

*Exodus: Redemption: Their Story Is Our Story*

We live in an age of restlessness, an age of overwork and under-rested. A distracted age. One angle of how we arrived at this age of restlessness is through the history of rectangles. The first rectangle where we'll start our journey is the brick. It seems mundane to us, but the invention of the brick was actually quite a technological marvel. It symbolized ingenuity and a sense of permanence in a world that lacked stability.

Its introduction revolutionized construction and the creation of anything from durable structures to an aqueduct system to modern cityscapes. Bricks offered a scalable building material that would enable societies to grow vertically and develop more sophisticated urban planning. However, as with most technological innovations, its history is also troubled.

The expansion of this technology also meant the exploitation of labor, as the brick would become a symbol of power and control. We've seen this in the story of Exodus. The expansion of this technology came about even through Egypt and Pharaoh. At the point in time in Exodus, Egypt was the world's most powerful nation and was ruled by Pharaoh, who was the most powerful human alive.

Most powerful people don't take well to threats, and Pharaoh perceived the Israelites as a threat as their population began to grow. The way he subdued their growth was out of fear by enslaving them. Every single day, their existence as the Israelite people was to make bricks—brick after brick after brick, day after day. It was a way to subdue and control the Israelites. But also, at the same time, perpetuate the very system that was enslaving them.

The people of Israel were enslaved, reduced, and dehumanized. They began to look something more like a machine than a human. All they had known was bricks, day after day, and it's all they would eventually know, which makes what they said in the story of the Red Sea all the more shocking. In Exodus 14, right after God had liberated the people of Egypt, they rushed out across the Red Sea. As they looked back and saw Pharaoh's army chasing after them, it says:

**They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" Exodus 14:11-12**

Better back in Egypt? Had they forgotten what life was like in that place? Better back being enslaved and dehumanized? Was it better to live a life that resembled more machine than a human? I mean, how is that possibly an option?

We live in a restless age in which we look at that and think, how could that possibly be the desire of their heart—overworked and exhausted? But the people of Israel could only imagine one form of being, and the fear that took place there had a resounding restlessness to go back to Egypt. Most of us consider that almost primitive. How could they desire that more? But how different is their restlessness than ours?

Let's go to phase two of the history of rectangles. This time, we're going to fast-forward quite a bit. It's a brief history. If it started with the brick, the second phase of this history is the dollar. The introduction of the dollar bill, or monetization in general, fundamentally reshaped how people thought not just of work but also of wealth. This shift societally meant moving from a barter exchange economy to a wage-based market-driven economy. For the first time, this standardization of wealth or value radically reformed how we showed up in the world and created almost this new category of personal wealth.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm quite grateful that I can show up at an overpriced coffee shop with a dollar bill in hand or just wave my phone in the general direction of the cashier instead of bringing a goatskin or something to trade. So, I'm not saying I want to return back to a different age, but in a market-driven, monetized society, wealth and its pursuit took on a new form of insatiability.

John D. Rockefeller was famously asked, "How much money would it take to make a man happy?" His answer was, "Just a little bit more." Most of us feel that. We work endless hours in an attempt to earn just a little bit more: more stuff, more security, more gadgets, more experiences, more freedom, whatever it is. Rockefeller's line resounds deep in our soul, and all of a sudden, our restlessness looks a little bit like, "Were there no graves in Egypt? Was it not better back there?"

Maybe it's not the insatiability of the pursuit of the dollar in the modern world that makes you feel enslaved, but let's go to the third category of the history of rectangles. If the first was the brick, the second was the dollar, let's go to 2007 with the introduction of the iPhone. Maybe the dollar rectangle isn't the one that enslaves you. Maybe you're quite content with the tax bracket you are in.

The promise of technology has always promised freedom and ease everywhere. This is what technology espouses. It's the myth that we buy. Let's go back to 1989. It was in an article in *Time* magazine entitled "Living: How America Has Run Out Of Time." This was written in 1989. It said,

**So, how did Americans become so timeless? Those who can remember washing diapers or dialing phones may recall the silvery vision of a post-industrial age. Computers, satellites, robotics, and other wizardies**

promised to make the American worker so much more efficient that income would rise while the workweek shrank. In 1967, [this article in 89 was looking back to 1967.] testimony before a Senate subcommittee indicated that by 1985, people could be working just 22 hours a week or 27 weeks a year or could retire at 38. That would leave only the great challenge of finding a way to enjoy all that leisure. *Time Magazine*, 1989

The promises of technology, something like the iPhone, have always been ease everywhere. What would we do with all this leisure? How is that panning out for us? In reality, Americans are more overworked than ever. Leisure time has not only decreased, but the amount of time we work has increased. Quite the opposite of the earlier predictions from generations before us. The time saving technology was promising to liberate us from the need to work long hours, but what we found is that the computer in our front pocket is actually a way to just carry work with us wherever we go. It didn't free us from the office; it freed the office to come to us.

