

Growing in Worship through Sabbath Rest

Exodus 20:8, Gen. 2:2-3

Sabbath

THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life

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Sunday, January 24, 2016, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

livinghopechurch.net

“Observing the Lord's Day bears witness to a self-reliant, self-sufficient world that our work does not save us or define us, Christ does.”

– John Piper

Announcements

1. Welcome to visitors / welcome packet
2. Expositor's class, 4pm – Eve worship, 5pm.

*I*f you don't have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8**. The title of our message this morning is “Growing in Worship through Sabbath Rest.”

Our Identity is Not found in Work

Often we try to find our identity in things other than Christ. A person may find their identity with attention from the opposite gender. They go into marriage with impossible and unrealistic expectations. Apart from Christ, that always ends up badly.

Some get their identity from sports. They live for a sports team.

Others get their identity the school they attend or in popularity – they have an insatiable narcissism to exalt themselves – with selfies and every detail of their life on social media or other ways of promotion.

Many get their identity from their work – what they do. How much money do they make? What house do they have; what car do you drive.

One Day out of Seven, Reflect on the Goodness of God

The fourth commandment – “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy” – is all about finding our identity in Christ. It is Christ who has given us everything we have, so one day out of seven, we are to stop and dedicate an entire day to reflecting on the goodness and sovereignty of God.

Piper Quote

John Piper says, “Observing the Lord's Day bears witness to a self-reliant, self-sufficient world that our work does not save us or define us, Christ does.”

The Lord Gives, the Lord Takes Away

So many people are a slave to their work because they believe they get their paycheck from their company. No, it is the Lord, not your employer, who has given us everything we have. The Lord gives everything. He could take it away. The Lord gives. It's not my work, not my girlfriend, not my well placed family, not my status in life, not my employer, but the Lord who gives and takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Outline

Today I want to us learn four lessons about God from the Sabbath. According to Hebrews our ultimate Sabbath rest is in Jesus Christ. It is in Jesus we find all we need.

So this morning let us consider these three lessons of how to find in Christ all we need as we celebrate the Sabbath day each week:

- The Sabbath pictures **Salvation**, Deut. 5:6-15
- The Sabbath celebrates God's **Sovereignty**, Genesis 2:2-3, Exo. 20:8-11.
- The Sabbath provides us **Sustenance**, Deut. 8:3; Mt. 4:4.

I. The Sabbath pictures **Salvation**, Deut. 5:6-15

Enslaved

We were all once enslaved to this world. We found our identity in relationships. We had to find the perfect one to be complete. We looked to sports teams. We looked to our work – if we got the right job we'd be complete. We looked to success for our identity – if we got the right job, the big house, the big car, then we'd be successful. Some of us looked to pleasure. If we had enough fun and pleasure our life would be complete.

The problem is nothing ever delivered. Aren't you glad this morning that we don't need those things to be complete? The Bible says **Col. 2:10** that we are "complete in Christ."

The truth is we were all slaves to sin and self and pleasure. But now that we are redeemed, we have been set free.

The Sabbath rest has been one of the identity markers of the children of God since the beginning of time. We see it in the preface to the Ten Commandments.

Redeemed out of Egyptian Slavery

The entire Decalogue begins with **Deut. 5:6**, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Now look at **Deut. 5:12-15**, "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you."

So the fourth commandment in Deuteronomy 5 is identical to Exodus 20, with one exception. Deut. 5 adds a powerful motivation to that of the Exodus 20:8-11 version: keep the Sabbath because **God redeemed you from Egypt**. We are to remember always where we came from. Deut. 5:15, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."

The Christian Sabbath

The question is often asked, is there a Christian Sabbath? Of course, there is not in the sense of Jewish law. If that were the case we'd all get stoned to death the moment you did any work on Sundays. But there is a Lord's Day. The Lord's Day is the Christian Sabbath if you will. It is not about not picking up sticks, and not going a certain distance from your house on the Sabbath. As with all the law in the Old Testament, it is expanded in the New Testament.

The ultimate fulfillment of the Sabbath is to rest in Jesus. The book of Hebrews hints at this. We are to enter into God's rest in Jesus. And we get an eternal Sabbath in heaven.

Sabbath Part of God's Moral Law

Let's understand that keeping the Sabbath is part of God's moral law, and the Sabbath was not established by Moses on Mount Sinai, but by God on the seventh day after God had created the world.

The essence of keeping the Sabbath holy is to set aside one day out of seven and reflect and remember what God has done. God made the earth. God made you. God has given you so many gifts. Those gifts don't come from your employer primarily. Your employer is a middle man. The gifts come from God.

