All Things New #11

Renewed Rest

Mark 2:23-28 Scripture Reading: Mark 2:23-28

03/13/22

**Introduction:**

I am going to be speaking about rest. I want to be completely transparent with all of you. This has been a great study for me. This sermon is an amalgamation of a lot of materials that I read and watched and listened. I do not have any direct quotes from any source except scripture but know that I did not make all this up, “there is nothing new under the sun”. I am terrible at rest. I would never classify myself as a workaholic, but I do mostly work at my job to make money every day. So, in this time of study, I have learned a few things and hopefully, prayerfully, I will be able to implement some of things we talk about. I heard a spiritual teacher one time use the term “we are going to walk each other home on this one”. His meaning is that I don’t have this down and you don’t either, so we are going to walk together and work this out together. So, I will invite you to check in with me going forward and see how I am doing in my sabbath practice but be warned if you ask me, I will ask you back.

Sabbath can sometimes be a loaded word in our culture. It kind of reminds me of “courting” that word has a meaning, but we don’t really use it the way it was originally intended we use it to describe something that it was intended not to be. I want to start with the Big Picture today, and then we will talk more in depth about what that means. So, the bid picture today is…

**The Bid Picture: Jesus is our Sabbath rest.**

**What is a Sabbath?**

Let’s start at the beginning, literally. What is a sabbath? The word that is translated into sabbath in our bibles comes from the word in the Hebrew, **Shabbat** and that means a cessation of work, of labors. But of course, we understand that through the teaching of scripture that the word and practice are so much more than that. Let’s look at the Sabbath’s origin.

**Created By God – Genesis 2:1-3**

**Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.**

In the very beginning of the bible, we get the story of God creating and working to make the world which he does in 6 days. The Bible then stops and tells us that on the seventh day God rested. He literally stopped working. In doing so He created a rhythm for us to be able to enjoy Him. God built this into the universe, and it is only through His special revelation that we are aware of this need.

**Created For Us – Mark 2:27**

**And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”**

Jesus Himself tells us that the sabbath was created for us. This sabbath is a gift to be enjoyed not a hardship to be endured. God set aside a time for us to be rejuvenated and refreshed.

**Fulfilled in Redemption – Deuteronomy 5:15**

**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.**

The completed work of Christ on the cross and his sabbath rest and then resurrection guarantees for us that the eternal sabbath rest can be realized. Therefore, since we are free from the bondage of sin through His work, we can get a taste of the eternal sabbath now through this freedom brought about by Jesus.

**Common Sabbath Traps**

**Over Legalization – Matthew 12:2**

**But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”**

I could mention denomination here and you would all understand what I mean. I could talk about humanities incessant need for rules and regulations, but what I really mean here is that if we are not careful to truly understand sabbath we to can get caught in this trap. To make the practice burdensome.

**Over Spiritualization – Matthew 5:17-30**

In the sermon on the mount Jesus spends some time speaking to all of us about the fact that our outward expressions of sin are actually just derivatives of the nature of our heart. Lust = Adultery, Hate = Murder etc.… So, there could be a temptation to take the sabbath and spiritualize it. For example, one might say it is my soul that needs rest and not my physical body so on my day of rest I will only do those things that are beneficial to my soul and not necessarily be an act of cessation to work. **Justifying bad behavior. MicroSabbaths**

**Over Conceptualization**

There are some folks that want to abolish the Jewishness of the law and “Christianize” the sabbath. As an example, have you ever heard of someone celebrating “The Lord’s Day”? This was very popular in almost all Christian circles throughout the time following WW2 all the way to the 1980’s. This was even helped by what were at one time called “blue laws”. The trap here is that is legitimizes over legalization by giving it a form and structure that has rules and regulations.

**The Jesus Way**

**For Healing – Mark 3:4**

In our text Jesus makes this statement “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” This is a rhetorical question of course. He then goes on to heal a man with a withered hand. In doing so He shows us that the sabbath, this time of rest is for our healing, physical and emotional.

**For Worship – Ezekiel 20:12**

In Ezekiel God Himself says “I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.” Our Sabbath was created in part for us to recognize that God is working in our lives and to give Him praise for it.

**For Connection – Deuteronomy 5:12**

In Deuteronomy chapter 5 we have a listing of the ten commandments inthe co verse number 12 the Bible says “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.” All of us together, with God, resting.

**Practical Steps**

**Be Intentional**

Just like anything other spiritual discipline in your life you need to be intentional. Set aside time to sabbath. A 24hr period of time to cease labors and commune with God.

**Be Consistent**

Make it regular, make it part of your weekly rhythm. It does not have to be regimented. The days may fluctuate based on the season of life you are in but feel that rhythm in your week.

**Be Focused**

When you take that sabbath time, do not trade “work for money” for “work for self”. Spend time enjoying God in His creation, with your family, get old school sit down at the dinner table with your friends and family and share a meal. Focus on God and His goodness to sanctify us and experience just for a moment a taste of the eternal sabbath rest.

**Conclusion:**

Some final words. As I stated at the beginning, I am no sabbath expert and I struggle, as we all do, to make time to rest. Don’t miss the big picture. All of this, the sabbath, the rest, the communing, the worship, the healing it all points to the fact that Jesus is our sabbath rest. Apart from the completed work of Christ on the Cross and His resurrection we have no hope. No hope of a future, no hope of rest no hope. But in Jesus we have a future and rest now and for evermore.

**References:**

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer

Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster

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