

# Keeping the Sabbath, Mark 2.23-3.6, 5.22.16

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## Introduction

1. The concept of taking a weekly Sabbath is foreign to us. As a church we have 10 values that define Willow. These are the essence of who we are and what we want to accomplish.
  - a. Quick review of Willow's Values – The Kingdom of God; The Word and Spirit; Sonship; Disciplemaking; Unity; Hearing From and Following God; Freedom in Worship; Outreach; Healing and Restoration of Individuals; Sabbath Rest.
  - b. One of the ten is not who we are, but what we want to become. Read Sabbath Rest value.
  - c. **Sabbath Rest:**The Sabbath as both a day and lifestyle are critical for our overall well being. In Gen.2, God made the Sabbath as a part of His created order. He commanded observance of it in Exodus 20.8-11. In Isaiah 58.13-14, He promises blessings upon those who keep it. Jesus said the Sabbath was made for humanity's benefit (Mark 2.27) and Hebrews 4.1-13 encourages us to daily enter into the rest of the Lord. The Sabbath as a day should not be defined in a list of do's and don'ts. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath; all we do on the Sabbath must reflect His Lordship of the Sabbath. The Sabbath lifestyle is characterized by putting God's agenda at the foremost each day and includes an attitude of reflection upon and appreciation of God's work. In summary, God gifted mankind with the Sabbath day for the purpose of reflection, renewal, and restoration by spending quality time with Him along with family and friends in simplicity.
  - d. The unholy trinity of affluence, technology and communication have won the battle for the Sabbath in most people's lives. Rev.17-18 describes the whore Babylon and her all consuming appetite for more. She may be embodied in a geographical location, but she is also an global system that controls the world before the return of Jesus. She influences and dominates most Christians in the Western world and the word of the Lord to every believer is "come out of her or you will be destroyed with her."

- e. One way to break her grip is by weekly observing the Sabbath. It is an antidote to the world system that says, “you are what you do and you are what you have.”

2. Sabbath definition – God gifted mankind with the Sabbath day for the purpose of reflection, renewal and restoration by spending quality time with Him along with family and friends in simplicity.

3. The origin of Sabbath

- a. As a day, Gen.2.1-4. God set up the Sabbath within the cycle of a week; it was to be kept holy.
- b. As a law, Ex.20.8-11. As slaves in Egypt, they didn’t have Sabbath. For 400 years, they lived opposite of the 10 Com. They slaved seven days a week w/o rest; workaholism; their motto was our motto: I’m so busy!

c. We live in an overworked, over extended, over tired, ever connected, ever pushing culture; life is one big obligation and it wearies the soul, drains the body and dries the spirit. We are slaves to a system that says, “Go, get, maintain.” Our lives are so complicated

d. The American way of life does violence to our souls. Speed, accomplishments, productivity, efficiency, activity with a constant background noise over-communication and information coming our way. We are seldom at rest. We are like crack or meth addicts who need hit to feel life. Being quiet with just your thoughts and the HS sounds so foreign and creates uneasiness.

e. We are bombarded with this idea that we don’t have enough.

Constant involvement with social media creates a greater disenchantment with life, b/c you’re always comparing. Your life is not so great as the other person or group. Even when you’re on vacation, you need a better one.

f. WE are completely out of rhythm with how God desires for life to be. By keeping the Sabbath we are taking steps to break the cycle of busyness and the ungodly influence of the global prostitute Babylon of Rev.17-18.

- I. Introd –
  - a. Jesus used the Sabbath to teach, heal, worship & fellowship with others.
  - b. 2 events; the Pharisees had developed many man made rules; they strictly enforced non-Scriptural rules while forgetting mercy (Matt.12); they had rather a person remain sick than be healed, b/c healing would be considered a work.
- II. Mark 2.23 – 28
  - a. V.23f – The Phar. Said they were harvesting.
  - b. V.25f – This isn't the exception but the rule. The Sabbath is set apart
  - c. V.27 – The application of the rule – God created the Sabbath for us so we can be restored. \*It's not about keeping rules – You should or you shouldn't – but rather restoration.
  - d. V.28 – The Sabbath belongs to Jesus. He decides how it's to be used not our human tradition or limited Biblical understanding. To illustrate this..
  - e. Image of Atlas holding the world outside of church in NYC where inside is a statue of the boy Jesus holding the world.
- III. Mark 3.1-6
  - a. V.1 – Jesus went into the synagogue which was his pattern – he worshipped His Father; taught the Word. That's a reason we meet together to do worship, reconnect and reorient our lives to Jesus being at the center of our lives.
  - b. V.1b – Jesus wasn't looking for a fight and saw this as an opportunity to provoke the religious establishment. He saw a person in need and wanted to do something about it. Appl – Jesus wants to do something about your need today!
  - c. V. 3-5 - It's not just a day to cease activity, but rather to show mercy.
  - d. Jesus used this day to restore. Appl – he wants to show you mercy & bring healing to your life.
  - e. Luke 13.10-16: A woman crippled for 18 years by an evil spirit.
    - i. If an ox is loosed on the Sabbath to have his thirst quenched, how much more should a person be loosed whose body is infirmed
- IV. Implications
  - a. God created the sabbath to meet our physical and spiritual needs. It's a day of restoration.

