

WHAT ABOUT THE REST

March 26, 2017 | Pastor Jeff Cero

God's people are coming out of many years of slavery, delivered by the God of their Ancestors. They don't know his name and they also know very little about him. So in our passage we see God's "coming out party", he begins to reveal himself and the first area is the ten commandments. Today we will focus in on the "Sabbath", let's look at the passage together:

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping 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, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy". Exodus 20:8-11 NIV

The origin of the Hebrew "sabbat" appears to have derived from the verb "sabat", meaning to stop, to cease, or to keep. The opposite is to "keep going", it's about pushing the "pause button", despite whatever is going on around us.

So the command is to work for six days, then rest on the seventh day. If we think this is only an Old Testament concept, we see that the Sabbath is mentioned over 50 times in the Gospels alone.

I think the majority of us enjoy rest, but the reality is, it is hard to implement. But the fact is, this is a biblical command and a scriptural principle that needs to be part of our life. It is interesting as we read about the life of Jesus, the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus over two main issues; his proclamation that he was the Son of God and issues over the Sabbath...it's important!

Our current culture struggles with the concept of the Sabbath, we are a very busy culture that acknowledges busyness and rewards it. On the contrary we can never be like the Jewish Leaders who became so legalistic it actually became bondage to them.

PHYSICAL REST REMINDS US OF OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS

We're told about an epic battle of prophets in the Old Testament, the combatants were Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. After an incredible miracle filled victory, Elijah had to run for his life from Queen Jezebel. He finds himself in a mountain cave asking God to take him. He is exhausted and hungry and God supplies food and sleep. But an interesting thing happens, the physical needs have been addressed but this only reminded Elijah about the need for rest for his spiritual weariness.

Jesus understood this when he said:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls". Matthew 11:28-29

Jesus clearly invites us to find "rest for your souls", which only he can provide.

PHYSICAL REST REMINDS US OF SPIRITUAL REST THAT ONLY JESUS CAN PROVIDE

"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". Exodus 31:13

It's interesting that all of the commandments start with "thou shall" or "shall not", but the Sabbath commandment begins with "remember". So what are we supposed to remember, that he is the one who gives us rest, true rest comes from him. It is Jesus that said come to me and I will give you rest and in me you will find rest.

It's also the Sabbath that reminds us who makes us holy, in all areas of our lives. Don't try to earn your own rest, it will never come. Enter the rest he supplies for you, only he gives true and complete rest.

1. REST REMINDS US WHO IS GOD AND WHO IS NOT; IT'S A MATTER OF CONTROL

"Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment". Luke 23:56

The Saturday between the cross and the empty tomb might be one of the "worst" days in history. "What just happened", "what is going to happen now", full of anxiety, uncertainty, fear and an eerily silence. In the middle of all of this there was a Sabbath rest.

It truly is a matter of trust; it is a place where you are not going to rely on your own reflex's or strength. Think about it; if anyone had the right to struggle with this area, it would be Jesus. He had the whole world on his shoulders, but he slept when others were panicking over a storm, he was able to find places of rest when the whole world was trying to get something from him...or kill him.

2. REST ALLOWS YOU TO ENJOY AND RECEIVE WHAT GOD HAS FOR YOU

This is a place to be refreshed and renewed, dare we say enjoyed, yes it should be a time of celebration for the things we get to enjoy. What refills you, what rejuvenates your life, this "rest" can look different for different people.

The original practice of the Sabbath included everybody and everything under your care. The rest included the animals, your family, etc. For us today when we enter God's Sabbath rest, your family will benefit along with you.

3. REST SHOWS US THAT GOD WANTS TO SPEND TIME WITH US, JUST BECAUSE HE LOVES US

We get to enjoy the Sabbath time, but when it comes down to the keystone of this rest, it's about spending time with our Father. In the midst of the busyness and demands of our lives, we find these oasis times; not to fulfill an obligation or check a box, but because he loves us and wants to fellowship with us.

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit... This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things". Titus 3:4-5, 8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. So in this lesson we will take a look at the "Sabbath". What comes to your mind when you hear this word? Jeff helped us with the definition of this word from the original Hebrew meaning; "to stop, to cease, or to keep", "to rest". How has this affected or influenced your walk with Jesus, (if at all)?
2. Some of us may look at the Sabbath as an Old Testament word and idea, but as we learned it's referred to over 50 times in the Gospels alone. We learned that the Sabbath is a biblical command and a scriptural principle that needs to be part of our life; but why is it so hard to implement in our lives?
3. On page two of your notes, Jeff makes two points:
 "Physical Rest Reminds us of our Spiritual Needs" and
 "Physical rest reminds us of spiritual rest that only Jesus can provide"
 Take a few minutes to discuss "physical rest", "spiritual rest" and what Jesus offers us; "rest for our souls".
4. Finally, please discuss the three points Pastor Jeff left us with on page 3 of your notes:
 "Rest reminds us who is God and who is not; it's a matter of control"
 "Rest allows you to enjoy and receive what God has for you"
 "Rest shows us that God wants to spend time with us, just because he loves us"