

Beginnings 4 - In the Beginning Was Rest

In the previous sermon we covered that God worked to create the world, that God gave *man* work as part of paradise and in the Millennium, and that work is not a curse, but a blessing

Even in our own self interest, work makes us productive and keeps us from being bored. However, when someone belongs to God, we also bring glory to God through our work.

Matt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Since the Fall, in our salvation, we were created to work for God to glorify Him. Work is not a punishment. The curse on work was that it would be hard. In the Millennium there is going to be work that we are going to do also. In the meantime, if any man does not work he should not eat. So you get the idea that man should work. We should be promoting work.

2Thess 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

If someone does not have a job they are in sin if they are not serving in some way. Of course, it is always nice if that job comes with a paycheck, but not all jobs are done for pay.

1. God gave rest.

But having said that, it could enter into people's minds that we must work, work, work, and end up going *overboard* with work. We can become workaholics, addicted to work. Not only did God give us work but at the same time He gave us rest.

Gen 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

God created the world in six days and on the seventh He *rested*. You should get the idea that God finds rest essential and gave us His example to follow.

Ps 121:3-4 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

If He Who is all powerful and does not *need* rest took *time* to rest, then we need to take notice. The idea of rest was so important that it got put into the 10 Commandments.

Exod 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

11For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

God's resting at the end of the creation is the foundation for the fourth Commandment to keep the Sabbath to rest. But that is not the only Sabbath that the Jews recognized. There were also sabbaths for the beginning of the month at the New Moon, Feast Days such as at Passover, Pentecost, and even for the land to rest. There is a particularly interesting example that God set for the sabbath rest in Exodus 16:19-30. The Jews were given manna for their daily food. If they tried to get extra for the next day so they wouldn't have to go out, the manna turned bad. They were told on the sixth day to get a double portion so they would have some on the Sabbath. Some didn't want to work so hard so they assumed that they would just go out as usual...but there *was* none on the Sabbath!

- Keeping Sabbath is not part of salvation.

Just as we have to be careful not to go overboard on our obligation to work, we have to be careful to not go overboard on our obligation to rest. I don't mean to only say don't go overboard with resting and becoming a sluggard, but the *obligation* to rest. Some elevate the Sabbath to become part of our salvation.

Some people try to say that the Sabbath day has to be done according to a strict interpretation of only a select portion of Scripture. They say it has to be on *Saturday* because that is the seventh Day. Indeed, in the Law in Ex 20:9-11 the Sabbath Day is identified as the seventh day. The Seventh Day Adventists say you have to go to church on the seventh day which is Saturday and that worship on Sundays is the mark of the beast.

However, in the Law it doesn't say

that you have to *worship* on the seventh day, but that you have to *rest* on the Sabbath day. The Jews did meet on Sabbath days in the synagogue, but worship actually took place *every* day. Also, there were and still are daily services at the synagogues. To say that Saturday was *the* day of worship for the Jews is simply not true.

Then there is the Roman notion of *Sundays* as *holy days of obligation*. In addition, there are a select number of additional days of obligation unless they fall on a Saturday or Monday. It is still supposed to be a mortal sin to miss Mass on holy days of obligation when you could have attended.

Paul addressed this issue in the book of Romans:

Rom 14:1,5-6 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

5One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Col 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

17Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Sunday became the practice for worship was based on the fact that Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week.

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

We see that the church met on the first day of the week to break bread which was understood to be in recognition of the resurrection.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

They also took up collections on the first day of the week, which was a

common practice in the synagogue as well.

1Cor 16:2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Then you have the reference to the Lord's Day, which was used instead of the term *Sabbath*.

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

You can still belong to God even if you don't go to church. The problem is that you can't be an *obedient* Christian if you don't go to church.

Heb 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

John 13:34,35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

You can love someone from afar if you are stuck being apart, but *avoiding* each other is not a convincing way of demonstrating your love for each other. Which day we meet does not determine our salvation. Don't limit worship to the day of rest. If someone wanted to be picky, it is fine to take Saturday to rest. Don't however, limit Saturday as *the* day of rest. Jesus pointed out that the priests profaned, or violated, the Sabbath by working on the Temple service and were blameless.

Mat 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Sacrifices were made daily by the priests in their courses and so for some of the priests, Saturday was a *work* day. What is important is that there is a day of rest. For me, it is not Sunday, it's Tuesday.

Mark 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

Don't turn the Sabbath into a day of burden. It is meant for us for a blessing. Work is a blessing in its place, and rest is a blessing in its place.

