

THE GIFT OF SABBATH: A REFLECTION ON REST, RESTORATION, AND GOD'S LOVE

By Pastor John Cabello, Lead Pastor

Have you ever considered the profound meaning and purpose of the Sabbath? Many people view it simply as a day of rest, but there is much more to it. The Sabbath is a gift from God, a day when we can focus on our relationship with our Creator and find restoration and peace in His presence. It's a day that defies the norms of our fast-paced, achievement-oriented culture and invites us into a space of stillness and reflection.

The Sabbath: A Sign of God's Care

In the book of Mark 2:27-28, Jesus tells us, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!" This powerful statement illuminates the true purpose of the Sabbath: it's not about rules or regulations, but about God's desire to meet our needs. As Lord over the Sabbath, Jesus covers and meets our needs, offering us rest and renewal.

Reflect: What in a hurried life do you need rest from and allow God to meet your needs?

Sabbath as a Proclamation of God's Restoration

The Sabbath is also a day when we can experience God's healing power in our lives. In Luke 6:8-9, Jesus heals a man with a deformed hand on the Sabbath, challenging the religious leaders' understanding of what is permissible on this day. He asks, "Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" This story illustrates how the Sabbath can be a time of restoration and healing, a time when God's restorative power is at work in our lives.

Reflect: How would your willingness to sabbath become a time to allow God's restorative power to work in your life?

Overcoming Barriers to Restoration

In Luke 6:10, Jesus boldly confronts the obstacles that stand in the way of our restoration. He commands the man with the deformed hand to "Hold out your hand." When the man obeys, his hand is restored. This story reminds us that our restoration is Christ's proclamation. The Sabbath offers us an opportunity to confront and overcome the barriers of hurry that prevent our restoration, trusting in Christ's healing power.

Reflect: What are the barriers of hurry that prevent restoration in your life? Can you trust God with the “to do” list?

Sabbath: A Countercultural Practice

In a culture that values productivity and busyness, the practice of Sabbath can seem countercultural. However, this is precisely why it is so important. The enemies of Jesus were enraged when he healed on the Sabbath, as we see in Luke 6:11. Yet, Jesus invites us into a different rhythm of life, one that values rest, reflection, and relationship with God over constant activity and achievement.

Reflect: Discuss Christ’s invitation to a different rhythm of life that values rest, reflection and relationship with God over constant activity and achievement.

Jesus: Our Sabbath Rest

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus invites us into a restful relationship with him. He says, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” This invitation extends to us today, reminding us that Jesus is our Sabbath rest, our refuge and source of renewal in a weary world.

Reflect: Take time to read Matthew 11: 28-30. Read slowly and meditate on Christ’s words.

The Sabbath and God's Love

The Sabbath also offers us an opportunity to reflect on God's love for us. As we read in 1 Corinthians 13:4, "Love is patient." God does not rush us or push us beyond our limits. Rather, He invites us into a rhythm of rest and work, providing us with the Sabbath as a gift of His patient love. A hurried life can lead to a distracted life, but the Sabbath invites us to slow down and practice the gift of God's presence, reminding us of His patient, enduring love for us.

Practical Reflection: What day of the week could you take a sabbath and slow down to be in loving union with God? Remember that God does not love us in a hurry. He is patiently waiting to spend the day with you in rest. Plan it and enter into His rest of healing and restoration.