

CRSWLK

PAUSE



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Greetings,

Again, we are excited that you are continuing your spiritual journey with us. This series, we will be talking about something that is deeply close to our hearts; The Sabbath. You may have experienced sermon series on the Sabbath before, but perhaps not at Crosswalk. Our ethos is not to fight about a day, but revel in the gift that God gave us through the Sabbath. You will not hear a historical treatise on when a day of worship was changed, nor who did the changing. We don't need to squabble over who is right and who is wrong and why that matters.

Rather, we have assumed that you take the Scriptures as seriously as we do, and because of that the idea of the Sabbath is clear to you. Now, what does it mean in your life and how can we implement this blessing in a more profound manner becomes the question. We are very interested in what it means for a community to understand sabbath, how it relates to work, how it relates to relationships, and what it means for your commitment to God. We believe that a Sabbath is a resistance from the world around us, the prevailing culture, and from the busyness of life. It has been shown to have profound impacts on our health, longevity, and happiness. Because of these things, we will take the time to do justice to this concept that is so deeply held within scripture.

It is on that note that we take a look into what Sabbath is, and what it can be for each and every one of us, to our families, our careers, and our God. Thinking of Sabbath in a more appropriate way gives us the nudges that we need to remember the blessing, the resistance and the powerful gift that it truly is.

Thank you for coming along for the journey.

Pastor Tim and the Series Guide Team

WEEK 1

Genesis 2:1-3

Day 1

Genesis 2:1-3

1 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.

2 On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work.

3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

This ends the Creation story told to us in the first chapter of Genesis. After the work of creation, there is a pause, a moment of rest, of peace, and of wellbeing.

Why in the world would God need this? Was God tired, was God winded? Was God in desperate need of respite? Or was this idea of a pause, a sabbath, something that was more for us than it was for God?

Is it possible that God understood that humanity needed something more from this life than simply working, eating, sleeping, and beginning it all again? Perhaps it was an act of grace that allowed for a time in our lives to Pause and rekindle what we really need in our lives?

1 What has the idea of _____
Sabbath in creation _____
meant to you? _____

2 Are you in the habit of _____
practicing a pause in _____
your life? _____

3 What can you _____
reorient in your life to _____
create some space? _____

1 How do you inhabit this “palace” in your life?

2 Can we really “dominate the self”? And what would that look like in your life?

3 What practices are in place that change the way you experience this pause in your life?

1 Is your habit of taking a pause considered lazy by anyone else in your life who might not understand?

2 What makes your practice of Sabbath subversive from today's culture?

3 What does your Sabbath say about you?

1 Does this change your thinking about the idea of a sabbath in your life?

2 What can you do to make that pause of the sabbath the climax of living, rather than the recovery from it?

3 What does the phrase “last in creation, first in intention” mean to you?

1 What do you abstain _____
from? _____

2 But what do you add _____
in its place? _____

3 How can you explain _____
to someone that _____
abstentions actually _____
mean additions? _____

1 What practices do you have in place to create downtime for yourself?

2 What can you do to inhabit your “Palace in Time?”

3 How does your schedule lend itself to downtime?

Day 7

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

What is your earliest memory of the Sabbath? Was it more knowledge-based or experiential?

Think about and share one or two of your best (or worst) memories of Sabbath.

HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read together Genesis 2:1-3, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.
- What is the importance of taking a day-off? Why did God “rest” from His work?
- What is the biggest difference between God’s actions on days 1-6 and day 7?
- What elements were present in God’s proclamation on day 7?

HEART (lessons for us today/ application)

- What does “Sabbath” mean to you today? What does it mean in the wider culture? Are these meanings similar or dissimilar?
- If the first “holy” object in the history of the world is applied to time; how much emphasis are you placing on that space and time each week? What can/should you do differently to honor and recognize the holiness of the Sabbath?