2. The benefit of Sabbath.

There is a benefit of Sabbath. Notice that I did not say "of *the* Sabbath," I just said there is a benefit of Sabbath. I have been using the word Sabbath and pointing out that it is for rest, but the word Sabbath itself is interesting. It doesn't mean seventh, as in the seventh day, and it doesn't mean rest. The word Sabbath means *to stop, to cease*. We use this idea when we say, "Give it a rest."

It is not just the end of the week, the new moons, the Feast days and holidays, but each day has its sabbath, or ceasing. There are three parts of the day for working, personal time, and then there is the time to stop completely when we fall asleep. Our bodies were made to go through the sleep cycle to refresh.

It is interesting that when we sleep, there are different cycles that we go through. One of the cycles is called REM sleep. REM sleep is when the body is getting its rest. There are deeper stages of sleep, but during REM sleep is when some real rejuvenation is going on. REM stands for Rapid Eye Movement. You can tell when someone is having REM sleep because when someone is going through that stage, you can see that under their eyelids their eyes are moving back and forth. That is the time you are dreaming. The body actually has a mechanism, a part of the brain, that will block out any nerve impulses going to the rest of your body for motor activity. You might be moving around in your dream, but your body is blocked from being able to actually move. When you are coming out of the dream and this block is wearing off, that is when you might go sleep walking. Also, you might find that in your dream at that point you feel like you are stuck in slow motion. That is the body trying to move but the motion is being blocked. If that part of your brain is malfunctioning which blocks the motion, you will move all around and could actually die from sleep deprivation eventually. Those who are insomniacs have to take measures to get some kind of rest.

The body *requires* rest. We can't go on full tilt all the time. Our muscles get filled up with lactic acid and has to be flushed out. Our bodies have a natural fight or flight response. When we are faced with a challenge, we produce adrenaline which gives us a boost of energy to either take flight or to stand and fight. An excess of adrenaline can cause rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, anxiety, weight loss, excessive sweating and palpitations. We can't live like that all the time. It would be like having a continual nitro boost to a car engine; if not handled properly it could fry your piston rings and worse.

We have to learn how to rest. God is the God of vacations, also, because they are used to give us a break, but the trouble with that is sometimes vacations are just a different kind of work. You can

see this from your experience when you get home you have to take a vacation from your vacation. Make sure to use the vacation as an actual time of rest.

In our culture, we have so much busyness. There are a number of times we need to learn to learn to rest. The sermon title could have been simply "Stop." There are several things I want to point out that we stop and take our rest from:

- Stop working.

We take a rest from our work. This doesn't mean that we just work like a machine for eight hours and then stop. There are breaks that are necessary. If you have the kind of work where you can do this, use a power nap. You can get more productivity by giving people breaks. Some large corporations have installed not just break rooms, but have provided other restful times.

- Stop taking care of everyone's problems.

We have to learn how we can't take care of everyone's problems. We want to be able to help people, but we have to watch out that we are not everyone's nanny. This also robs people of the opportunity to learn, but it can burn you out.

- Stop Worrying.

We need to be able to cease from worrying and fretting and frustration over everything in society. We should be concerned and take action but we have to watch out that we don't develop a mentality that says, "The world is going to go up in flames if a vote doesn't go the way we think it should." By all means vote, but learn how to stop and say, "I am not going to worry about this because everything is in God's hands."

When it comes to evangelism, be concerned enough to try to do a good job explaining the Gospel, but there is a point where your work stops because their responsibility to respond takes over.

1Cor 3:6-7 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

We shoot for excellence, but we have to learn how to not go overboard.

Phil 4:5-7 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

6Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Don't be full of care. Know how to trust things to God. Don't think you have to make up for what God is not doing. Do your best, but many times good enough *actually is* good enough. It is like working on an engine. You could keep working on it till you have replaced every part, but maybe you should only fix it so it lasts long enough to get to the store and buy a new engine.

- Stop sinning.

Stop sinning. Sin takes so much energy.

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

You don't have to remember everything you say if you always tell the truth. When you lie you have to work hard to remember the lies so you keep covering the lies. It is a lot easier to stay home and not sin. It takes more to get out of sin than to do right to begin with. People get in trouble because they don't know how to stay home and have real rest.