In general, every single one of us has come of age in an era in which we are overworked and underrested, dissatisfied, discontent, and more and more restless. The saturation of entertainment options alone, coupled with the accessibility of technology, has cultivated a life in which restlessness is at an all-time high. We're always working but never quite creating. We're always entertained, but we're never quite rested.

Forty percent of Americans are, by definition, chronically sleep-deprived. Meaning that they do not get the medically prescribed minimum of 7 hours of sleep a night. Guilty as charged. Sleep researchers suggest that, on average, people sleep 20 percent less than somebody who was born 100 years ago. On average, we work more and more than those in the 1960s. And if you add up all the extra hours we work a week over the course of a year, we work an estimated additional month per year.

So, I return to the question I started with. Is our restlessness all that different from the Israelites? Bricks, bricks, bricks. Money, money, money. Scroll, scroll, scroll. You may not be able to voice it in the same way the Israelites did. Were there no graves in Egypt? I return to the words of T. S. Eliot. Maybe that will resonate more. Where is the life we've lost?

From the brick to the dollar to the iPhone, all of these different innovations offer a sense of enslavement. It's different than the enslavement of the Israelites. That's important to note. That was forced upon them. In many ways, the enslavement in which we experience now is more of a self-chosen enslavement, yet we seem to be echoing the same words of the Israelites looking back at Pharaoh. Were there no graves in Egypt? Is there a way to break this cycle? We're nearing the end of a long series through the Book of Exodus. We've talked about how it presents not just one exodus but two. The first exodus was getting the Israelites out of slavery, and the second exodus was getting slavery out of the Israelites. We talked about the construction of the Tabernacle, which was a traveling cathedral. A tent that would travel with the people. That was where God's presence would most concentratedly dwell. God gives detailed instructions, not just for the construction of the Tabernacle, but also all of its furnishings within it.

Now, we arrived at Exodus 31 with the seventh set of instructions. God's word to the people is not actually to build anything. It's the Sabbath. So, we're going to look at what this Sabbath means.

*"Then the Lord said to Moses" (Exodus 31:12).* Two weeks ago, I made the point that this line is also a literary device dividing these instructions into the seven sections I just talked about. So when we get to the seventh, that's what's happening.

*"Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy'" (v. 13).* Note that initially it says Sabbaths, not Sabbath. It's quite intentional because God is pointing to a call of perpetualness to it. It's not just one Sabbath, but the Sabbaths that will come.

Sabbath is built out of six days you work, one day you rest, and we repeat that cycle over and over. So God instructs the people to be sure to observe his Sabbath. Then he says, "This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am the Lord who makes you holy."

There was something to the practice of the Sabbath for the Israelites, in which it was a marker of that covenant. Although it may not have been a covenant between Egypt and Pharaoh that they were in, they remember the defining part of their existence in Egypt. Seven days a week, day and night, always bricks, bricks, bricks, bricks.

But this God says something different. This God comes on the scene and says, "Yes, work. Work is essential. Work is a good thing." However, this God also says, "But on that seventh day you cease." It's in that resting that there's a covenant made between God and the people of Israel at this moment.

When we incessantly just work day in and day out, bricks, bricks, bricks, money, money, money, we either buy the myth that someone else is ruling over us as Lord or that we are Lord of our own life. Sabbath is about the recognition that we stop and recognize that we are not in control of our own destiny. There's someone else who is the Lord.

**"Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. vv. 14-15**

The penalty seems pretty harsh. This is certainly an Old Testament covenant. But in the New Testament, when Jesus comes, everything changes with our relationship with God, in which Jesus is, in fact, our Sabbath rest. Our relationship with God is not dependent on our ability to uphold these laws. Rather, it is Jesus' work on our behalf. But it doesn't negate it. It doesn't mean that it's not important.

