

Reclaiming Sabbath: Jesus is Lord of Rest

Matthew 11:27-30

Ben Deaver at New Hope Church on March 15, 2015

Fusion students reads Matthew 11:27-30 ^{ESV}

PRAY

Is anyone tired this morning? Tired in general? Weary? Exhausted? On the edge of burn out? Are you getting enough sleep? What burdens do you carry? What keeps you up at night? What wakes you up in the middle of the night? How's your day of rest? How's your Sabbath? Are you getting enough rest?

Some answer this question by sleeping through the sermon! Go take a nap. Or just sleep here. That's cool too!

The need is not for amount/quantity of sleep but depth/quality of sleep. 8-9 hours needed. 6.8 hours is average.

- We need more sleep, dear friends!
- More than that we need soul rest, friends!

We need to reclaim Sabbath rest! Sabbath = to rest; to cease

Psalm 46:10a (NASB) Cease striving and know that I am God...

1) Why rest? 2) Where do we get rest? 3) How do we reclaim rest?

1. Why rest?

New Hoppers are tired!

- Young families
- Young careers—the cost of living in Manhattan tends to be high compared to salaries so we're working pretty hard to make ends meet
- Trying to do this community thing together which can be wearisome, especially with the young kids
- Transient community—volunteers and leaders are always leaving. Those who stay are tired!

Our Modern Society—Most workaholic culture ever

- Materialistic and consumeristic
- Some are lazy but most are working really hard. Slothfulness is sinful and the Bible speaks strongly against it. However, I would imagine that more people here are working really hard to make ends meet.

1. **Insecure Jobs**—Jobs are insecure.
 - a. Bonuses are sought after. You gotta climb the ladder lest you fall off!
 - b. You don't wanna lose your job. It's a competitive marketplace.

2. **Large Income Gap**—Feast or Famine—The gap between the haves and have nots is growing.
 - a. The high paying job are super demanding.
 - b. The wealthiest are extremely wealthy but then suffer from crazy expectations.
 - c. We tend to idolize workaholics.
 - d. Others working multiple jobs to make ends meet.
 - e. Trying to live on one income is very difficult.

3. **Technology**—We can now work anywhere so we work everywhere.
 - a. Industrialization and Globalism

4. **Meaning/Identity from Work**
 - a. Traditional Cultures = Family
 - b. Modern Cultures = Work/Accomplishments
 - i. Fulfillment and/or wealth
 - ii. One of the first questions we ask each other upon meeting is, "What do you do?" "How do you make a living?" It's like asking, "What is your source of life?"
 - iii. Work is a good thing. In fact, there was work before the Fall. Work is great! We should work hard. The problem is when our work defines us.

1, 2, and 3 show that we need rest! Four shows that we can't rest!

Human Condition = need to prove myself

This is the plight of fallen humanity.

We think rest comes in proving ourselves to ourselves, mom or dad, the Joneses, and God.

Illus: Chariots of Fire (1981)

- Eric Liddell says, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure."
- Harold Abrahams says, "I will raise my eyes and look down that corridor; 4 feet wide, with 10 lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But will I?"
 - He gets the gold but finds no rest. It's never enough.
 - The fear of losing. Now I'm frightened to win.
- It's never enough. We have this constant craving to do more, or be more, to convince ourselves of something.
- All labor and are heavy laden even if they don't realize it.
- Physical work isn't most exhausting. Trying to make a name for yourself is most exhausting.
 - This is the work underneath the work. It's never finished. It's never enough. It's exhausting.
 - You'll never be able to say, "It is very good. It is finished." You may have moments where you feel that but they are fleeting.

When people ask you how you're doing how quick are you to say, "Busy"? I say it all the time. I'm afraid that people will think I'm not working hard enough—that I'm not earning my keep.

We labor and are heavy laden trying to prove ourselves to ourselves, others, God... This is wearisome!
We need rest but we can't rest!

