

Redeeming Time 3 Built to Rest in God

In this world, you will be bombarded with chromos (Gk) - time as a driving consuming clock. It can pound away at us or get away on us.

I have a clock confession. I hate tick tick clocks. If I find a tick tock clock, I take the batteries out. Maybe it was the crocodile in Peter Pan, maybe it was all those years training with a metronome. If I'm trying to rest or read....Darlene comes home and the clocks have stopped.

I find the taste of heaven comes from Kairos (Gk)- time as an event, a season...God's opportunities. TIME IS A GIFT to be redeemed in this life. Last week we looked at work time as a means to honor Christ, build community and turn hearts toward Jesus by our gracious, salted words.

Now we turn our attention to Rest

Opening

While I was in university, I was challenged by a chapel speaker to commit to a Sabbath Rest concept...Sundays as the day-off from regular work (including studies). He amazed me again and again as each week, the work piled up and somehow I made it through, even when I had an exam Monday morning. I wished I had been that consistent since then. I believe God would have had more time to refine me. Why is setting apart time to rest from regular work and focus on God and His people so easy to let slip?

You'd think that our society would be good at resting. We're certainly good at

selling sleep and leisure. I remember the Serta mattress ads:

PP pastor sleeping: 'I was just thinking'.

I was checking Indigo Books online and found their 'health and well-being' section has 95 books on fitness, 834 on health, 2453 medical, psychology has 2850 and 14340 in self-help. We want to take care of ourselves, but how are we doing in Canada?

Survey on Canadian Work Attitudes (2012)

- 3/5 say their employer can contact them 24/7.
- 83% say technology has maintained or increased their life stress.
- Over 1/5 say they experienced physical side effects because of stress such as headaches, fatigue and sleeping difficulty. Yet 62% of these people keep working while home life suffers.
- Work demands have increased, Absenteeism has increased, Employee mental health has declined.
- Canada is the highest per capita user of Marijuana in the world.
- 14.5% say they used illegal drugs in the last year
- 18% consumed alcohol at high risk levels when with other people

Maybe the best way to describe what is missing in our society is, REST FOR THE SOUL.

I've found 3 main kinds of rest in the Bible:

1. God's Rest (Creation and Sabbath)

2. The hope of rest with God (Canaan & Heaven).

3. Rest for the soul (in Christ, Matt 11:28)

We discussed the rest that Jesus offers for the soul previously in this series, and certainly that will tie in. But today we're going to focus on God's rest from creation and what that means for us and how the hope of eternal rest can help us to redeem our time daily.

Lets start at the very beginning of rest

Read Gen 2:2-3

Was God actually tired, drained of His resources? Some would take it a step further and say God finished all work and has not continued since (Deism). Not so, in John 5:17 Jesus tells us 'My Father is always at His work'.

God blessed the 7th day and called it holy because He rested from this work. God sanctified it by setting it apart from the work of Creation.

God became very specific about how His chosen people should approach the 7th day.

Read Exodus 20:8-11

The 3rd Commandment in Exodus is a call for Israel to imitate God. What is good for God is good for His people. It also set them apart

Read Deut 5:12-15

In Deuteronomy, Moses adds a reminder that God liberated Israel from captivity: don't become enslaved again.

So Exodus is about imitating God and Deuteronomy is about receiving God's liberty.

Q: Are Christians obligated to a Sabbath Rest?

Before we go too far down this road, lets look to Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.

Read Mark 2:23-28

The Sabbath was made for man's good – not an institution of control by the religious elite. Listen to Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath.

Read Mark 3:1-6.

Jesus corrected a wrong view of God and His purpose for the Sabbath.

V4 Jesus is visibly angry (only instance?).

Is it lawful to do good or evil?

Rather than a day of restraining human exertion by following minute regulations (so minute that grabbing a few heads of grain was considered 'reaping work'), Jesus proclaimed the Sabbath- to be good for us and for helping others. Jesus taught, healed, fellowshiped, walked and snacked along the way. (Mark 2:23).

#1 GOD RESTED FOR US

God set us an example. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Set aside a regular rest day to trust and discover Him again.

We need to be on guard against enslaving ourselves...to consumerism, for instance. Try planning the shopping, meal making and fueling up so you don't make others work on Sunday.

Q: What is the connection between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day?

The Early Church met on Sunday because it was the day Jesus resurrected and the Holy Spirit empowered the church. The first believers were Jewish converts who observed the traditional

Sabbath (Friday Eve to Sat Eve) as well. On Sunday believers met to pray, study God's word, celebrate the Lord's Table, fellowship, serve one another in love and collect money for other poor churches. Eventually, tension arose because some Christian Jews expected Gentiles to follow Sabbath customs. Some Gentile Christians scoffed back at them.

Turn to Rom 14

Paul called matters of food, drink and Holy Days, 'disputable matters'
Read Romans 14:1-8, 12-13, 19, 22

Paul challenged the Christians in Rome that condemning or looking down upon on each other over these kinds of matters is destroying the work of God (v20). Paul is adamant that believers personally follow the conviction of the Holy Spirit and make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (v19)...not compromising righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (v17). If you have more freedom of conscience than the community consensus, keep that between you and God (v 22).

This is similar to the rule making that irked Jesus. I'm not for a minute saying we can treat regular worship gatherings or setting aside regular work for the Lord lightly.

Hebrews 10:25 clearly urges us to keep gathering and encouraging one another especially as we see Christ could return any moment. Personally, I see every day is a gift from God and Sunday is extra Special.

