

APPLICATION

Take a moment. Pause. Breathe. Quiet your restless and anxious mind. Allow God to be God and be still before him. Rest in the calm assurance of our Lord.

Read Genesis 1:31-2:3 (and Hebrews 3:7-4:13)

- How do you rest? What does rest look like? What calms you?
- How do you get more life? What fills you up?
- What are some ways you can make time for resting in God? What is something you can cut out of your life in order to find the time to rest instead?
- What stood out to you the most in this week's sermon?
- How is normal human rest alike and different from Godly rest? How is rest from working alike and different from rest in God?
- According to Hebrews 3:7-4:13, what prevents us from resting in God? How can you encourage each other in this?
- Do you feel worn out? Do you feel tired? How is this a signal of something you need to give over to God and trust him with?

Inductive Bible Study

- Read Hebrews 3:7-4:13
- Box every instance of the word "rest"
- What commands do you see in this passage? vs. 8, 13, etc.
- What repetitions of phrases do you see?

For Parents: Rest often is not in the equation of parenting. It is the first thing to go. But then consider, your kids watch everything you do. How can they learn to rest if they never see you rest? Take a moment this week and go to a coffee shop, get a drink, sit and linger—doing nothing. Just watch and observe. Reflect on this: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). You are not God, and you are not supposed to be. Rest in the assurance he is God and let the created order just be itself. Let all your pressing issues leave you. When you feel it's time to leave, leave. Don't watch the clock or your phone.



Sabbath Rest • Session 5

So much of our lives is a blurry mess of activities, bills, and responsibilities. Most of us are constantly running after things we want or are trying to catch up to the relentless current of things happening around us. The "rat race," the "daily grind," "hustle culture," "getting ahead," and "just trying to make it" are now common phrases that describe our lives. The question is, is this what God intends? Is this all that life is supposed to be?

All people need the rhythm of Sabbath rest for that is the way God has made the world. It is good for us to rest. In fact, Sabbath is a special kind of rest. It seems to be a special activity, or rather a lack of activity, which was to mark the lives of God's people. Sabbath might be thought of as a covenant purpose of God for his people. That means that while all humans on Earth can rest from their daily toil, God's people get to rest *in* him from their spiritual toil. This resting *in* God is rooted in trusting his power and creative purposes for our lives. God holds us, shelters us, and bears our burdens. His gives rest to our souls. So, how did he want his people to model and live out this beautiful reality? It was through a special kind of rest. A rest that would happen on the 7th day of each week. On this holy day, his people would stop from the work they were doing and would mirror their creator God who rested too. They would enjoy the blessings of his creation and mirror him in exclaiming, "It is good!" Sabbath rest is an invitation to us to fellowship with God in a special way by stopping and letting creation rest; enjoying it for what it is and being pleased.

So, what is God's rest? Is it not delight in his creation? Is it not looking with joy at his world and uttering his very words of "This is good!" Sabbath is so much more than ceasing from work; it is sharing with God in the delight of his work. On the Sabbath, we allow creation to simply be good because it was made by God, regardless of its utility or beauty to us, which commonly characterizes all other days. It is remembering that God made all things and called them "very good."

I. God Rests

On the seventh day, after God completed the heavens and the Earth, he rested. He wasn't tired. He wasn't bored. He rested because creation needed an occasion to step forth and be enjoyed. He rested because it was good for creation! God rested because he loved the world and because he made it good, and now is allowing it to be good on its own - so to speak. It is interesting that God also blessed this day and made it holy. He doesn't do this to any other day. This day is special! This day is his day.

Last week we looked at how we are God's image in this world and that we resemble him. Thus, we are also called to rest as he did. It is a bizarre thing that humans spend close to a third of their lives sleeping. But rest is more than merely biological sleep. It is also more than merely a lack of working a job or expending energy. There is a spiritual kind of rest that most people fail to incorporate into their lives. This spiritual kind of rest Jews and Christians call "Sabbath." It has two major components; a regular earthly rest practiced each week to reflect the special spiritual rest found only *in* God.

II. Sabbath Rest

"Sabbath" is the English version of the Hebrew word "sabat" (shab-bawth) which simply means "rest." Oftentimes, we approach Sabbath primarily through the lens of 'church-activity'. While this is a fine way to approach it, let's remember that Sabbath is all about enjoying God and his creation in community with others. Worship, which takes place each day in our very lives, is where we offer back to God, for him to enjoy, our work, our praise, and our thankfulness. Sabbath, which is a day set apart from all the rest, is

where we remember he worked first and still is working now. It is creating space in our busy lives for his rest to fill us. It is where we *rest*, not strive, worry, or fight. It is where we rest from our toil, striving, and agendas to give those things time to breathe. Our weekly Sabbath is a model of the rest we enter *in* Christ. That spiritual rest from the struggles and schemas of life is epitomized in the verse "*Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" (Matthew 11:2) Jesus offers us rest for our soul's striving and fighting. He offers us rest *in* him. Our weekly Sabbath rest is supposed to model and practice God's own act of resting from all his creating.

"You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee"

– St. Augustine of Hippo

Not only do our hearts long for and crave this rest, but the Bible tells us that the Sabbath is vitally important in four more big ways. It is commanded. It is blessed. It is for the land. It is for man. This means that Sabbath rest is not optional. It is divinely orchestrated with God's favor. Both the Earth and humans need it to flourish. "*Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.*" (Exodus 20:8-10) The land is to have a Sabbath rest too (Leviticus 25:1-22). Be blessed on this day (Isaiah 58:13-14). "*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*" (Mark 2:27-28). No other people in history had a Sabbath; none but God's own people. We are set apart and made holy and blessed, just like the Sabbath day itself. While all are his, we are his special people, just as the Sabbath day is his special day. The Sabbath helps us remember who we are created to be. On this holy day, we practice this beautiful symmetry.

III. How to Rest

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

(also see Psalm 37:7, Zechariah 2:13, Exodus 14:14, 1st Samuel 12:16, and Deuteronomy 12:5-11)

Let creation be itself. Marvel at its beauty and wonder and goodness. Give thanks for it. Enjoy the blessing of creation. Eat, drink, and be merry. Remember creation's creator and purpose. Uplift his name with your voices.