- i. If we don't keep the Sabbath, God won't strike us down, but we will miss the benefits and we'll have to live with the consequences of life w/o the Sabbath, i.e., we're always playing catch up & things remain broken & you're on edge.
  - ii. The Sabbath is like tithing. We learn that God is in control and can meet my needs. It's an outward demonstration of faith.
- b. We should use the day as Jesus did to worship God, fellowship with other believers, minister to people in need and grow in our knowledge of God. These are activities that lead to restoration.

V. **Practicing the Sabbath – from Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Pete Scazzero.**

- a. Intro:
  - i. All work — paid and unpaid — is good, but it needs to be boundaried by the practice of Sabbath. The problem with too many leaders is that we allow our work to trespass on every other area of life, disrupting the balanced rhythm of work and rest God created for our good.
  - ii. Sabbath is a twenty-four-hour block of time in which we *stop* work, enjoy *rest*, practice *delight*, and *contemplate* God.
- b. **Stop.** Sabbath is first and foremost a day when we cease all work — paid and unpaid. On the Sabbath we embrace our limits. We let go of the illusion that we are indispensable to the running of the world. We recognize we will never finish all our goals and projects, and that God is on the throne, managing quite well in ruling the universe without our help.
  - i. Image of Atlas carrying the world
  - ii. Image of Atlas carrying the world – Rockefeller Center – with St Patrick's cathedral in the foreground
  - iii. Image of Jesus holding the world – St Patrick's Cathedral
  - iv. Image of both
  - v. <https://dynamisresources.com/2013/02/13/take-the-weight-off-our-shoulders/>
- c. **Rest.** Once we stop, we accept God's invitation to rest. God rested after his work of creation. Every seventh day, we are to do the same (Genesis 2:1 – 4). We engage in activities that restore and replenish us — from napping, hiking, reading, and eating good food to enjoying hobbies and playing sports. Don't do activities that negatively stress you. Resting from unpaid work, however, requires advance planning. If I am to have any hope of enjoying a Sabbath rest, I need to set aside time during the week to attend to the routine tasks of life I won't do on Sabbath — paying bills, cleaning or fixing something around the house, etc.

- i. **You have to deal with the false messages that say – God won't come through for you; people important to you don't rest; "I'm selfish or lazy"; the devil never takes a day off; you're being useless.**
- d. **Delight.** After finishing his work in creation, God pronounced it "very good" (Genesis 1:31). This was not an anemic afterthought — *Oh, well, it's nice to be done with that* — but a joyful recognition and celebration of accomplishment. As part of observing Sabbath, God invites us to join in the celebration, to enjoy and delight in his creation and all the gifts he offers us in it. These innumerable gifts come to us in many forms, including people, places, and things. Inherent within delight is slowing down; you can't rush through a beautiful national park to fully appreciate its grandeur. The same is true with delighting on the Sabbath. Dallas Willard was asked the key to the spiritual life and he responded, "Ruthlessly eliminate hurry."

As part of preparing to practice the Sabbath, one of the most important questions to consider is, "What gives me joy and delight?" This will differ for each of us, but part of the Sabbath invitation is to enjoy and delight in creation and her gifts. Geri and I both delight in the beauty and grandeur of nature — the ocean, lakes, beaches, mountains, and star-filled skies. Geri is a "foodie," so tasting, smelling, and savoring the gift of food is a high priority for us. I delight in libraries and bookstores. Geri loves cooking a fresh meal. Through any and every means possible, on Sabbath we seek to feast on the miracle of life with our senses.

- e. **Contemplation and Gratitude.** Pondering the love of God is the central focus of our Sabbaths. What makes a Sabbath a biblical Sabbath is that it is "holy to the Lord." We are not taking time off from God; we are drawing closer to him. Sabbath is an invitation to see the invisible in the visible — to recognize the hidden ways God's goodness is at work in our lives. It does not mean we necessarily spend the entire day in prayer or studying Scripture, though those activities may be part of a Sabbath day. Instead, contemplation means we are acutely focused on those aspects of God's love that come to us through so many gifts from his hand and we express our gratitude. Scripture affirms that all creation declares his glory (see Psalm 19:1). On Sabbath, we intentionally look for his grandeur in everything from people, food, and art to babies, sports, hobbies, and music. In this sense, contemplation is an extension of delight — we are intentional about looking for the evidence of God's love in all of the things he has given us to enjoy and we express our gratitude.

## VI. Why is practicing the Sabbath so difficult?

- a. **Slaves can't rest; free people can.** Are you a slave to a system that says you have to have this, go there, be at that, be aware of this, get involved over here.

- b. There are demonic powers behind the Babylonian system who are holding whole swaths of believers captive. Breaking free from their grip isn't easy.

VII. Application:

- a. Sabbath definition – God gifted mankind with the Sabbath day for the purpose of reflection, renewal and restoration by spending quality time with Him along with family and friends in simplicity.
- b. Prepare for it. What are the things you must do beforehand to be ready for it?
- c. Practice it – what day works with your schedule?
- d. Disconnect from technology & work. – let your conversations be in person; don't sneak a peak at work. My experience with getting a simpler phone.
- e. Delight & Contemplate – what brings life to you? Look for the invisible God in visible creation.
- f. Let your week revolve around the Sabbath. Instead of working the idea of a Sabbath into your schedule work your schedule around Sabbath.

Conclusion:

- Have you found rest in God?