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

- You may have grown up with a list of things you couldn’t do on the Sabbath. This week, try to think about and encounter the Sabbath

WEEK 2

1 What part of modern civilization gets you down? _____

2 Is there something you do to “sabbath” in your day? _____

3 What is your best way to downshift? _____

1 Do you like what you _____
do for a living? _____

2 How do you find the _____
sacred part of it? _____

3 Can you ever truly un- _____
plug from your work _____
and find indepen- _____
dence from it? _____

1 When do you turn _____
your phone off each _____
day? _____

2 How do you live _____
independently of _____
technical civilization? _____

3 What seems to wear _____
you down each day? _____

1 How can we find ourselves away from the world without having to go to the desert?

2 Have you ever wanted to run away from it all? What stopped you, what was attractive about the idea?

3 How can you find a way to retreat every day within the way you live your life?

1 What do you love about your work? _____

2 How does your work express the love God has for his people? _____

3 How do you show others the importance of God's grace through your work? _____

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

What is one of your favorite Sabbath activities that helps you break free from the pace of the week and the pressures of your labor in order to find refreshment at the feet of Jesus?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read as a group Genesis 2: 15 and Exodus 20: 8-11 and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage.
- In the beginning, was work/labor meant to be a blessing or a curse? How do you think it was a blessing?
- If work/labor was a blessing, why do you think God rested from it?
- When did the call to labor change from blessing to curse? What changed about it? (Read also Genesis 3: 17-19)

- One of the first things God does when He rescues the Israelites from Egypt is to remind them about the Sabbath. Why do you think He had to remind them?
- Exodus 20: 8 says to keep it holy. The word for “holy” means “set apart.” So how do we seek to set Sabbath apart from the other days a week?
- Why do you think God included your household and anyone living among you in the instructions for Sabbath?

HEART (lessons for us today/ application)

- How would you define Sabbath to someone who knew nothing about it?
- Is Sabbath just a one day a week experience, or are there ways to

WEEK 3

Exodus 5:4-19

Day 15

Exodus 5:4, 5

The Sabbath As Resistance

4 Pharaoh replied, “Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work!

5 Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work.”

Why was Pharaoh upset? Moses and Aaron were creating disruption to the work that people were doing for him, and that was unconscionable to the culture at the time.

Remember, the Israelites were not slaves when they came to Egypt, rather, they had been invited to share in the reserves that had been saved by Joseph when he was in charge and following God’s leading in his life.

Therefore, in the ensuing years, the relationship between the Israelites and the Egyptians had taken a turn for the worse.

1 What distracts you _____
from your work? _____

2 Have you ever felt like _____
a slave to your work? _____

3 Does your boss seem _____
like the Pharaoh at _____
times? _____

1 What would you do if _____
you found yourself in _____
this situation? _____

2 Does your boss email _____
or text you at home? _____

3 Does work never stop _____
for you? How do you _____
push back on that _____
idea? _____

1 Is your work situation _____
built on an Egyptian _____
economy? _____

2 Where are you having _____
to struggle with _____
doing more and more _____
with less and less? _____

3 How can you begin to _____
change this reality in _____
your life? _____

Day 18

Exodus 5:13, 14

13 Meanwhile, the Egyptian slave drivers continued to push hard. “Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did when we provided you with straw!” they demanded.

14 Then they whipped the Israelite foremen they had put in charge of the work crews. “Why haven’t you met your quotas either yesterday or today?” they demanded.

Have you ever worked for someone who felt and treated you like this? There is nothing worse than being treated poorly in a job that you have given your life to.

When you are taken for granted, when you are used and feel as if you are taken advantage of, all of these things create a sense of worthlessness that no one should feel from their work and their careers.

Too often, the entities that we work for don’t understand that their workers are often part of the mission as well.

1 What can you do to help your employer change the way they treat their workers?

2 Are you an employer who needs to change your ways?

3 What is the mission of the organization you work for?

1 What can you do to break the cycle that we see in the texts above?

2 How do we take back control of our lives from the production/consumption cycle?

3 How could a Sabbath break this chain?

Day 20

Exodus 5:17-19

17 But Pharaoh shouted, “You’re just lazy! Lazy! That’s why you’re saying, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to the Lord.’

18 Now get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still produce the full quota of bricks.”

19 The Israelite foremen could see that they were in serious trouble when they were told, “You must not reduce the number of bricks you make each day.”

This story always reminds me that the organizations we work for will rarely see the error of their ways. The mission of the organization you work matters a great deal to how they will see their employees.