Old Testament/Covenant Foundations for Sabbath Rest

Creation as a Foundation for Sabbath Rest

- **Exodus 20:8, 11** ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ¹¹ 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.
 - We rest because God rested. He didn't need rest but He wanted to reflect on creation.
- **To Sabbath is to reflect.**
 - Sabbath gives space to reflect on God's work. Remember and rest in God's work through us. Rest is an act of trust. Sabbath shows that we are not God.
 - "We have to remember to stop because we have to stop to remember." –Judith Shulevitz in NY Times article, *Bring Back the Sabbath* from March 2, 2003
 - Consider God on Day 7 of creation. "It's good..." five times. After all is created, God says, "It's very good..." Then He rests, utterly satisfied in what's been done.
 - God sits back in His most comfortable armchair and reflects on what He's just done. "Man, I'm good. That's awesome. I'll just revel in my glory for awhile here."
- **True Rest = utter satisfaction in what's been done**

Salvation as a Foundation for Sabbath Rest—Freedom from slavery as a foundation for Sabbath rest

- **Deuteronomy 5:12, 15** ¹² Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹⁵ 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.
 - If you don't rest then you're a slave. See Deut 5:12-15.
 - Servants and even animals were to rest on the Sabbath. Lots of social justice implications here that we won't go into.
- **To Sabbath is to restore.**
 - Sabbath helps us flourish as humans. The Sabbath is radical because it's for everyone.
 - Accept the gift of Sabbath rest.
- **True Rest = utter satisfaction in what's been done**

Two OT foundations for Sabbath that promote...

- Love of God and respect for God and love of people and respect for people.
- Reflection on what God has done and restoration of tired people .
- Something went wrong and Jesus needed to come to earth. One of the things He had to do was to reclaim Sabbath.

2. Where do we get rest?

If you don't know Jesus please still listen up.

Jesus Reclaims Rest—New Testament/Covenant Reclamation of Rest—The Gospel and Rest

Matthew 11:27 ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father...

Read Matthew 12:1-8

The Sabbath law is provisional for humankind to flourish.

- The Pharisees could not get true rest. They worked so hard. They didn't feel the love of God so they worked to earn it and to impress others.
 - 39 Sabbath laws
- **Mark 2:27-28** ²⁷ And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."
 - It can be set aside as needed. The priests are hard at work on the Sabbath.
 - Moral laws cannot be set aside as needed.
 - David ate the bread and no one fussed.
 - The priests worked really hard on the Sabbath and that was alright.
 - Something greater is here right now, y'all!
 - E.g. It's never a good time to commit adultery.
 - Sabbath is a gift for you. Accept the gift.
 - Sabbath rest is not found on a specific day, it's found in a specific person, Jesus Christ.
 - The Pharisees were lecturing God about the Sabbath. Jesus created the whole thing.
 - I wish Jesus had an Instagram account and we could see His commentary on this stuff.

Jesus is Lord of rest!

Read Matthew 12:9-14

- He claimed Deity and they wanted to kill Him. In fact, they did kill Him. On the cross Jesus experienced infinite restlessness to satiate the demand to prove Himself to His Father...on our behalf.
- Ironically, in killing Jesus they further solidified Jesus as Lord of rest. He became the one who could give ultimate rest to all would come to Him.
 - Bob quoted this last week: **Isaiah 30:15** For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." But you were unwilling...
 - We need a Savior to bring us rest.
 - **Isaiah 48:22; 57:21** ²¹ "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Jesus said, "It is finished!" The Father said, "It is very good."
- **True Rest = utter satisfaction in what's been done**
- I rest in His finished work! There is utter satisfaction in what's been done. What I could not do for myself, God has done for me in Christ Jesus.
- Jesus can offer rest because He took on my restlessness. Only in Jesus can you get the deep, soul rest you long for.

Jesus is Lord of rest!

This passage is like a salve for my soul, y'all. This is soothing when I am weary. Jesus has all the authority to say this.

Matthew 11:28-30 ²⁸“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

“Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls.”

Yoke and Discipleship

- Consider a yoke of oxen. One is the lead ox and they do the heavy lifting and train the weaker, younger ox. Guess which ox Jesus is. I tell you this much, He ain't the co-pilot. He's doing the heavy lifting.
- **Matthew 23:4** They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.
 - Religion heaps on burdens. Jesus lifts them.
 - “Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls.”
- **1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.
 - “Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls.”
- **Psalms 127:2** 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.
 - “Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls.”
- **Zephaniah 3:17** The LORD your God is in your midst... he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
 - *Illus:* Singing over Maddox when he's crying. “Far over the Misty Mountains cold. To dungeons deep and caverns old.”
 - I envision God singing me to sleep as I'm pitching a fit.
 - “Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls.”

