- **Take Naps** There's few things on earth more delicious than a Sabbath nap.



- **Slide: Cartoon**
- **Leftovers, Takeout, or Crockpot** – Mom doesn't have to cook.
- **Be Interruptible**
- **Say no to emails, to-do-lists, household chores** (there are certain things that can't wait)
- **Decide at the beginning of the week what day your sabbath is**
– swing shifts, on call, find a 24 hr period of rest. Could be noon to noon.
- **Prepare for the Sabbath.**

Exception to the Sabbath

Matthew 12:11-12

If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

- Sabbath is about preserving life.
- Emergencies do come up. First responders. Disaster relief. Medical community.
- God’s makes provisions for you to preserve life.

One more scripture that captures the attitude

Exodus 31:16-17

The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.”

Sabbath is about celebration.

- A day God has lifted the burdens of life and we’re set free.
- Time and eternity kiss. We no longer have to long for God’s coming kingdom. His Holy Space in time is already here among us, and we celebrate it.
- A day we stop being Lords and we learn to be children again.
- A day we don’t try to master life. We marinate in it.
- It’s a day we learn to listen to the poetry all around us.
- Sabbath is an art. A posture of our heart. Resting in Jesus. Resting in the Father.

Ministry Time: Meditation

Creation sings: He is good. He is Life. His love endures forever. He is the God of Life.