What is the mission of the organization you work for? Do they value compassion, joy, balance and hope as much as they do a bottom line report? Do they believe that mission should always lead the margin?

1 What can you do to help them understand that we work in an economy of abundance, rather than an economy of scarcity?

2 What is the greatest thing about where you work, and how can you leverage that to change the culture of it?

3 Why do you think that God installed Sabbath into a work week?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

What is the most challenging job you've ever had? What aspects of the job made it so difficult? Have you ever had a "fun" workplace, and if so, what made it fun?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read together Exodus 5:1-4. Pharaoh and, by extension, Egypt, are often cited in the Bible as stand-ins for atheism. From these passages, why do you think they exemplify atheism?
- Read Exodus 5:5-9. This text seems to be a decree or statement issued towards the Egyptian taskmasters in charge of the Hebrews. How did Pharaoh make the Hebrews' labor harder? What were the reasons he used to justify the orders?
- Read Exodus 5:10-11. How did the taskmasters convey the new work conditions? Compare and contrast Pharaoh's order with the taskmasters. Why do you think they shortened Pharaoh's words?
- Who received punishment for the reduced productivity (v. 14)?
- The Israelite foremen approach Pharaoh and give a plea for compassion in Exodus 5:15-16. From the words they use, how would you describe their tone?
- Pharaoh continues to harden his heart towards the Israelites' requests. What does he think will "cure" the Israelites of their desire to go and sacrifice to the LORD? What do you make of Pharaoh's accusations?
- In Exodus 5:19-22, we get an epilogue to the narrative that

Pastor Tim is teaching this week. Although we won't be studying it in its entirety, notice that both the Israelite foremen and Moses are troubled by their experiences. As they entered the sabbath economy, they didn't expect to meet extreme resistance from the Egyptian economy.

HEART (lessons for us today/
application)

- Who do you have authority or influence over today? When they bring requests to you, how do you react?
- Even if you can't meet every request that comes your way, are you the kind of person who responds with empathy?
- The Israelites were forced to scatter around Egypt, searching for the straw they needed to meet their brick quotas. They had no choice but to prioritize their productivity. How can we take back control of our lives from the production/consumption cycle?

- Has work ever become an idol that intentionally or unintentionally kept you away from "sacrificing to the LORD"?
- What are some of the ways our current economy wages war against sabbathing?
- Describe your ideal sabbath.

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

- Laziness is used again and again in the Exodus 5 narrative to dismiss the requests from Moses and Aaron and the Israelite foremen. The Egyptian economy depends on massive amounts of consumption and production, which means that anything that breaks away will be shamed and attacked. But the sabbath reminds us that we are not machines. What rituals can we develop to protect us from pinning our worth on what we own and what we make?
- What can you or your small group commit to doing next week to lighten the burden of brickmaking on someone within your social circle?

WEEK 4

John 14

Day 22

John 14:1-7

- 1 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.
- 2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?
- 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.
- 4 And you know the way to where I am going.”
- 5 “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”
- 6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.
- 7 If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

To take a Sabbath is to fulfill the command that we see in verse 1 of chapter 14. “Trust in God, and trust also in me.”

To take on the Sabbath into your life and practice means that you are willing to trust that God has all of this in hand. It is to submit to his abundance, and to give in to his authority. Without the willingness to trust in God, Sabbath can become either a tool for spiritual superiority, or another notch in our belts of spiritual practice.

The sabbath is not so much a spiritual practice as it is a spiritual place of safety. You don’t “keep” the Sabbath, rather, you give it away.

1 What is the difference between keeping and giving away the Sabbath?

2 What do your Sabbath's look like, where do you find yourself trusting in God?

3 How can we keep trusting in God, through Jesus, and how does the Sabbath encourage this?

1 How does the Sabbath help you connect with the Father and the son?

2 Where do you see the Father in the stories of Jesus on which you reflect?

3 Why does the sabbath give us such a great moment to reflect on their connection?

1 How can you be a blessing today? _____

2 What can you do to help others understand the power and expanse of Grace? _____

3 Is there a way that you can feel closer to those around you today? _____

Day 25

John 14:15-21

15 “If you love me, obey my commandments.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.