My hope is to offer, whether or not you feel inclined and convicted to follow the Sabbath, that it is a gift of God that we have been missing. That's the fundamental place. So yes, the penalty seems harsh here with the Israelites. God is saying that it's much more. If the Sabbath is so we

may know that God is the Lord, to reject it is essentially the Israelites saying that they don't want anything to do with God. It's a rejection of who God is and what he's done in their life. So, the harshness of the penalty stems from that reality.

**The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.' " vv. 16-17**

Did you catch what God was doing there as far as further rationale for the Sabbath? God links it back to the creation story in Genesis. The creation story that God's evoking is that he's standing over all of the unformed creation. The phrase is that it's *Tohu va-Vohu*, meaning it's formless and void. If you were to look at the creation story, the first part of it is God creating things that were formless. He was giving shape: day from night, land from sea. He was giving form to that which was formless.

But then he also says it was void or chaos. It's then from that formlessness, as God creates the form that he fills it. So he creates the birds of the sky and the animals of the sea. It's as if God is creating a canvas and then filling it with life and painting across the created order. For six days, after each description of what God did in that creative work, it says that there was evening and there was morning on the first day. There was evening, and there was morning, the second day, the third, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth.

But what's fascinating is when you get to the seventh day, you actually don't find that repetition in the seventh day of creation in Genesis 2. You don't see God say, and there was evening, and there was morning. Why?

**Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:1-3**

This is the first thing ever called holy in the scriptures. The seventh day was set apart, distinct, holy, because on it he rested from all his works of creating that he had done. Did God need to rest? Of course not. God exists outside of time, which means he exists outside of the deterioration of the material body. He's not affected by gravity in the way you and I are. His body will not slowly erode. God didn't need rest, which tells me a few things.

First, it would indicate that if God, who didn't need rest, chose to rest, certainly I, as a created being far lower than God, may need a little bit of rest. That's the first thing. The second thing is it tells me something about Sabbath. It's more than just about a day off. It's something different, which is what you see here.

Over and over, God is looking over his creation and calling it good. Then he looks back after the seventh day at everything he created and says, "This is very good." There's something about rest in which we look back

over that which God has created and recognize what God created, its goodness, beauty, and delight.

Doesn't it seem a little bit odd that after giving all the instructions on building the Tabernacle, God gives this command to remember the Sabbath? What is God doing in this particular place? He's already mentioned it in the Ten Commandments. He's already given the instruction. But there's something about it that is important for God to remind the people.

Two weeks ago, when we were talking about the creation of the Tabernacle, I talked about how that mirrored the pattern of Eden, how that was heaven and earth overlapping. It was the way back to Eden, which was the way back to God.

The same is happening here now with the Sabbath. The Sabbath is to time what the Tabernacle was to material space. So, the Tabernacle was a shadow of a deeper reality. It was physicality. It was made with tables, wood, drapes, curtains, and candles. All those things were the material world that was meant to mirror the experience of Genesis in which you were dwelling with God. But that was all happening in space, in actual physicality.

The Sabbath is a cathedral in time, which is beautiful when you just pan out and look at the history of the Jewish people, who had forever struggled to find a place and have had their temples and cathedrals destroyed. They've been an exiled people, and God states that they don't need a physical space at all. They can meet with him in the Sabbath.

This past week, I reread a beautiful book on Sabbath written by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. He said, "The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals in time." The meaning of Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week, we live under the tyranny of things of space. Bricks. Bricks. Bricks. Money. Money. Money. Scroll. Scroll. Scroll. On the Sabbath, we try to become attuned to holiness. It's a day where 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.

Sabbath is about eternity, that which is timeless, beyond our comprehension, breaking into our moment of time. It's a shadow. There is coming a moment in which all of the story of the scriptures is pointing to in which there's no more sickness, no more death, no more illness, no more fires, no more plane crashes, none of it. In which we will dwell with God in eternity. It says in Revelation 22:

**I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. vv. 22-24**

There's eternity, and Sabbath is about a foretaste of that. You taste a little bit of that which is to come. It is our great cathedral in time. Rather than going to a place to meet with God, we can go to a time and experience the presence of God in a different way.

We've talked a lot about Sabbath in the past few years. It is one of our core habits and our rule of life. It's one of the things we've drawn a line in the sand and said that we want to, as a community, be a people who practice Sabbath so we can grow in attentiveness to God. For all the restlessness that I talked about at the beginning of the sermon, we want to react against that, push back the tyranny of always on, always working, and always accumulating. One of the ways we do that is through Sabbath.

