

Sabbath is For Us

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. ⁹ Six days you may work and do all your tasks, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. (Exodus 20:8-10a, CEB)

²⁷ Then Jesus said, "The Sabbath was created for humans; humans weren't created for the Sabbath. ²⁸ This is why the Human One^[b] is Lord even over the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27-28, CEB)

It's good to be back with you this week, after taking a week of post-Easter vacation. This wasn't a vacation where I was able to travel with the family because they had all had their school spring breaks during Holy Week. So this became more of a staycation for me. To be honest, I had some spring-cleaning type of plans in the back of my head for last week, but they really didn't materialize. Partly, because spring hadn't showed up yet :-). But, truth be told, I just needed a week of rest - of Sabbath time apart from work. At least that's what my body was telling me.

In its most well-known form, Sabbath is that day of rest, once every seven days, that was commanded by God and given to Moses as part of the Ten Commandments. I generally take my Sabbath rest day on Fridays each week. But I also try to find some Sabbath time (a few minutes of peace to "be still and know that God is God") within each work day, as well as extended Sabbath times (such as a week of vacation, where I step away from work) on a seasonal basis.

Sometimes, I think we get caught up in thinking that Sabbath is just a rule that we have to follow, or else we'll get into trouble with God. But, Jesus made it clear that the Sabbath is really **for our benefit**. He said that Sabbath is created for people, rather than the other way around. Sabbath is intended to be for our good, not as some sort of punishment or killjoy. We need not feel guilty about Sabbath rest, but instead receive it as a good gift from our Heavenly Father.

Our Disciple Bible Study class, which met for 24 weeks during the Fall and Winter months, had a weekly focus on Sabbath. It was powerful to see how each person began to live into the Sabbath more intentionally from week to week and how that affected their lives in positive ways. One of our class members reminded us of something a previous pastor had said about Sabbath: that it's meant for **RE-Creation**, which is, of course, where we find the origins of our word "recreation."

So, how can we think differently about Sabbath in a world that is constantly screaming for us to work more, work harder, work longer hours, and be more productive? Here are a few thoughts about Sabbath from the Disciple II curriculum that I found helpful:

God created the world and then declared Sabbath time, time to set apart for rest. God rested; so we rest and celebrate the grandeur and mystery of creation.

Sabbath offers time for those God brings into our life. Hospitality is an important part of Sabbath. It is an honor to share a Sabbath meal with a guest.

On Sabbath, we witness to our dependence on God as our Creator and Sustainer.

Sabbath is intended as freedom to rest for God's people, animals, and land.

On Sabbath, we practice God's presence as community. The Lord's day.

Sabbath offers time for spiritual rest and renewal. We are instructed to wait and pray for the Holy Spirit.

Sabbath calls us from the values of the culture that surrounds us to the values of the Kingdom. Culture puts self first; Kingdom puts others first.

Sabbath offers a balanced and hopeful view of life. It does not deny the pain, the sorrow, the sadness. Rather, it breaks into the pain and sadness with a time of joy, fellowship, intimacy, and renewal.

I wish for you to find rest for your soul in the keeping of Sabbath time.

Easter Joy,

Pastor David Rittgers