17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live.

20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

Here, Jesus engages the conversation about the Holy Spirit, and the permanent nature of the Spirit’s relationship to us. He will never leave us. This is intrinsic to the idea of the Sabbath due to the permanent nature of the sabbath in scripture.

In Isaiah (66:23) the Sabbath is mentioned as something that we will even

keep in the new earth. Therefore, the installation of the Holy Spirit as advocate, as well as the continued command to honor the Sabbath shows us the permanence of the relationship that God has established with us.

This mirrors the eternal relationship that Jesus has with the Father and Spirit due to their relationship in the trinity.

1 Who is your oldest friend, how long have you known each other?

2 What does this relationship give you?

3 How can you establish relationships that will continue well past this life?

1 How can you most effectively use the sabbath to remember what God has done for you?

2 How can you boost your relationship with others during the Sabbath?

3 What do you love most about what God has given you, and how can you integrate that into your life and into your sabbath?

1 How does the sabbath more closely connect us with God and others?

2 What is your best memory of the sabbath?

3 How can the sabbath be included in your spiritual practice more profoundly?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

Think about and share a moment when you felt close to God. Where were you? What was happening? What was the result of that connection? Were you pleased? Satisfied? Left wanting more?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Read together John 14, 17:1-5, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.
- Jesus had just shared some fairly troubling words with the disciples [he will be betrayed, denied, and then leave them] but then he says, ‘Don’t be troubled...’ (14:1). What does Jesus invite his disciples to do in order to fight the urge to be troubled? How does that invitation impact us today?
- How does Jesus describe his “Father’s house” in this passage? What image(s) does that provoke and what peace does it bring? Is that peace accessible here and now? How so?
- In 14:15 Jesus says, “If you love me, obey my commandments.” How does your love for Jesus inform the way you live? When people look at your life and examine the way you live, do you think they can easily conclude that you love Jesus by the way you obey his commandments?
- Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit as another Counselor which can also be translated as comforter, encourager, or advocate. Which one of those titles speak to you the most today?

WEEK 5

1 How do you recognize _____
the Sabbath in your _____
weekly routine? _____

2 Pause means that _____
we take a break. _____
From what do you _____
take a break on your _____
Sabbath? _____

3 Is Sabbath, or at least _____
the concept of it, _____
relegated to once a _____
week, or can you find _____
time to Sabbath each _____
day? _____

1 What is your favorite holiday, and what does it remember?

2 What do you try and remember on the Sabbath?

3 Are you concerned about the way you “Keep the Sabbath”?

1 How was sabbath for you growing up? _____

2 Did you love it or dread it? _____

3 How can you recapture it's meaning in your life? _____

1 When have you _____
tried to subdue the _____
sabbath in your life? _____

2 Where do you see _____
God working most _____
profoundly in your life _____
on the sabbath? _____

3 What is the hope you _____
find in this weekly _____
connection with God? _____

1 When do you feel the presence of God most profoundly?

2 What can you put into your life as practice that will remind you of his presence?

3 How can you connect your everyday life with eternity?

1 Why would we leave you with this quote? _____

2 How can you lean into the Holy? _____

3 Has this changed the way you want to experience the Sabbath in your life? _____

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

What is one of your favorite holidays of the year? Why is it one of your favorites? What traditions do you do on that holiday that helps you celebrate?

HEAD (digging into the passage)

- Growing up, did you know about the Sabbath and if so, was it a good thing or a bad thing? Explain. If you didn't know, when did you learn and how did you learn about it?
- Read as a group I Samuel 7: 1-2 and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage.
- What did the ark of the covenant represent to the Israelites?
- The Philistines had captured the ark and had it for 7 months, so for 7 months, the Israelites did not have the presence of God with them as they understood it. So did God leave them, or had they left God? Explain.
- If God's presence is not contained to a box, why do you think He allowed the ark to be a symbol of His presence?
- What do God's presence and Sabbath have to do with each other?

HEART (lessons for us today/ application)

- The sin of the Israelites, as we continue to read about in I Samuel 7, was idolatry. How is practicing Sabbath able to help free us from our worship or dependence on