The Lord's Day, Resurrection Day

So as Christians, we celebrate the Christian Sabbath on Sunday, the Lord's day, the resurrection day of Jesus. There are some Christians who want to celebrate on Saturday, the seventh day instead of on Sunday the first day, because they misunderstand.

From the beginning of the church, Christians have celebrated their day of rest on Sunday, which is the day Jesus rose from the dead. Sunday is the day the early church marked as the holy day of the week to remember their redemption, not from Egypt but from their sins.

New Testament Instances of the Lord's Day

John says in **Revelation 1:10**, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet."

Paul says **1 Cor. 16:2**, that the Christians normal day of meeting was on the "first day of the week" and it was then that they should gather money.

Pausing to Remember Redemption

Setting aside one day out of seven is a way to pause and reflect that just like God redeemed Israel out of Egypt without chariots and weapons, but with the Shekinah glory of His amazing presence, with the pillar of cloud and fire, so God has redeemed us from slavery to our sin.

Deut. 5:15, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."

Every Sunday we pause and sing songs of God's sovereignty.

"Rejoice the Lord is King!"

"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

"How Great is our God"

"How Great Thou Art"

“Amazing Grace!”
 “Crown Him with Many Crowns”

God Alone Has Saved Us!

In pausing each Sunday and singing these and hundreds more anthems to God’s sovereignty, we are saying before all mankind, before God and witnesses, that God alone could ever save us. Who else is a god like unto our God? Who can deliver us from our sins? Who can deliver us from our slavery? Who could rescue us from our Egypt?

It is the Lord God that has delivered us!

“We have heard the joyful sound:
 Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
 Spread the tidings all around:
 Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
 Bear the news to every land,
 Climb the steeps and cross the waves;
 Onward!—’tis our Lord’s command;
 Jesus saves! Jesus saves!”

Redemption from Egypt marks the expansion of God’s lordship on a cursed earth: a victory over his enemies, and His taking a people for Himself.

The covenant with Israel declares the Living God to be Lord, not only of all creation, but specifically over this people He has chosen to be His. So the Sabbath celebrates both God’s lordship over creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11) and his specific lordship over Israel, his redeemed people (Deut. 5:15).¹

The Picture of the Sabbath

The Sabbath is not an end in and of itself, but points, as does all of God’s Law, to Jesus Christ. Today, our Sabbath is Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 3 and 4, the Lord talks about how most of the children of Israel died in the wilderness, and never entered into God’s Sabbath rest. In chapter 4, he compares that with coming to rest in Christ by faith. He says the promise still stands.

Hebrews 4:1-2, 9-11, “Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news [the Gospel] came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.... 9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. 11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.”

What was the disobedience of the people of Moses’ and Joshua’s day? It was unbelief. Our ultimate Sabbath is rest in Jesus Christ. They did not enter God’s rest in the promised land (His salvation) because they were not believers.

¹ Frame, J. M. (2008). *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (pp. 529–530). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

Reflecting on the New Creation

Ultimately, when God created the world, his masterpiece, He paused and reflected and gained satisfaction from His work. He took that which was “without form and chaotic” and brought it to an order that reflected His image.

Redemption is like **creating** anew. So the New Testament tells us that we are “God’s masterpiece, **created** in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (**Eph. 2:10**).

Or what about **2 Cor. 5:17**, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new **creation**. The old [chaotic life] has passed away; behold, the new [creation and new life] has come.”

In **Eph. 4:22-24**, we are told to “put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, **created** after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

You are a new creation. You are created in the likeness of God, being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ day by day. Put off the old chaotic self. Put on the new redeemed self, made in Jesus’ perfect image.

II. The Sabbath celebrates God’s **Sovereignty**, Genesis 2:2-3, Exo. 20:8-11.

God Rested After Finishing His Creation

Genesis 2:1-3, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”

God rested on the seventh day. Of course, God was not tired. He never slumbers or sleeps. The purpose for God’s rest was to show that God created something amazing and holy and wonderful that reflected God’s beauty. When God completed His work, it was perfect. There was nothing that could be added to make it better. It was very good. Everything was in order. There was no sin on the earth at that time. The animals were all tame. Adam and Eve were without sin. Everything was harmonious.

God Blessed the Seventh Day

God also blessed the Sabbath Day not for Himself. As we said, God does not need to rest. God did it as an example for man to be a holy day. It is a day when we should stop working and reflect on the goodness and sovereignty of God.

The reason given in both Genesis 2:3 and Exodus 20:11 why God blessed and hallowed the seventh day is that “on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.” His rest means that he wanted to now stand back as it were in leisure and savor the beauty and completeness of his creative work.

