



Last week we learned that the sabbath was a command for God's people to follow under the Old Covenant. Sometimes, we can allow something that is "commanded" to become a chore. This week we will look at how the Sabbath can be a beautiful gift- a day filled with joy.

Read Deuteronomy 5:15

We read this passage last week, but when we think of the sabbath in terms of a gift, does this passage seem different to you? How do you picture God as He sends this message to the people?

Does the Sabbath feel like a gift to you? Why or why not?

Read Mark 2:23-28

What sticks out to you about this passage?

For whatever reason, the teachers of the law had allowed the sabbath to become a day of diligent rule-following (far beyond the original requirements of the Sabbath). What are the implications of what Jesus tells them?

Did you grow up with a view of the Sabbath that aligned more with Jesus or with the Pharisees? How do you think that impacts you today?

In what ways do you think you need to reform your views of the Sabbath to line up more with what Jesus says?

Author and pastor Pete Scazzero said *"I have been teaching pastors and leaders about Sabbath-keeping for over a decade. Why is it then that so few actually stop to receive this wonderful gift? The root answer lies, I believe, in the place from which we have our sense of self. If our sense of self comes from our work, accomplishments, or ministry, then stopping our work to can be quite terrifying. It touches our deep anxieties about our own deaths. Many of us come carry a great deal of shame, an intensely painful feeling or experience of being flawed. It may come from a background of abuse (as was my history), or a deep well of pain and regret. We feel unworthy of the rich delights and love God offers us in Sabbath. It is easier to just keep working –even if our lives are spinning out of control. Sabbath is about letting ourselves be seen by God. Sabbath is about being deeply loved. Sabbath is about emotional exposure to grace. Sabbath is about grounding our sense of self in our relationship with Him, not our work. This very act of stopping our work helps shape the foundation of our identity in Christ apart from what we do. Pharaoh, the slave driver, remains inside too many of us. Let us throw off his yoke and remember the Sabbath."*

Take a moment in prayer and reflection, and ask God to show you what He wants to give you freedom from as you begin to receive this gift of rest. Write any reflections or share them out loud if you processing with others.

How are your tanks? Are they full?

Do you feel a strong sense of rest and peace in your life?

Is your life filled with delight, with peace, with an overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude?

Pray this prayer

Father, thank you that through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have been freed from the yoke of spiritual slavery. We receive both rest for our souls, but also for our bodies. Thank you that we can still practice the sabbath rest that you promised to your people. Help me to learn what it means to make every effort to enter this rest. In the name of Jesus, amen.