Read Colossians 2:16-17. (bonus material)

Here, Paul is more specific about the shortcomings of the Sabbath law. Focus on that which will last forever. Stay tight with the Father and you will become aware of the difference between Holy Spirit conviction and man-made rules. Human institutions including the Sabbath are only a shadow of what we find in Christ.

So do believers need to observe the original 7th day? No and it is certainly not a requirement of salvation. However, Jesus honored the **heart** of the Sabbath, which involved honoring God, gathering to worship and doing good.

#2 CULTIVATE A SABBATH HEART

As far as setting aside a special day away from your regular work and trusting God will provide; I believe you will be blessed for that.

Sabbath traditionally began in the evening. When we sleep we have to trust God. While we are asleep, God is working to grow crops and heal wounds. We wake up to join Him, thankful for this is the day the Lord has made. Certainly, we would be better rested to receive what God has in store on Sunday morning if we honored God the night before.

Here's some things we need to fight against:

We have a consuming habit. Buying and spending on Sunday, creates the conditions for more work. It promotes others to be enslaved that day.

We have control and worry issues. We should think twice about bringing the worries of tomorrow into The Lord's

Day...paying bills, preparing tax returns, and to do lists.

We like to veg. Most entertainment robs us of the here and now. Try a screen free Day of Rest for a while.

We hear voices. The taskmaster in our head calls you lazy and tries to make you feel guilty for setting time aside for rest with God.

*The Sabbath is not a reward for finishing or a bonus for work well done. It's a gift in the middle of everything, without apology or guilt, only because God told us to.

If you are away or work at odd times, find the rhythm God is calling you to. Neglecting Lord Days are not like neglecting sleep. You can stay away on the road only so long...and then it becomes a fight to stay awake. Slapping yourself, yelling out the window, putting your finger in the lighter socket...you can't stop sleeping.

A 'Sabbath' is easy to break. But we will find years later: unsatisfied with work and life, not really knowing ourselves or God.

I've sat in living rooms with parents...praying that work shifts would change so the whole family could share the Lord's Day together. And God answer's prayer.

If Sundays don't work yet, don't neglect meeting with believers (us) on other days.

Fun, exercise & socializing on Sunday is good, go beyond that too. Delve into

practices that require reflection, personal time with God, thanksgiving, visiting the lonely or sick.

Ask God to help you think differently about time & eternity. Ask Him to help you to redeem the time in work and rest. Then we will be on solid footing for practicing what God shows us. Jesus gently give us His yolk of teaching: a yolk that provides rest for our soul.

We're now going to take a look at entering God's rest - beyond the Jewish Sabbath or the 'Lord's Day'.

Turn to Hebrews 4:1.

To set this up properly, the writer of Hebrews is focused on the supremacy of Christ...that Jesus is God (1)...supreme over angels, higher than any high priest for all time (7), greater than Moses (3)...and that Jesus offers a new and greater covenant (8).

Our present passage follows a discussion about how Moses...great as he was, sinned and was forbidden from entering God's rest =Promised Land. We need to understand that the Promised Land represents the place where God abides.

Read Hebrews 4:1-11.

This is a warning for Christians to keep on believing...don't lose sight of your goal to enter God's rest - which is heaven.

V3 More specifically, believers receive the promised seal of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:21; 5:5 Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; 1 Peter 1:5) as a pledge of their inheritance forever.

V6 The 'former gospel' is God's promise for Israel to enter the Promised Land if they obeyed His Commands. As it turned

out, most didn't obey and missed out. We obviously missed that 'rest' too, we're born to late.

V9 there still remains a Sabbath-rest we can enter. This 'Sabbath-rest' is very unique...only place in the Bible. So what 'rest' is the inspired writer talking about? From the 10 Commandments? If we look at the context we will find that this meaning fits with the eternal resting place. Believers who live in thankful obedience get a taste of heaven already...but not fully yet. It's a confidence in a relationship with God lived out by faith in Jesus.

#3 REST IN THE LORD BY FAITH

Is God convicting to live by faith more? Maybe we haven't been treating our time, money and abilities like they're really His. Maybe we're not living like Jesus is the boss. I was convicted back in university about setting aside my goals and my priorities at least one day a week. We can see now it's not a once a week thing...it's a daily walk of faith. Perhaps we have become complacent with our faith and overlooked the ones God has been setting before us to help grow their faith.

It's never too late to grow and help others in their faith. In Jesus' parable of the landowner who needed workers (Matt 20), we find God hires even at the last hour of the day...with full payment of eternal life.

Today we've been encouraged to imitate God and receive His liberty through an actual setting aside time like Jesus: not just for tradition. We've been challenged

seek the way of peace with one another - accepting one another with different convictions about the Lord's Day. God will be the judge.

We've been exhorted to keep on believing in God's promise to enter His rest in heaven- as motivation to redeem the time now.

In John 14:2-6, Jesus said, "*In my Father's house are many (rooms, mansions, dwelling places); if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*"

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'.

Long-term accommodations have already been made with God because of Christ. So believe Jesus is the Son of God and took the punishment we deserve so we can enter God's rest. Live by faith and redeem the time every day!

The choice is before us moment by moment:

- To rise above the pain, loneliness, and pressure to see our real home.
- To see our trials as the refining of a loving Father so we enter eternity prepared
- To remember we are never alone...

Psalm 23

*The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.*

*He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of
righteousness
For His name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and lovingkindness will
follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.*

AMEN