

## Finding Rest

Hebrews 4:7-10/Matthew 11:28-30

### Rest #1

Weekend of January 4-5, 2020



### Introduction

I have a friend with young kids who tells me that each night he has a little ritual where he stops his car in a little parking lot about 5 minutes from his house, gets himself mentally psyched up to arrive home, prays and drinks a Red Bull because he knows the most intense part of his work day is about to start.

**Complicating this is the fact that we have a culture that chronically overworks—even going to far as to teach overwork as a value.**

As we begin 2020, the preaching team thought it might be beneficial before we dive into the main topics of the year, to really look at this tendency both in our culture and frankly in our church. Let's be honest—the last three years as we have sold the Daniieldale building, spent 7 months in transition as we met at First Baptist and other spots in our community and then moved in this building has been stressful and difficult.

On top of that, we built a new building at the conclusion of all of that activity that is going to be a blessing to both the church and the community, but it created its own set of strain and difficulties. I want to take that into consideration as well as challenge all of us to honestly look at our schedules and our chronic overcommitment.

Every study out there, of course, shows overworking is bad for us. We know it is bad for our families. **A lot of parents try to justify overwork by saying, "I'm going this for the family," but like Nicolas Cage in one of his greatest movies, Family Man, you look up one day and realize they don't have much a family.** Overwork is also bad for our health. Why do we keep putting our bodies through this kind of stress and hardship.

**But there is A REASON many of us are driven to overwork. The most obvious being that work is how we provide for ourselves. The privileges we enjoy, we believe, are in direct proportion to how hard we work.**

**For men in particular, our work is how we establish our identities. We think the nature of our work determines our worth. Bottom line is that for all these reasons, we're a tired people, which is why we want to spend a couple of weeks talking about rest.**

### Bible Study

There is this phrase in Hebrews 4 that has always been of interest to me. Do you remember these words...

**"So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God"... Hebrews 4:9.**

Today I want to explore this passage and others because most of us have no idea what the author of Hebrews is talking about. **If anything, Christianity just feels like more stuff to do.**

**But according to Jesus, the core of the Christian experience is rest. Until you learn to rest correctly in Christ, all of your work for Christ is going to be off.**

The writer of Hebrews ties this rest to the Old Testament concept of “Sabbath,” so let’s take a minute and unpack that idea. Exodus 20 is where the concept of Sabbath rest is introduced...

**“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**

We remember the Sabbath for 3 key reasons...

**To Remind us That God Is The Point Of Our Lives:** Sometimes the tyranny of life can cause us to disconnect from the purpose of which we were created, which is the quickest way to live in misery. Studies show that we can endure a lot of strain, even pain, if we know the purpose behind it, so we were to take one day off just to remind ourselves of that.

**We weren’t created for a job; we were created for God.** Here’s a second idea...

**To Remind Us That God Is The Provider Of Our Life:** In many ways, taking this day off was inconvenient, especially in ancient Israel. Survival was often a day-to-day, season-to-season affair. Crops had to be harvested daily. Water had to be drawn daily. To cut your productivity by 1/7 could make the difference in life and death! No other society did this!

**But God commanded his people to do it because he wanted to remind them at the end of the day it was his responsibility to provide for them...** Six days a week we labor. We have a part of the responsibility to provide for ourselves. But the seventh day... we rest and are reminded it is ultimately God who is responsible for all of our provision. **Sabbath was a declaration of trust.**

God mentions the Sabbath in a second section of scripture from Deuteronomy 5...

**‘Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 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 or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. 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 5:12-15**

Here, the Sabbath was to give them space to reflect on their salvation. It’s our third idea to consider...

**To Remind Them (and us) That God Was The Savior Of Our Lives:** They needed to reflect that their greatest need God had accomplished all by himself...their salvation. **These were the**

**3 things they were to reflect on during the Sabbath: God was the point, the provider, and the Savior.**

**The Sabbath that Moses and Joshua instituted did not provide the ultimate rest—it pointed forward to Jesus; who would himself be our ultimate rest.**

**Let me give you 3 ways Christ became our REST—3 things that if you can say them about Christ, from your heart, you have entered into his rest.**

### **Application**

**Christ My Righteousness:** The ultimate way that Christ is our Sabbath is he saved us. And just like with Israel, God accomplished that all by himself. There are a lot of things that we cooperate together with God on but our salvation is not one of them. Jesus didn't give us an instruction manual with explanation on how to save ourselves, he did the work and told us only to believe and receive it. I love how this song that we sing in many of our assemblies expresses this truth...

