

MARK

- THE STORY OF JESUS -

PART 8 - THOU SHALT REST

Today we will look at ...

1. The origin of the Sabbath
2. The meaning of the Sabbath
3. The Lord of the Sabbath

1. The Origin of the Sabbath

One Sabbath he [Jesus] was going through the grainfields
... Mark 2:23

Rest and Genesis

- And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. Genesis 1:5
- And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. Genesis 1:8
- And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. Genesis 1:13
- And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. Genesis 1:19
- And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. Genesis 1:23
- And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Genesis 1:31
- 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 his work that he had done in creation. Genesis 2:1-3

Laws About the Sabbath

“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. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20:8-11

- “Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed. Exodus 23:12
- You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Exodus 31:14-15

- Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. Exodus 35:2
- “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you ... It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’ ” Ex 31:13, 17

Mishnah (Oral Torah) Tractate Shabbat 7:2

The principal acts of labor (prohibited on the Sabbath) are forty less one—viz.: Sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding into sheaves, threshing, winnowing, fruitcleaning, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, wool-shearing, bleaching, combing, dyeing, spinning, warping, making two spindletrees, weaving two threads, separating two threads (in the warp), tying a knot, untying a knot, sewing on with two stitches, tearing in order to sew together with two stitches, hunting deer, slaughtering the same, skinning them, salting them, preparing the hide, scraping the hair off, cutting it, writing two (single) letters (characters), erasing in order to write two letters, building, demolishing (in order to rebuild), kindling, extinguishing (fire), hammering, transferring from one place into another. These are the principal acts of labor—forty less one.

Garland

The Christian Sunday began as a day of worship, celebrating the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, the foundation of our faith (1 Cor. 15: 17). It became, like the Sabbath, a day of rest. A day of rest is a gift. Philo, a prominent and learned member of the Jewish community in Alexandria in the first century, defended the Jews' custom of not working on the Sabbath. He argued that it was not because of any indolence on their part. The object was to give man relaxation from continuous and unending toil and by refreshing their bodies with a regularly calculated system of remissions to send them out renewed to their old activities. For a breathing spell enables not merely ordinary people but athletes also to collect their strength with a stronger force behind them to undertake promptly and patiently each of the tasks set before them. In this century, Abraham Heschel profoundly expresses this value of the Sabbath for our technological age. It is a day when we can celebrate "time rather than space." Our modern technological society can boast of our conquest of space, but we have not conquered the "essential ingredient of existence": time.

It is the realm of existence where “the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord .” Many spend all their lives acquiring material possessions but shrink from sacred moments. Everyone needs a time to be able to lay aside the feverish pursuit of success, trying to “wring profit from the earth” or to amass more goods. Heschel concludes: Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world. In our culture we have lost this gift of a day when we can reconnect with the holy and recharge our spiritual batteries. Our daily struggles may produce economic triumphs but can make our lives a spiritual wasteland. Lily Tomlin said the trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you are still a rat. We need time for ennobling our souls and must enjoy this gift.

Rest Doesn't Have to Be Physical?

- The Sabbath was a physical rest
- The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm 23:1-3

Psalm 4 – A Bedtime Prayer

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! O men, how long shall my honour be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him. Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD. There are many who say, “Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!” You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

2. The Meaning of the Sabbath

One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Mark 2:23-27

A Reminder to Trust

“Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed. Exodus 23:12

A Reminder that God Makes You Holy

And the LORD said to Moses, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. Exodus 31:12-13

A Reminder About Freedom from Slavery

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. Deuteronomy 5:15

3. The Lord of the Sabbath

And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.” Mark 2:27-28

The End of God's Sabbath

- And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Genesis 1:31
- 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 his work that he had done in creation. Genesis 2:1-3
- And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

God Has Been Working Since the Fall

Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." John 5:9-17

A Deeper Rest

So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Hebrews 4:9-10

Jesus Finished the Work

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:28-30