How does Sabbath form us? How does God use this particular practice? The first thing it does is emphasizes work overtoil. This is tricky, but you have to think back to the Genesis story. We're going back there one more time. In the Genesis story, work was a good thing. It was a pre-fall reality. Before sin entered the picture, Adam and Eve had work to do. God said, be fruitful and multiply. Cultivate the world. Till it. Create something out of it.

The original picture, before sin entered the scene in Genesis 3, was us partnering with God to co-create and rule over the world. To build something beautiful out of this. God would give us raw materials like wheat, yeast, and water and said to create, and we made sourdough, which is pretty darn good. God gives us these raw materials and invites us, the image bearer, into that level of creativity. He wants to co-create together.

Work was a pre-fall reality. You were created to work. You were created to contribute. You were created to find ways to pour your life out. We have such a reduced vision of what work means. Work, in the broadest sense, could be what you do in your 9 to 5 job going to the office. It could be staying home and raising children. It could be upkeeping a house. It could be teaching kindergarten, forming software, or creating art through a palette of colors. It could be any number of things, but you were created to work, to cultivate the ground.

What happened in Genesis 3 is when Adam and Eve looked at God and said, "Actually, God, we know what's best. We'd rather have our seed than your seed." They reached out and seized and tried to live beyond their limitations. They said, "Well, I'm just going to take of that fruit that you told me not to eat." All of a sudden, their work became the very thing that was where they found meaning and purpose, which wasn't what it was intended to be.

They were to find meaning, purpose, and identity in God. But they reached out and seized their own power and conviction. After that happens, God says now work has become toil. Remember that moment in which he's dealing out the consequences of their rebellion. He said, "When you are trying now to work, you're going to war against the ground."

If your quarterly reports or your goals at work if they become everything. If everything is dependent on your kid's success, on their academic achievements, or on you getting that promotion, rising to that tax bracket, if that is the ultimate goal, my friends, that is toil. That will rest and sit in your body like anxiety, stress, and anxiousness. That is not the work you were created to do.

There's a way that you can show up to work that is healthy, and you understand your connection to God. It's a way you show up and recognize that you have a part in partnering with God in the renewal of all things, but it isn't where we find our meaning and purpose. We are not God. God is the one who supplies that.

To practice Sabbath is to name that you are not in control of the world. It's to name that you're not the source of your own worth. It is to look to God, who is the Lord, who made it holy, who set it aside. It is to say, my sales goals, my quarterly reports, the growth of my company, whatever it is, that is not ultimate. It's good, but it is not ultimate. That will cross over into toil, and toil is what cultivates death.

Sabbath is the resistance of the god of accomplishment. The hardest part for us in our culture of Sabbath is that our culture celebrates and promotes toil. It reinforces it with another raise, another bonus, prestige, and power. There's nothing wrong with a holy ambition to work hard at what we do, but when it becomes your source of meaning, culture will reinforce that. If our existence is found there, when it's taken away, you are left anxious, empty, and hollow because toil brings about death.

Sabbath reshapes our relationship with work. Even more so, it reshapes our understanding of rest, and so Sabbath is about rest over leisure.

One of the great misconceptions about Sabbath is that it's purely a day off for your own indulgence and leisure. But that's different. It's different than that. The difference between leisure/indulgence is that it centers on the self, not God. Leisure is when you reach out and attempt to restore your own soul, something you can't do on your own.

There are times when leisure is totally fine. It's not necessarily a bad thing. But I'm reminding us that leisure will always over promise and under deliver. It will not provide the rest that your soul desires.

Eugene Peterson, a pastor and author, would call a day off "...a bastard Sabbath." It's kind of like it, but it's not quite. Because the day off is the day where we can have it. We live in a country where most of us get a weekend. Not all of us, but most of us get two days off. You get a day off to do the chores, run around, mow the lawn, and go to the store. You do all the things you need to do but don't mistake that for rest.

Lindsey and I have just started watching the show *Severance*. Season two was coming out, so we decided to binge-watch season one so we could be ready when season two came out. So we watched it over and over, engaging in leisure and indulgence. We sat on the couch and watched three or four episodes back-to-back. I got to the end of the first season, and I thought, "Oh, this is a great show." But my soul was not rested. I don't think we get to the end of binging a show or scrolling endlessly on Instagram and think, "Ah, my soul feels better."