**YOU ARE my author, my maker, My ransom, my Savior  
My refuge, my hiding place You're my helper, my healer My blessed redeemer  
My answer, my saving grace You're my hope, in the shadows My strength, in the battle  
My anchor, for all my days  
And you stand by my side because you stood in my place!  
Jesus, no other name!**

**“...for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.” Hebrews 4:10**

This doesn't mean that we cease to do good works—of course not— we just cease to do them as a way of obtaining salvation. And that gives us a rest in them because no longer are they done with the pressure of thinking we have to do them to save ourselves or obtain favor from God! It leads to this second idea...

**Christ My Identity:** Through my salvation, Christ has given me a new identity in him. I am no longer a stranger or an orphan before God; I am a son or daughter of God, brother or sister and best friend with Christ. And as his child I've been given specific gifts for use in his kingdom. I, and each of you, are specially designed servants for use in his kingdom.

**No longer am I laboring to gain an identity. I've been given one through Christ.** Here is something we struggle with... **our souls have this ingrained sense of unworthiness. It's called “shame,” and it's a result of the fall. It was FIRST EXPERIENCED as a sense of shame over our nakedness. Before the fall, we were naked but not ashamed about it because we felt clothed in the love of God. But afterward we felt naked, and now our souls feel the need to find something to clothe themselves. Our work becomes one of the ways we do that.**

**The gospel says, “You have a new identity” in Christ.** You are a chosen son or daughter. He has a plan for you to use you in his kingdom and that is a better identity than anything else.

**Think about this: Apart from Christ, you will “work” even when you are resting. With Christ, you can rest even while you are working.** This leads to the third idea...

**Christ My Security:** God had said to Israel, “If I rescued you when you were helpless slaves, surely I’ll take care of you now that you are beloved sons!” Take a day off to reflect on that.

In the early church, they shifted the Sabbath day to Sunday and called it “the Lord’s Day” because SUNDAY was the day that Jesus has resurrected, and they felt that day best commemorated their salvation.

**But on that day, they were to reflect on that exact same thing: If God did not spare his own son to save me, now that I’m his beloved child, will he not freely give us all things? The Sabbath was fulfilled in Christ: Christ my righteousness; Christ my identity; Christ my security. But just because the Sabbath was fulfilled in Christ doesn’t mean we stop practicing the principle of the Sabbath.**

Into the very fabric of creation God established that life was to be a rhythm of work and rest... and your day of rest is not because there is nothing else to do, but because you are trusting God to be your provider and your security. Here are some practical ideas to practice sabbath principles as you live your everyday life....

**Take One Day A Week For Rest, Renewal, and Relationships:** This is one day to be rather than to do. To focus on God, relationships, and enjoy his creation. Sunday is a great day for this as worship creates the space for this to happen for you. Here is a second principle...

**Sleep:** Look at these words from Psalm 127...

**“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.” Psalm 127:1-2**

**What’s the sign in this verse that you are beloved by God? Sleep.**

**But if you are asleep, whose got the city? Who is building the house? Who is watching the city? The psalmist smile sweetly and says, “God is.” God intended sleep to be a time every day where you remind yourself you’re not God.**

Here is another idea for us to consider...

**Daily Sabbath:** Everyone needs a daily time to refocus themselves. I personally don’t know how we can function well with our a daily time in God’s Word. We need to intentionally build time everyday to recenter ourselves and to focus on a relationship with God.

I know a pastor who asked his assistant to build a 5-minute space between each one of his meetings for him to pray. Between each counseling appointment, staff meeting, or visit...he would take five minutes to stop, pray, and rest. He would literally pause his day, multiple times per day, simply to rest. Look at these words of Jesus...

**“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30**

At first, when people read this, it sounds confusing. What Jesus is offering is not an escape from life, but a new way to go through life, a new way to bear responsibilities. Instead of

offering you escape from the pressures, he offers you new equipment to use to bear the pressures. When you are yoked up with someone much stronger, who bears most of the weight—the STRONGER ONE does!

**The hardest way to live is the way most religious people do—instead of surrendering fully to Jesus, they adopt a religious checklist of things they need to do to keep God happy. And it just makes them feel more burdened and busier. They are not getting the benefit of rest that comes from being fully committed and know that he is pulling most of the weight in the yoke.**

**If you want to rest, surrender fully! Whether you take these Sabbaths demonstrates whether you actually trust God or if you just talk a big game.**