I feel the need to come to Jesus for rest for my soul. This is sweet repentance—turning back to God.

- Exhaustion when first on staff with Navs

Rest in Jesus, friends! No matter where you're at in your spiritual journey this morning, Jesus says to you, “Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls.”

3. How do we reclaim rest? Reclaiming Sabbath Rest!

- Take baby steps. Write one action step down and share it with someone.
 - Self-control is needed. That's why this is a discipline. This is difficult to do in our culture. We are to be a city on a hill—a different culture within the culture.
 - Reflection and restoration are the two goals.
1. **More Sabbath Rest**—Take more Sabbath rest.
 - a. You're probably not taking enough true rest.
 - b. Freedom! Grace abounds! Sabbath is a gift to you. Accept the gift of Sabbath. We have two days off from work in our culture. But are they really days off. Just take 1 day out of 7 to rest.
 - c. The day of the week is not what's important here.
 - d. Set the stage for yourself.
 - i. Set your clothes out. Set your Bible out. Go to bed earlier. Put the smartphone away. Schedule this stuff.
 - ii. Make space for your spouse or a roommate to get Sabbath rest.
 - e. **When will your Sabbath be?**
 - f. Mine is Sunday afternoon through Monday afternoon. I need to protect this more.
 2. **Balanced Sabbath Rest**—Balance your Sabbath rest.
 - a. Avocational Rest—Easiest
 - i. **What rejuvenates you? What is recreational for you? Re-creates you? What are your hobbies?**
 - ii. There's a difference between resting/retreating and escaping. Guys, listen up! You will be tempted to escape into hunting, sports, etc. That's not the goal. Rest is.
 - iii. Examples:
 1. Yard work isn't refreshing for the guy who runs a lawn business...but it is for me.
 2. Meeting with a bunch of people from the church may not be rejuvenating for the person who works for the church...but it may be for someone else.
 3. Family time with the kids may not be restful for a stay-at-home-mom...but it may be for dad who doesn't get much time with them throughout the week.
 4. Introverts and extroverts tend to be rejuvenated differently.
 - b. Contemplative Rest—Difficult
 - i. Tell yourself the story of who you are. Preach the Gospel to yourself. Reflection on what's been done.
 - ii. Do this together and individually in a variety of contexts. Most of the spiritual disciplines we're covering can be experienced together or alone for the sake of Sabbath rest.
 - iii. Sabbath rest together:
 1. The early church gathered on Sundays. See Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2.
 2. Sunday mornings probably won't be physically restful for you if you're vitally involved at New Hope. But it is a time for us to gather and remind ourselves of the story of who we are.
 3. LIFE Groups and other small gatherings are also a great context for this contemplative rest.
 - iv. Sabbath rest alone:
 1. tawG = time alone with God
 - v. **How will you reflect on what's been done?**

- c. Inactive Rest—Extremely difficult
 - i. The land also got a Sabbath. It wasn't planted with a different crop. Whatever grew up, grew up. You need this type of rest too.
 - ii. Cease striving and know that I am God. See Psalm 46:10.
 - iii. ***When will you simply stop and do nothing for a time?***
3. **Sporadic Sabbath Rest**—Inject Sabbath into Your Work/Week
 - a. Schedule up to 70% capacity. See WBN, p. 291.
 - i. Overcoming the Ringing Effect. See WBN, p. 225.
 - b. You may fall behind in your career. That's ok. You may be rewarded for your boundaries. Great!
 - c. Ideas:
 - i. Taking 15 minutes out of the workday to rest the mind.
 - ii. Use your commute for some reflection on what God's done.
 - iii. Running.
 - iv. Disc golf in the middle of the week.
 - v. Coffee or Coke break.
 - d. ***What flexibility do you have in your weekly schedule?***
4. **Smart Sabbath Rest**—Community—Get help with Sabbathing well.
 - a. Who is in a similar field and/or life stage as you? Talk about how to Sabbath well.
 - i. Are you a SAHM (stay-at-home-mom)?
 - ii. Do you own your own business?
 - iii. Are you a soldier?
 - iv. Are you a student?
 - v. Are you in full-time vocational ministry?
 - b. ***Who can help you think through what Sabbath could look like for you?***
5. **Accountable Sabbath Rest**—Be accountable for Sabbath rest.
 - a. There are seasons where overwork may be required. They need to only be seasons.
 - b. E.g. The beginning of this transition was a season of overwork for me. Maris had to tell me, "Stop! Go to The Stone Barn and rest for 48 hours." I needed that kind of accountability.
 - c. ***Who are you accountable to for Sabbath rest?***