That is the difference between rest and leisure. There's nothing wrong with leisure. There's nothing wrong with us watching *Severance*. There's nothing wrong with engaging in those things, but it will not give you the rest your soul desires because only God can provide that. Only God can provide you the rest that your soul longs for.

In Exodus 31:17, the text we just read, there's a little line that we breezed past, but speaking of the Sabbath, it says, *"It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."* The word in the Hebrew is *nephesh*, which can be translated as catch your breath. Which means God rested and caught his breath. Rest is different than leisure. Rest is where you allow your soul to catch up with your body. Often, it means engaging in things that bring you life. But we live in an oversaturated world of entertainment where we're more entertained than we are rested.

The difference from leisure, such as binging Severance, to rest is what Lindsay and I do on Friday nights. We make homemade pizza. That's our new thing. We open up a nice bottle of wine and make pizzas with the girls. We sit together and talk and read, and we slow down in the presence of God, which spills over into Saturday morning. Saturday morning, I wake up and buy overpriced coffee and then make a breakfast that's too big.

Lindsay and I then sit in our home study in these two green chairs where we get filled with life. We just rest in the presence of God. Sometimes, that moment in those chairs is 15 minutes; other times, it's two or three hours. We just sit there in the presence of God and allow the conversation between us to flow.

We talk about things that are bothering us, that are on our hearts, and the way we've seen God. We allow our souls to slow down to the pace of eternity. It's not always perfect. Don't get me wrong. Most of the time, it's not, but there are those times when I enter into that rest, and my soul catches up with my body. I begin to understand the difference between rest and leisure, something only God can provide, but I can create the space to receive what God so willingly wants to give.

See Sabbath is about rest over leisure, and it's also about worship over self-care. There's been this popular movement with Sabbath recently that's exciting to see as people try to take this practice more seriously. However, Sabbath can devolve into a self-care day. Notice that the scriptures are quite clear. It is not self-care. It's a Sabbath in Leviticus 23. When this command is repeated, it says it is a Sabbath to the Lord, not to the individual, not to me, and not to the worker for completing their work.

Sabbath devolves into self-care when we come to see Sabbath as a reward for our efforts. That's not what it is. Because we live in an overworked culture, we tend to view rest, when we get to taste it, as a reward. If I just work hard, then I'll get to go on that vacation. The problem, if your vacations are like mine, is that they're great and you engage in leisure, but when I get home, I feel like I need a day off before I go back to the office.

There's nothing wrong with vacation. It's great family time to connect. It's a very good thing, a gift we can partake in. But if we're not careful, it devolves into self-care. We think that Sabbath is a time to just care for ourselves. Sabbath is not self-care. It's worship. We organize our Sabbaths not around self-care but around worship through meditating

on scripture and contemplating the person, presence, and activity of God in our lives.

We enjoy the beauty of God. We practice gratitude for what God has already given us, not discontent for what we wish he had. Sabbath is a way in which we develop and cultivate an affection for all that God has created in this world. Sabbath is about centering God in our experience and affections.

Sabbath is fundamentally about worshipping God. We tend to think of worship just as songs, and that may be part of it. Maybe that is part of how you Sabbath, you sing to the Lord. However, worship can look a thousand different ways. You can experience it through the creativity of art, on a hike, going on a walk, a nice meal, or a good conversation. All of that, when done through the lens of God, can be an expression of worship. Sabbath is about rest over leisure. It's about work over toil. It's about worship over self-care.

This last is about eternity. I want to bring us back to what God is doing in the text in Exodus in which he's saying that which will come someday in Revelation is breaking into the here and now. Sabbath is not about being caught up in the demands of time of one thing after another after another but rather trying to practice for that which will be true in eternity. It's about that reality breaking in.

Heschel, in a different spot in his little book, says,

**"The Sabbath comes like a caress, wiping away fear, sorrow, and somber memories. It is already night when joy begins, when a beautifying surplus of soul visits our mortal bones and lingers on."**

Sabbath is about trying to cultivate the environment in which God breaks into our moment, the eternal, timeless God, and gives us a small foretaste of that which will be true. If that's what Sabbath does within us, I want to really briefly close with just how to practice this. In a room this size, with the amount of diversity in this space across all sorts of different spectrums, Sabbath will have to look different for all of us. It won't look the same in my stage of life as it will in yours.