Given that God does not actually grow weary so as to need literal rest, the celebratory rest could have as easily occurred after three days, or after two, or even after one. So why the six days? It seems obvious that God intended the six-plus-one pattern for man’s edification and imitation.² God rested as an example to man.

² Frame, J. M. (2008). *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (pp. 531–532). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

Making the Lord's Day Holy

So how do we make the Lord's Day holy? John Piper put it this way,

"Here is the real basis of God's hallowing and blessing the day of rest. He is saying in effect, 'Let my highest creature, the one in my image, stop every seven days and commemorate with me the fact that I am the creator who has done all this.

Let him stop working and focus on me, that I am the source of all that he has. I am the fountain of blessing. I have made the very hands and mind with which he works. Let one day out of seven demonstrate that all land and all animals and all raw materials and all breath and strength and thought and emotion and everything come from me. Let man look to me in leisure one day out of seven for the blessing that is so elusive in the affairs of this world.'"³

Setting Aside the Day as Special

Exodus 20:8, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." God commands us to hallow the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. How do we do that?

As Piper says, "Keep it holy," means set it aside from all other days as special. Specifically, as verse 10 says, keep it "to the Lord," or "for the Lord." In other words, the rest is not to be aimless rest, but God-centered rest. Attention is to be directed to God in a way that is more concentrated and steady than on ordinary days. Keep the day holy by keeping the focus on the holy God.

An Invitation from God to Stop and Ponder

That very first day that man was created, he enjoyed the presence of God in perfect worship. God's work was so amazing, that He instituted a Day for man to celebrate Himself. It is called the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day was instituted before the Law of Moses, but it was not made to bind people to rules, but instead to enjoy God. As Jesus said in **Mark 2:27**, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath is made for man to stop from his labor and enjoy God and worship Him.

Helping Others to Keep the Sabbath Holy

Exodus 20:8-11, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

There is to be no cutting corners on the commandment by saying, "Well, I will keep it, but I will put my maid to work, or set my ox to threshing with a carrot in front of his nose at 6 PM the evening of the Sabbath so that it will thresh the grain all day while I rest."

God says, No. You miss the point if you try to keep the business running by using servants or animals or relatives.

³ John Piper. Message entitled, "Remember the Sabbath to Keep it Holy" from October 6, 1985. <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/remember-the-sabbath-day-to-keep-it-holy> Accessed 1/2016.

The Point: All Creation Reflects

What's the point of the Sabbath? It is for all people to stop and reflect on the goodness and sovereignty of God.

William Shakespeare said, "O Lord, that lends me life,
Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness."

1 Thess. 5:18 says it clearly, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

The Sabbath Rest is an opportunity to demonstrate to the world that it is not our employer or our giftedness that gives us provision. It is our amazing sovereign God! **Matthew 5:45**, "[the Father] makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

III. The Sabbath provides us Sustenance, Deut. 8:3; Mt. 4:4.**Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone**

Before the law was given, man was to rest one day out of seven. It is not simply an ordinance from the Law of Moses, but an ordinance from the order of creation.

Moses put it this way, in Deut. 8:3 (quoted by Jesus in Mt. 4:4), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Lazy and Crazy

God made an example for man to work 6 days and rest and reflect on the seventh. In today's society we have a five-day work week. This works well for a non-agricultural society. Man can work for five days in his vocation, and the sixth day he can work at home and church etc.

We must understand that from the beginning of time, God sanctioned the Day of Rest to mark His people. By celebrating the Sabbath, we are saying, "Man does not live by bread alone." My work is not my primary provider. You should work. It's a means of grace and provision in your life. But it is not your employer that provides. It's God.

You will do better in life by dedicating that 7th day to God instead of working.

Other Models do not Work

Other models do not work very well. France during their Revolutionary War enacted a ten day work week. They wanted to de-Christianize the country.

The year was not divided into weeks, instead each month was divided into three sections of 10 days, of which the final day was a day of rest. It was an extremely unpopular move, because now there were 9 work days between each day of rest, whereas the normal (Gregorian) Calendar had only 6 work days between each day of rest on the Lord's Day.

Established at Creation

The Sabbath was established as an ordinance at creation. When God blessed his own Sabbath rest in Genesis 2:3, he blessed it as a model for human imitation. So Israel was to keep

the Sabbath, because in Genesis 2:2–3 God hallowed and blessed man’s Sabbath as well as his own.⁴

The Christian Market Day

The Puritans used to call the Lord’s Day the “market day of the soul.” “As the Puritans went to market each week to stock up on supplies, so we stock up on our spiritual goods for the week by listening to the sermons, then meditating on them throughout the week to come.”⁵

Preparing Physically for the Lord’s Day

In his book *Expository Listening* Ken Ramey offers a list of ways you can “Plan Ahead, and Schedule Your Week Around the Ministry of the Word.”

