

THE BIG IDEA: The Sabbath reminds us that God does more as we do less.

The Take-Off

Let's do a quick, informal poll. Raise your hand if you've ever felt like you need more time to get things done?

That's going to be an easy 100% yes, right?

Which is why this last message in our Rhythms series could possibly feel like the most counter-cultural one yet.

It's also the one that - in full disclosure - I feel the least qualified to teach.

See, I raised my hand, too. I'm just like everyone else - always feeling like there are more tasks than time.

But our experience isn't the bottom line. If we've learned anything in this series, it's that our experiences actually reveal the wisdom of God.

He knows that we need rhythms in our lives because he can see how crazy our lives get without them.

Let's read the passage again from **Matthew 11:28-30** - it's from The Message and I've grown to love it more each week!

*"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."*

Remember what we've learned so far:

- the One speaking these words is Jesus, and we **MUST** have a **Savior**, someone to set the beat of our lives.
- He calls us to "get away" with him and we recognize this as a call to **solitude and silence**.
- He invites us to "keep company" with him, and we know that means we'll be in the presence of the servant King. **Serving**, then, is a rhythm that he calls us to.
- When we are with Jesus, we hear the word of God just as Jesus heard the words of the Father. **Scripture** is critical in the lives of those who would learn these unforced rhythms of grace.

On this last morning, I want to draw your attention to the words "I'll show you how to take a real rest."

How would you describe a real rest? Sleeping in without setting an alarm? Anything longer than the last vacation you took? One or two more vacations? Winning the lottery and never working again?

All of us would define it differently, and honestly, the way we would define it reveals a lot about where we are - or aren't - in establishing the rhythms that Jesus is talking about here.

Let me tell you how Jesus defined real rest.

The Greek word for rest is "anapauo" - yes, the first four letters DO spell "a nap" - that will help us remember

It means "to cause or permit one to cease from any movement or labour in order to recover and collect his strength,"

"to give rest, refresh, to give one's self rest, take rest," "to keep quiet, of calm and patient expectation"

Sabbath in the OT was a 24 hour period when God's children did just that - they stopped

We find it in **Exodus 20:8-11** - one of the 10 commandments

I'm not going to be able to address everything there is to know about the Sabbath, but I do hope this wets your appetite to want to learn more

I believe that this rhythm is key to solving that 100% survey we started with.

Just before I share some guidelines to help you implement Sabbath rest, let's answer the obvious: "Was the Sabbath just an OT thing? Should we even consider it today?"

Mark 2:27; Luke 23:56; Luke 4:16; Hebrews 4:9; Acts 17:21 Mark 6:2 - those are just 6 of the places the Sabbath is mentioned in the NT - in fact, Hebrews 4:11 tells us to make every effort to enter into this rest

So, here are 2 guidelines about practicing the Sabbath and we'll close it out with 3 words that prove 100% that God blesses the rhythm of Sabbath rest today.

1. The Sabbath is designed to charge us up, not prop us up

- a. There is a misunderstanding that the Sabbath is needed because we're tired
- b. Granted, we do get tired - "Are you tired?" - but God took a day of rest, too, and God wasn't tired
- c. Remember the Greek word: "to cease from labor in order to collect strength"
- d. **The Sabbath is designed to charge us up, not prop us up**

- e. We practice the Sabbath because we're trusting, not because we're tired
- f. We get charged up FOR something - we tend to think of the night as the last part of the day, but for the Israelites, it was the first part
 - Genesis 1 is full of the phrase "evening and morning, the ____ day"
 - For Jews, night came before day
 - Think about that - the rest prepared them for the work
 - When rest props you up, you HOPE you get enough, but when rest charges you up, you MAKE SURE you get enough
- g. Think about the creation - God worked for 6 days and then rested on the 7th
- h. But he created man on the 6th day, which means man's FIRST DAY was the 7th - a day of rest
- i. God gave man a massive mission - be fruitful, multiply, rule - but had him rest first
- j. Time with God fuels everything we do for God

2. The Sabbath is designed to free us up, not tie us up

- a. So, how should we spend that time? You know people love to create rules, right?
- b. The religious leaders in Jesus' day did, too.
- c. They had rules about how far you could walk, what you could eat, not eat, say, do, not do
- d. **Matthew 23:4** / Jesus said they tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's backs
- e. They made the Sabbath hard, but **the Sabbath is designed to free us up, not tie us up**
- f. The Sabbath should be full of things that charge us up for the work God has for us
 - Worship with friends and family
 - Time with our Father
 - Go for a run, read a book, do yard work
 - What charges your soul? Do that.
 - What drains your soul? Don't do that.
 - **Mark 2:27** / The Sabbath is for you!
- g. Will your list look like mine? Nope, and that's okay.
- h. **Colossians 2:16** / you're free to choose your Sabbath list of do's and don'ts
- i. **Romans 14:5** / you're free to choose your Sabbath day or time
- j. The point is that **you're free**

The Landing

I told you that I would give you 3 words that would prove without a doubt that God still honors the Sabbath
My guess is that by the time I get to the second word, you'll be able to shout out the 3rd.

Ready. The 3 words are

Can we put ourselves in the feet of the Israelites?

- They had been slaves in Egypt for generations - 430 years to be exact
- While there they had worked 7 days a week
- Their work was never done and they had a nearly impossible - if not truly impossible - quota

But just like a small chicken sandwich chain, when they honored God by doing less, he did more.

That's the whole point of the Sabbath: **it reminds us that God does more as we do less.**

Let's pray.