

June 27, 2021 Dennis Gallaher Preparing for Sabbath Series: Embrace Sabbath

Lord, open our minds and our hearts to understand the truth of Sabbath.

Sabbath of the Lord is not a day of the week though much of "Sabbath" in the Bible refers to a particular day of the week. It's not about a law or command or about a supposed freedom from this law. It is a gift from God. The Sabbath, Shabbat, was the first gift of intimate relationship that God gave to His creation formed in His image. It is an important truth that God desires us to both understand and embrace.

The History: God created man on the sixth day of creation. God breathed His breath into the nostrils of that dead clay figure and it became a living soul. On that day, Adam came alive.

Genesis 2:2-3 *By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

It would seem that God was worn out and created rest on the seventh day - Shabbat - Sabbath. He blessed it, sanctified it, rested, and made it holy. Each of the six days had evening and morning except for the seventh day. Could it be that God never intended for man to move out of this day of rest with God?

Menucha (Hebrew for rest) that God created was to continue. God wanted to teach the Jews that He would provide by giving them the Sabbath for rest. God created the Garden as a place of rest - not as a vacation place - but as an environment of rest.

Then the result of sin is arresting... **Genesis 3:17-19** *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it', cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

The place of rest was now closed to Adam and mankind. Toil, thorns, thistles... **Genesis 3:24** *So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.*

Rest had ended. The toil of sin had begun. The true Sabbath of the Garden was replaced with a shadow of the true rest that God created - a day each week to stop and remember what true rest was. The Jews were faithful to always observe the Sabbath but then began to add more and more manmade laws and rules to it. Years passed and the true rest was only a word until Jesus made a declaration for everyone to come to Him...

Matthew 11:28-30 *Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

Jesus was saying that He would give rest from toil and from physical, emotional, and physical exhaustion. Jesus was declaring that the great rescue plan of God was not only from sin but from toil. His promise was that

He would give rest, shabbat, that was lost through sin. This describes the fall of man with the wounds of sin, the mark of damnation, fear, control, anxiety, condemnation, anger, hopelessness, uselessness, calloused hearts, nakedness... Jesus comes and declares His rest, real Sabbath. His meaning - I will return to you. It's more than a day; it's a promise of new life. This rest is for anyone who will come to Him. The Creator of rest was taking His rightful place again as Lord and Master - Lord and Master of Rest. This was the very thing the devil did not want to lose control of. The toil of man denied mankind the freedom of true rest. Jesus was making His stand - giving us the intimacy that we had never experienced before.

Matthew 12:8 *For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.* **Matthew 12:14** *But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.* The Pharisees and religion will seek self-sufficiency making man lord of the Sabbath. Jesus' salvation that He offers is a salvation from sin and from the toil that sin produced. He wants to return to us rest and confidence in God to bring peace, rest, and salvation.

The design of Sabbath is important because of the depth of sin and what Jesus came to rescue us from. Sin took mankind much deeper than we can imagine. Come to me, He says! Come all who have worked yourselves to exhaustion. Are we so tired that we can't rest? Is there trouble and fear in our hearts? The Prince of Peace, the Lord of the Sabbath, was making His stand on this battleground. **Matthew 11 to 12** continues that Jesus went "on the Sabbath" to interrupt the traditions of men. **Matthew 12:8** *The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.* Jesus is Lord of rest. It does not mean a day but a lifestyle and a relationship with God without fear.

We are the illustration as exhausted people that need rest. God gives the gift of the Garden thru Jesus.

Hebrews 4:9 *So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.*

Isaiah 30:18 *Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him.*

God is waiting for us to come. We are yearning for Shabbat - a rest - because the thorns of this world are painful. Look to Jesus - the ruler over the curse and thorns. He paid the price for our sins so we could return to Shabbat.

This is a season of returning to the Lord. A season to return to the Father's way is to rest in the command of the Father. **Matthew 11:3** *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* His yoke is obedience to the Father's way, to rest and trust in the command and promise of God. Leave our burdens at Jesus' feet. Make a map and know where you are going this Sabbath season. If you need abiding rest, then Jesus bids you to come. Lay down at His feet.

What do you need rest from? a difficult time?

Do you have self-condemnation to unload on God?

What heavy burdens are you carrying to exchange for one that is light?

Write down what you are asking the Lord for as He says "Come to me"?