- Plan

There is a fair question that people ask, "How can you tell when you have moved from proper concern to excessive worry? How can you tell when you are not just being restful, but are being irresponsible? How do we know how when we are no longer just trying to be a blessing and have taken on the weight of the world to take care of?" Part of this is art. If you find yourself paralyzed from making decisions, failing in responsibilities, or preoccupied with worry, then it is probably time to start taking action.

However, we should take notice of something in God's example. He had a schedule. He planned His work and He planned His rest. Six days to work, one day to rest every week. He created the sun, moon, and stars for a purpose:

Gen 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

They are there so we can have the new moon sabbaths, the yearly sabbaths, and the sabbaths for the land. He made our bodies to fall over and stop *each* day.

We have to be able to plan our rest as much as we plan our work. The fourth commandment is the commandment that helps with addiction. Also, it doesn't have to be just drug addiction. You can be addicted to anything. You can become psychologically dependent on anything and have no substances involved at all. It's just that substances add on a whole new dimension to addiction. You can get addicted to work. People need to learn how to rest.

There are physical things that can be done. Just like there is a fight or flight response, there is a relaxation response. This is where you deliberately sit down, and leave it to God what He is going to do. Calm down, breathe slowly, drink a cup of something. "Choose your breakdowns before your breakdowns choose you."

Take a break from the news, social media, toxic people, turn your phone completely off especially during dinner and family time, doubt, prayerlessness, TV or movies, complaining.

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

The whole idea of going to church becomes a time of rest from the world. You leave behind all the affairs of the world, setting aside a time to meet with God and God's people. Church is a time to reflect on our dependence on God and restore our outlook on the world. In Luke 10:38-42, we read about Martha's complaint concerning Mary. Martha was much cumbered about, while Mary sat with Jesus.

Luke 10:41-42 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Martha was not condemned, both work and worship are important though. Jesus pointed out to her what her priorities should be.

Not all the worries will go completely away until we get to Heaven, but taking on Christ's yoke will give us peace and glory.

Matt 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

3. The ultimate rest.

This last point is probably the most important point. God has set things up in the Bible to lead to and point to the ultimate rest, which is heaven, where no worry for sickness and failure exists, where tears of regrets are wiped away, where the curse is removed from our work and our work becomes play. The whole scenario of work and rest is a picture and type of our earthly work before we enter into our eternal rest. When Joshua brought the people into Canaan land, he brought them out of their wilderness wanderings to their rest, but it was not the ultimate rest. In Hebrews, Paul points out that there is a rest that still remains, the rest in the Promised Land is not the final rest. The rest we have is the rest we have in Jesus where we cease from our labors for salvation.

Heb 4:1-10 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. **[Paul is warning his people, the Jews, to not miss what being Jewish was all about]**

2For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them **[the Jews in the wilderness]**: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. **[this is a reference to the Jews not accepting the report of the two righteous spies of entering the Promised Land]**

3For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest **or, they shall not enter into my rest]**: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

...

8For if Jesus **[Joshua]** had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. **[Since getting to the Promised Land was not the ultimate rest, the ultimate rest is found in salvation]**

10For he that is entered into his **[God's]** rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

How do we enter into that rest?

John 6:27-29 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him

hath God the Father sealed.

28Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Eph 2:8,9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Rom 4:4,5 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Simply put, *shabbat!* Sabbath, cease! Give it a rest! Stop it! Stop trying to work for salvation. I am not trying to work to earn heaven, Jesus earned heaven for me. We work not to get to heaven, but to glorify God. The ultimate way to stop from labors is to stop trying to do good works to get to heaven but just enjoy the salvation that Jesus has purchased for us. We are seated in heavenly places *now*, just enjoy it. Everything we have before in the Scriptures pointed to the peace and rest of salvation. Just as deliberately as you plan to work, and should deliberately plan your rest, be deliberate and make sure you have taken care of the ultimate rest in Christ.

Eph 2:10, Matt 5:16, 1Pet 2:11-12, 2Thess 3:10

1. God gave rest. Gen 2:1-3, Ps 121:3-4, Exod 20:8-11, Rom 14:1,5-6, Col 2:16-17, John 20:19, Acts 20:7, 1Cor 16:2, Rev 1:10, Heb 10:25, John 13:34,35, Mat 12:5, Mark 2:27
2. The benefit of Sabbath. 1Cor 3:6-7, Phil 4:5-7, Heb 12:1, Gen 1:14, Phil 4:8, Luke 10:41-42, Matt 11:28-30
3. The ultimate rest. Heb 4:1-10, John 6:27-29, Eph 2:8,9, Titus 3:5, Rom 4:4,5