

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Please Read! Below are the readings and sermon for Sunday August 2, 2020, a Zoom link for this Tuesday's Bible, Bagels and Brew Bible Study, and info on a men's group beginning Wed. August 12.

In Christ's Peace,

Pastor Steve

Bible, Bagels and Brew Bible Study

Join Pastor Steve and friends Tuesday mornings at 9AM on the Zoom app. This is a time of bible study, sharing and caring from the comfort of your home. All are welcome. No bible experience needed, just an openness to learning and experiencing God's love for you in Jesus Christ.

- **Video:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85180298593>

Or

- **Phone** (Land line or mobile)
 - o Dial +1 646 558 8656 US
 - o Enter Meeting ID: 851 8029 8593#
 - o Press # as you are a participant.

GROUNDING An On-line Men's Group

All types of fellas are welcome to a weekly gathering of faith and fellowship on **Wednesdays from 7-8AM** on the Zoom app. via video or phone. The format will be conversation centered around a biblical devotion. Start your day off right. Get that midweek recharge. Be GROUNDED in your faith with men of all walks of life wanting to do life right. GROUNDED begins Wednesday August 12th.

- **Video:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86767586678>

Or

- **Phone** (Land line or mobile)
 - o Dial +1 646 558 8656 US
 - o Enter Meeting ID: 867 6758 6678#
 - o Press # as you are a participant.

Readings for Sunday August 2, 2020

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

12 Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. ¹³For six days you shall labour and do all your work.¹⁴But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. ¹⁵Remember 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.

Matthew 11:28-30

28 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

I today's Gospel Jesus uses the word weary. What do you think of when you hear the word weary? I think worn down, tired and exhausted. Spent. Jesus beckons the weary to come close to him. Those who carry a burden, *I will give you rest*. Jesus puts himself out there as a beast of burden. You who are burdened, come close to me. Be connected to me. We will move in unison. Your load, now my load. Your burden upon me. I carry it now. Feel the ease and lighter nature of life now that you are moving in step with me? This is Jesus' invitation. Come and find rest for your souls.

Sermon for Sunday August 2, 2020

Of the Ten Commandments, keeping the sabbath is the we all kind of say...oh, it's not that important. But did you know it has more print in the context of the Ten Commandments than any of the other nine? The gist of #4 commandment is that its pivotal in us relating to God and one another. It is not to be taken lightly.

The Israelites are no longer slaves to Egypt. What they produced for their owners is no longer the benchmark of their worth. However, old habits die hard. That is all they have ever known for nearly 400 years. Their DNA is programmed to know oppression. But now, now they are free and need to be guided to the realization that their worth is connected to God above and nothing else.

Wherein all the other commandments seek to keep us from being enslaved to sins, the Sabbath command seeks to drive the things that enslave us out. For at least one day of the week. 1/7 of your day , 14.2% of your week we are to cease working. Whatever defines your existence, measures your worth, quantifies your life is paused so that you

may just be. Rich, poor, old, young, slave, free, citizen, foreigner...No. On the sabbath you are just a beloved child of God. Reset. Back to the source of your existence.

This is the easiest of the commandments to disregard, and the hardest to have sink in. Perhaps that is why God makes it a weekly occurrence. Stop what you are doing and just **be** in my presence. Our doing, validating, proving, consuming, comparing and trying...will ultimately lead to our dying. But once a week, on the seventh day just be God's resting creation. One day in seven just be human, and not "God" over creation.

One day in seven dominion over one another comes to a rest. One day in seven rest in your connection to God and one another. Be free from the demands of the world. As we go about seeking meaning to our lives, the world around us is not shy in its attempts at naming it for us. We are inundated with messaging that try their best at defining and labeling us, try their best at having us compare and contrast, rank and judge...you name it. At our fingertips, not just 24/7, but 25/8. Devices and social media feeding us a steady diet of you have to know what is going on, and you have to think or behave in this way or that.

That rat race is for real. The one repeated "blessing" I have heard in regards to COVID-19 is the reduced pace of life. Except for now we don't have to drive there, we just "Zoom" there. Have we really slowed down? How do we realistically step off the speeding train of life, unplug, turn off, keep calm, reduce the number of activities and not come across as odd? On the other hand, keeping busy is a badge of production and provision. I do this and this and this...This makes me valuable to my family. Does it?

Sabbath is important. It keeps us real. Sabbath keeps us from getting too big for our britches. Sabbath reminds us of the pecking order. God is the creator and we are God's creation. Being reminded of that takes intentionality on our part. If we don't take the time to stop and smell the roses, to taste the salt spray of the ocean, to touch the skin of a baby, hear the wind rush through trees or look upon the smallest of creations and be open to wonder, then its meaning as markers, as tells to God's existence will indeed pass us by. Rest is not a reward to be earned. It's the starting point.

Rest has become a reward to work. But that is not how God laid it out. It is not to be earned. Rest is the beginning. It is the starting point. In the Jewish tradition, sabbath is not taken lightly. They get it better than us Christians. The Jewish day begins at sunset. All work happens in the second half of the day, fueled by, and resulting from, rest. And when the Sabbath day arrives, everything stops, whether you are ready or not. Sabbath interrupts and takes over. It is now time to rest. God commands it. Sabbath is not after the work is done, It's before the work gets done. Before the chores get done and the errands completed. When the sun sets, you stop. Screens dim. The work is laid to rest. Silence

ensues. Now it is just humans together in the still of the evening, in the presence of God and one another. No distractions, just concentration on the life God has provided. Purposeful and intentional grounding with God and God's people.

I wish I could tell you I was great at Sabbath keeping...I try...

We all have heard it said that the work and worry will be there tomorrow. So step away from it for a spell...

But it's so difficult and foreign to us...

Getting stuff done. Checking off lists means we are adding to something. I am improving. I am providing, and so on...Me, me, me. The busyness of life can be just busy work (We are familiar with that right? Kids in school...). But what if we were more purposeful...be it in the strictest sense Sunday, or other time(s) of the week in which we stop...drop what life on earth is doing **to** us, and here the invitation...²⁸ 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Jesus uses the word weary. What do you think of when you hear the word weary? I think worn down, tired and exhausted. Spent. Jesus beckons the weary to come close to him. Those who carry a burden, Jesus says, I will give you rest. Jesus puts himself out there as our load bearer. You who are burdened, come close to me. Be connected to me. We will move in unison. Your load, now my load. Your work, your value...let me in. Your burden now mine. I carry it now. Feel the ease and lighter nature of life now that you are moving in step with me? This is Jesus' invitation. Come and find rest for your souls. Purposefully. Intentionally. The Father commands it and Jesus extended the invite.

I believe I have shared this with you before, but I really believe it gets to the core of who and what we are...

While in Guyana (South America) in 2007 on a mission trip I learned the following about their culture...What do you do? vs Who are you? In their culture who you are takes precedent over what you do. In meeting someone you ask who they instead of what they do. Instead of their value being connected to what they produce in this world, they are encouraged to be grounded in the relationship that created this world.

Ask this of yourself...Who are you? If you begin by saying I am...mom, dad, teacher, retired person. STOP. Start with, I am a beloved child of God's. And begin to find rest in that. Carve out the time. Permit sabbath rest to inform your relationship with God, God's

people and the work, worry, and burdens of your days will be resolved as God's loving will sees fit. These words are as much for you as they are for me. I have a pretty good hunch we will not be disappointed. Amen.