

Rediscovering Sabbath, Week 6

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Oct 16th

OCTOBER 16TH SERMON SUMMARY

REDISCOVERING SABBATH: RECLAIM (HEBREWS 3-4)

God calls us to more than a Sabbath day; we are invited into a life of Sabbath rest. What if we refuse to obey?

1. The danger of not observing a Sabbath is that we may miss out on the life God calls us to live, just as the Exodus generation failed to enter the Promised Land. (Heb. 3:7-19)
2. The invitation is to live a continuous, constant life of "Sabbath Rest", freed from the work of finding our identity in something other than God (Heb. 4:1-11). Instead of craving security and confidence in things, we find rest in Christ alone.

Are we living a life of Sabbath rest? If we are, we would naturally incorporate a Sabbath day. If we refuse to pursue a Sabbath day, does this indicate doubt, disbelief, sin, weakness? We have an open invitation to draw near to God to receive mercy and grace in our time of need. (Heb. 4:12-16)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you think of rest, what one person, place or thing comes to mind?
2. What stood out to you or impacted you in the message?

READ HEBREWS 4:1-2, 8-16

1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. **2** For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.....

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.

9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; **10** for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. **11** Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the

heart. **13** Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. **15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. **16** Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

3a. Define the following ideas: what does each term mean?

- Sabbath Day
- Sabbath Rest

b. Discuss how these 2 ideas are related.

4a. If a person lived a life of Sabbath Rest, what would he/she rest from? Give examples.

b. How would he/she view work differently?

5. Hebrews 3-4 makes a connection between the Promised Land for Israel (Heb. 3:16-19), and the "promise of entering his rest" for us (Heb. 4:1).

a. What are some reasons the Israelites did not enter the Promised Land? (Use Scripture or your own thoughts.)

b. Do you think these are the same reasons people today refuse to pursue Sabbath Rest? Explain.

6. Hebrews 4 includes well-known verses that you have probably heard before. Think about the context of these familiar verses, and how they apply to the idea of Sabbath rest.

a. Hebrews 4:12-13: How does this convict us regarding our response to God's call to rest?

b. Hebrews 4: 14-16: How does this comfort and help us as we seek to pursue Sabbath?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

7a. What appeals to you about pursuing a life of Sabbath Rest?

b. What makes it hard for you to enter that life of rest?

8a. How do you feel God is inviting you to respond to His invitation to Sabbath Rest? Be as specific as you can about attitudes, activity, next steps, etc.

b. How do you need God's mercy and grace as you consider your response?

SABBATH PRACTICES AND EXERCISES

Each week you will be given some practical ideas and exercises to incorporate a time of Sabbath - use them (or not), or tweak, change, or adapt them in whatever way fits you.

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina, or contemplative reading, is an ancient practice. It begins with reading a short passage, then quietly reflecting upon it – not analyzing – but allowing it to quietly work on you, as leaven in the bread, as water on a stone. The key is to read slowly, chew over the words, and allow them to quietly nourish and heal you.

Choose a short piece of scripture for reflection. During Sabbath time I often choose the 23rd Psalm. I read it a few times silently, and then choose a phrase that speaks to me – “The Lord is my shepherd”, or “I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever”, or “My cup runneth over”. Then, sit quietly or take a Sabbath walk, and allow the scripture to accompany you. Without grasping for meaning or answers, let the phrase live in the breath, using it to bring awareness back to this moment whenever the mind wanders. What do you notice about the words? How do they change? How do your feelings shift over time?

This week, you might choose a section of Hebrews 3 or 4 to reflect on (e.g., 4:1-7 or 4:8-16). Listen for how God might speak to you through a word or phrase.

(Excerpt from *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* by Wayne Muller, p. 92.)