

Genesis 2:1-3

Sabbath Rest in Christ

We read this and the assumption that goes through us is that God was tired. Rest implies to our world weariness and exhaustion... we would never voice such a thought, for it is ludicrous, but still the reality of that assumption is part of what drives our disconnect from the intention of the Sabbath, we do not understand its context, its purpose or its person. We miss its blessing and purchase its curse with our disobedience.

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE SABBATH

Our understanding of this gift is stunted by our overscheduled, hyperactive, hyper-entertained society. We just can't process the blessing that is given in this practice. So let's start with the basic stupid question... did God rest because He was tired? Of course not! He rested to establish something, because BY resting, He established something. He rested to consider His works, to delight in them, to enjoy fellowship within the Trinity over them and of course to bless us with the

same practices! The context of a sabbath rest is at its heart a GIFT from God that blesses us in a host of ways.

a. Rest is Good

Genesis 49.14-15

refusing it enslaves you to your burdens.

b. Rest Restores us

Ex 23.10-13

c. It is a gift from God

Exodus 33:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

d. It speaks of security

Ruth 3:1 (NKJV) Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?"

e. It is peace

2 Samuel 7:1 (NKJV)

Speaks of God giving David "rest from all his enemies all around..."

f. It is to be quiet and inactive, a spectator

Isaiah 18:4 (NKJV)

⁴ For so the Lord said to me,

"I will take My rest,

And I will look from My dwelling place

Like clear heat in sunshine,

Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."

It carries with it the context of watching what GOD will do –

Is 30.15-16

It is why worry is such an insidious sin -

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

When we trust, we wait patiently and watch God, resting in Him and we will see His deliverance, when we don't, instead striving, scheming, plotting and worrying, we lose the peace and rest that comes from trusting.

g. Overactive concern with work to be done robs us of rest

Ecclesiastes 2:22–23 (NKJV)

²² For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? ²³ For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

h. It is rooted in the company of the Lord

Psalm 37:7–8 (NKJV)

*⁷ Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.*

*⁸ Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only causes harm.*

i. It is driven by and enhances thanksgiving

Psalm 116:7 (NKJV)

*⁷ Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.*

Ecc 6:3 indicates that failing to appreciate all the good that God has given, leaves us without rest

j. It is to be filled with hope for it is born of hope

Psalm 16:9 (NKJV)

*⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.*

k. It reminds us of the great rest that is to come

Hebrews 4:8–10 (NKJV)

*⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.
⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.*

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH

The central thing that we need to remember is that the Sabbath rest is designed to draw us near to God and to enrich and enliven our spiritual condition. It helps us see and love God for ALL of the contextual reasons that we have just considered - (and a host of others as well) But our spiritual joy, life and vitality is directly connected to our Sabbath practice

a. Increase our affection and knowledge of God

Isaiah 58:13-14

i. Proscriptions

1. Stop walking on the blessing
2. Do not do the things you would normally do
3. Do not speak about the things that are your normal things
4. Do not seek your own worldly pleasures

ii. Prescriptions

1. Delight in the time God has given you to worship and think on Him
2. Honor the day

3. Speak His things, Do His things, aim your attention to HIM
- iii. Blessings
 1. Your delight in GOD will increase
 2. You will have the blessings of the earth
 3. You WILL know God in ways you cannot imagine.
- b. Mark us out as a peculiar people belonging to God

Exodus 20:8-11

- i. This was a peculiar issue and even the heathen noted that they were odd in this.
- ii. It was to be applied to even the stranger in the gates.
- iii. It was to be driven by our own intention to OBEY. (Eddie Basha & Grandpa)

III. THE PERSON OF THE SABBATH

Colossians 2:11-17

The ultimate reason for all of this was that the greatest knowledge of God comes in the person of Christ. All of the law was tutor to bring us to Christ, but Paul here tells us that the sabbaths and the religious practice of Israel are all specifically designed to point to Christ. For they are the shadow of knowing God, but the substance of knowing God is Christ.

This breaks the bondage and yoke of legalism - God is not going to destroy your home, finances or life if you work on the sabbath, or pick up a fishing pole, or go to a game...

But - and this is really the crux of the whole matter - you do rob yourself of the blessings of this rich interaction when you treat the Lord's day like it were any other day on the calendar. Because we have a far greater opportunity to know God through the Sabbath than any Jew ever did, for we know

WHO our Sabbath rest is. The practice of devoting an entire day to God will not in any way harm the rest of your life, and it WILL bless the rest of your life in ways you cannot now imagine, for it will focus, sharpen and enhance your vision of Jesus, who is our vision of God. And in finding a clearer vision of Christ we ultimately prepare ourselves for the unending day of delighting in Him that awaits us. This is ALL about loving God, all about living that love, but because God is so very good, He rewards the love we return – love He gave to us in the first place, which gift was itself born out of the fact that He loved us before anything was made that was made. Love Him therefore with your whole life. Enjoy your Sunday nap, surely – but most importantly, rest your mind, body and soul in the presence of the King. God has built the Sabbath to that you might allow yourself the SPACE and TIME to love Him... and beloved, you will never regret the rest.