“For the majority of people, even church members, church is not the priority of their week. Too often school, work, sports, and other activities take precedence over going to church. They make the mistake of letting their time be ordered by the world, which views the weekends as a time to relax, to play sports, to stay up late and sleep in. For Christians, however, Sunday should be the most important day of the week. You should try to schedule your work, activities, get-togethers, and vacations around church. You should live by the principle that Sunday morning starts Saturday night.”

He offers several practical suggestions on how to prioritize the Lord’s Day:

- **Be home Saturday night.** Make it a habit to be home on Saturday night.
- **Plan ahead.** Be careful not to do, watch, or read anything that will cause lingering distractions in your mind the next day. Get things ready on Saturday night to alleviate the typical Sunday morning rush (lay out clothes, set the table, write the offering check, stock the diaper bag, etc).
- **Get some sleep.** Get a good night’s sleep so you can be sharp and energetic to worship and serve God. It’s hard to listen when you’re nodding off.
- **Eat breakfast.** Eat a simple but adequate breakfast that will hold you until lunch. It’s difficult to hear over the grumbling of your stomach.
- **Be proactive with your attitude.** Work together with the other members of your family to get ready, and to establish and maintain a godly atmosphere on the way to church. Listen to music, sing, and pray together.
- **Arrive early!** Arrive at church ten minutes early instead of ten minutes late so you have enough time to find a parking spot, drop the kids off in the nursery or their Sunday school classes, get a cup of coffee, visit with your friends, and find a seat.

“When you fail to plan ahead,” he warns, “Sunday morning ends up becoming a chaotic crisis, and by the time you get to church, you are frustrated and frazzled and your heart is in no condition to receive the Word. But when you plan well and are able to arrive in a relaxed, leisurely way, you will be in a much more receptive frame of mind.”

⁴ Frame, J. M. (2008). *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (pp. 532–533). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

⁵ Joel Beeke, *Preparing for the Preached Word*. The Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth [Periodical], Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2005, p. 5.

Preparing Spiritually for the Lord's Day

How should we prepare. Joel Beeke said in a recent article for Banner of Truth magazine, that we can prepare for the Lord's Day in at least 5 ways.

1. **Pray.** Before coming to God's house to hear His Word, prepare yourself and your family with prayer. The Puritans said "we should dress our bodies for worship and our souls with prayer."

2. **Hunger.** Come with a hearty appetite for the Word. A good appetite promotes good digestion and growth. Peter encouraged a spiritual appetite, saying, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

3. **Fight.** Be alert for battle. Some of the fiercest battles are on the way to church. Expect satanic attack. Prepare your mind by meditating on the importance of the preached Word as you enter God's house. Since the Gospel is the Word of God, not the word of man, come to church looking for God. Though you should deeply appreciate your minister's efforts to faithfully bring you the Word of God, pray that you see "no man, save Jesus only" (Matthew 17:8). If you focus on the preacher you will eventually become discouraged no matter how knowledgeable or gifted he is. There is only one Jesus Christ and the teacher or preacher is not Him!

4. **Listen well.** Be ready to "receive the implanted Word" as James says. Remember as you enter the house of God that you are entering a battleground. Many enemies will oppose your listening... Satan opposes your listening to God's Word with might and main, knowing that if you truly hear it, he will lose you. So Satan tries to disturb you before the sermon begins, distracts you during the sermon, and dismisses the sermon from your mind as soon as it is finished... Pray repeatedly for strength to overcome all your enemies by listening well.

5. **Act.** Finally, come with a loving, expectant faith. Psalm 62:5, "For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him."

James 1 says that we need to "be swift to hear, slow to speak..." He says in Jms. 1:22-24, "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."

It is not enough to simply sit and soak. We come to be "doers of the Word!"

Edifying One Another

In at least 35 places the Bible gives us the one another commands –

- exhort one another,
- encourage one another,
- edify one another,
- love one another,
- submit to one another,
- tolerate one another,
- outdo one another in good works,
- be kind one to another,
- bear one another's burdens,
- be hospitable toward one another
- etc.

All of these things are in a local church context. All of these demonstrate that we are to be living in community with one another in a covenant relationship.

Gathering together is a time to edify the Body.

Conclusion: Putting God First

Matthew 6:33 says, that we should “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.

- Professor in college: put God first.

Remodeling the Bathroom

This week has been a difficult week. We are remodeling the bathroom. At first I thought it would be a quick process. But process is so slow!! It’s going much slower, and I stop and look at the process.

So it is with God. He’s still working on you. Stop one day out of seven and give him thanks!