Closing Thoughts:

- Ironically, it is hard work to get true rest. This is why it's a spiritual discipline.
- Ironically, rest begets more rest!
 - ***Illus:*** Maddox and Sleep - Sleep begets sleep! Counterintuitive but true. Rest begets rest!
 - Like all of the spiritual disciplines. This is an acquired taste.

"Come to me...and I will give you rest for your souls."

Bring up ushers and PRAY.

Matthew 11:28-30 in The Message

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Good stuff on the chopping block:

Isaiah 40:30-31 ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

- Sabbath supports a life of belief in God.
- **Exodus 31:14** Everyone who profanes it (the Sabbath) shall be put to death.
 - They will die if they don't keep the Sabbath. We too will die.

RECLAIMING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

SERMON SERIES BIG IDEA: Let's reclaim Gospel-powered spiritual disciplines for the sake of godliness (i.e. good works to the glory of God and for the good of His people).

- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney

Preaching is meant to disrupt and entice.

- Last week—Bob Anderson spoke on *Reclaiming Solitude*.
- Ask for recommendations!
- I hope you're having conversations about reclaiming the spiritual disciplines and sharing successes, failures and best practices with each other.

"Learning to pray doesn't offer us a less busy life; it offers us a less busy heart." -Paul Miller

Rocky says, "'Cause all I wanna do is go the distance... And if I can go that distance, ya see, and that bell rings, ya know, and I'm still standin', I'm gonna know for the first time in my life, ya see, that I weren't just another bum from the neighborhood."

Matthew 11:25-26 ²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

- Children rest well when they know who they are and where their provision comes from.
- Jesus and the Sabbath—The New Covenant as a foundation for Sabbath rest???
- "...Jesus exposed Sabbath distortions and restored Sabbath as a gift for living in free obedience before and with God." —Eugene Peterson in *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*, p. 112
- Matthew 11:25-12:14; Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6; Luke 14:1-6; John 5:1-18; 9:1-41

What about sleep aids?

Sabbaticals?

Healthy weariness?

- Colossians 1:28-29 ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

We have this eternal inner murmur of self-reproach.

How do you come to Jesus?

Jews and Sabbath:

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/2011-2020/electrical-electronic-devices-shabbat.pdf>

- We are not under the Mosaic law here... However, there's a strong connection between the Mosaic law and wisdom.

The tiredest people I know...
...moms.

What are you tired from?

Theology of Work - Work is good.
The problem of industrialization.

Re: Sleep:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/sleep/how-much-sleep-do-you-need.htm>

<http://sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need>

- Gallup.com (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/166553/less-recommended-amount-sleep.aspx>)
 - Fifty-nine percent of Americans get seven or more hours of sleep at night, while 40% get less than seven hours. Those figures are largely unchanged from Gallup polls in the 1990s and 2000s, but Americans, on average, slept much more in the 1940s. Americans currently average 6.8 hours of sleep at night, down more than an hour from 1942. Medical studies have related a lack of sleep to health problems and cognitive impairment. Therefore, experts typically recommend seven to nine hours sleep for adults. Currently, 59% of U.S. adults meet that standard, but in 1942, 84% did. That means four in 10 Americans get less than the recommended amount of nightly sleep, compared with the 11% who did so 70 years ago.

Quotes:

Unbusy Pastor -Eugene Peterson

Resources:

<http://qideas.org/articles/wisdom-and-sabbath-rest/>

Illus: Justin Wiebers reclaimed steel beam from Howie's. Came from the Rec Center. 1400 pounds. Similar but different function.