We found this four-part framework that we took from Pete Scazzero. He's an author and a pastor, and he talks about Sabbath through four different movements. This is the practical part. You do it through four things: stop, rest, delight, and worship. Most of us focus on what we can't do on the Sabbath. If you focus on these four things of what you can do, those other things take care of themselves. This is a great beginning point. Don't start with what you can't do. Start with stop, rest, delight, and worship.

It's bumpy. it is not a binding commitment. Our hope is that Jesus is our rest. He is, in fact, our Sabbath rest. So, these are all just ways in which we're cultivating a life, a container that can catch the presence of God in that moment with Jesus in our lives.

### **Stopping**

The first step to Sabbath is stopping. That just means to cease. That's literally what the word Shabbat means in Hebrew. It means to stop. The reminder is that you do not stop because the work is done. The work is

never done. Is your to-do list just never ending? I always write the little arrow, which means make sure to do that the next day.

By Friday, I generally have 75 to 90 percent of my sermon completed, and I finished it that day. But this week got away from me, and so I had a little bit more of a sermon to write on Friday than I typically do. I was racing against the clock because in homemade pizza, yeast needs to rise, the dough needs to be there, and the pizza stones have to warm up. I have to get to that point. So the sun was going down, which is when Sabbath starts in my house, and this part of the sermon I'm actively preaching right now was not written. I wrote it early this morning. Because pizza has to rise, and that's what we decided to do.

I wrestled in this tension, because I don't like when my sermons aren't done ahead of time. It makes me uneasy. But I had to offer that on the grace of God and fight everything in me that said to keep working. The work wasn't done, but it was time to Sabbath. We Sabbath not because the work is done. We Sabbath because the sun goes down on Friday, and for me, that's when our Sabbath starts. So we tuck our work away.

### **Rest**

Second, we rest. What brings rest to your soul? What are the activities that ground you in the present moment? Not the future, not the past, but what is it that you can rest in that cultivates gratitude within you. For me, that's often a good book. I read a lot, and I enjoy reading on Sabbath things that bring me life, not stuff to study for a sermon or textbooks for school. It's rather I just read a good book. What is it that fills your soul up with rest?

### **Delight**

Then after that rest and we find our soul catching up to our body, we can engage in delight. What is it that stirs your heart towards the things of God? Eating your favorite foods? A nice bottle of wine, a good cup of coffee, or sitting with your favorite people? Resist the urge to try to be so holy and put together that you can't enjoy the gifts that God's given.

If it means engaging in a guilty pleasure, do so. But you're doing it to the Lord, not self-care. On the Sabbath, we may cease from asking prayers. We often engage God by asking for things, but I wonder if on the Sabbath, it'd be a better day to do more gratitude and listening prayers, not striving for something more, but delighting in what God has given you, allowing contentment for the daily bread that he's provided. So you worship on the Sabbath. Reflect and thank God for where you are in tasting heaven on earth in your actual life.

### **Worship**

And lastly, you worship. You enter into the Sabbath reflective of who God is; you read scripture, journal, meditate, play worship music, or whatever it is. You engage with worship with God.

Some of you come to Sabbath with all sorts of baggage. Some of you have the religious baggage in which the legalistic requirements have been thrown as this demanding weight on top of you. I want to invite you to be free from that. Others of you have come to this practice, and you think that it is great for those who are privileged to have more control over their calendar. I know it's not perfect. But it doesn't mean throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Still others of you think that it all sounds well and good, but there's no chance. Your life and the complexities that make up your life, may be different than a pastor.

I get it. But I would gently remind you of the time when Jesus was questioned about the Sabbath. These religious leaders went to him and told him what the disciples were doing on the Sabbath, and Jesus just said that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Oftentimes, we get that wrong. We assume that if we can't do it perfectly, we better just throw it all away.

But Jesus says that this is a gift made to you. You were not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for you. What I have found in my decade-plus of trying to practice Sabbath is that I'm not really that fond of Sabbath. I'm fond of Jesus. Sabbath creates an environment in which I can slow my life down and align it to Jesus so I can receive from him. That is the gift of Sabbath, not the practices and logistics and all that. Whatever gets in the way of you communing with Jesus, I'll be the first to say, throw it out. But I would guess that if you stepped into it, Jesus just might meet you there.

I thought I would read a Sabbath prayer that we've used around CPC before and that my family says every Friday night. We sit around luke-warm pizza, light candles, and say this prayer:

**Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures, grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary. And that our rest here upon earth may be in preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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