

July 4, 2021 James Gallaher

Sabbath Sermon Series: Rhythm - Finding Our Rest in the Rhythm of Jesus

Genesis 2 God creates a day to make a provision for rest. This first Sabbath was to be a perpetual place of provision that God gave to us. As a result of sin, this union was broken and a conflict came about with Sabbath. Do we really understand what God's provision means? Even God's provision of manna was doubled the 6th day so they could rest the 7th day. God provided. After years, the religious leaders had attached so many more laws and qualifications to this day. Jesus comes to reclaim the idea of rest that had become just a shadow.

Matthew 12:9-14 *"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him. And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.*

Jesus was coming to redeem and reclaim the idea and gift of rest that had been distorted. Sabbath is not a day to eliminate activity as a once a week requirement. It is about living in such a way that we are at peace and depend on the provision of God. It is a place that God invited us into to live in always.

Sabbath had been given as a gift of rest, provision, and peace. Are there areas of your life today that are not at peace? Are there areas that have a constant sense of anxiousness? God's gift of Sabbath is available.

This gift of rest became a burden by adding laws, restrictions, limitations, and rules so that it wasn't restful but made people more weary. Jesus says that these leaders placed unbearable burdens on the followers of Jesus. Does our desire to follow Jesus feel like a burden? Receive the gift of Sabbath because our efforts will never satisfy that burden.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus with genuine interest and not to condemn for not conforming. For the religious leaders, the issue was not the healing but that Jesus was breaking their laws. They thought this was required to honor the Sabbath. In a broken way, they were fighting to preserve the truth even though it was distorted. How often do our own broken views, beliefs, and opinions prevent us from seeing the truth that God desires for us?

God only said, "Remember the Sabbath and to keep it holy." The religious leaders added so many more laws to these few words, yet, there was no prohibition from healing on the Sabbath. Jesus intended to bring healing and peace and a sense of provision from God to our lives. Do extra Biblical things prevent us from experiencing the gifts that Jesus made available to us?

What about this statement... God helps those who help themselves? It sounds good but it's not in God's Word. God actually says, *"You can't do anything apart from me."* **John 15:5**

When we dig into our convictions, are we making sure they are rooted in God's Word? The Pharisee's convictions began as a desire to be worthy of God's love. They were attempting to do what only God can do. Do you try to do the impossible without help?

The Pharisees valued religious tradition more than people. They had bound themselves to these acts of submission to a system instead of a Savior. This man was not even allowed to acknowledge the healing on that day. Do we place stipulations on ourselves or others?

God can extend His goodness without our earning it. **Verse 11-12** *And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep!*

It had everything to do with love and not in the man's worth of himself. Do we often deem ourselves unworthy to receive from God? This man's worth came about because of Jesus' love and not on anything the man did. We sometimes can miss God's favor because of our own unworthiness. The man wasn't healed because he was worthy. He was healed because he was loved. For every one of us that feels unworthy to receive from God, even the gift of rest, know that He loves you!

What Jesus asked the man to do was impossible. The man had no function in his withered hand. Is that the same as our own fear of confessing our brokenness to God, afraid that God doesn't heal it?

Luke 6:6 *On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.* The man's right hand symbolizes what provided for his family, his friendships and was unable to be used. The right hand was significant showing that he had no ability on his own to heal or do anything with that which was broken and defiled. Healing came as the man stretched out his hand as Jesus commanded.

Take the ugly part of our lives and reach out to Jesus. Take that broken relationship and reach out to Jesus. Take that hidden sin and reach out to Jesus. The gift of God begins by reaching out... from our brokenness, our desperation, our shame.

James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.* The man did not extend his left hand. He reached out to Jesus with his withered hand. His healing came as a result of Jesus' love for him as he reached out with his brokenness. God's peace doesn't require understanding. **Philippians 4:6** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* Reach out to Jesus today!

When does your desire to follow Jesus feel like a burden?

What is a broken view, belief, or opinion that has prevented you from seeing the truth that God desires?

What is withered in your life that needs Jesus healing touch? Reach out with the impossible.