

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

One of my favorite games to play is Balderdash. If you've never heard of it before the concept is pretty simple. Make up definitions for words you've never heard before. For example: what do you think the word "Rockhair" means? Initially I thought it referred to the long hair typically seen by rock in roll players. Actually, it is a specific type of moss that is attracted to growing on rocks. Today we have a word in our text that I am pretty confident that you've heard before, but I wonder how you would actually define it. What do you think the word Sabbath means? You'd be wrong to think it is perhaps a special kind of bath. Actually, it is one of those words carried over from the original language. The word Sabbath is the Hebrew word to "cease, desist, or rest." God teaches us that it is important we understand not only what the word means but what God's use of this word means for our lives.

NIV Deuteronomy 5:12-15 **12 "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.**

These are God's Words to us that are profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, dear fellow Redeemed. Our theme today is our constant prayer while in this world:

DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR REST!

1. The **Time** to Rest
2. The **Need** to Rest
3. The **Ability** to Rest

And so we pray: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight oh Lord, our Strength and Redeemer. Amen.

1. The Time to Rest

Since most days I work from my home office, I am thankful that I am able to help out here and there around the house. Most days as you would expect with two very "active" kids there's a question that repeats in my mind like a broken record... "Isn't time for you kids to rest?" The energy level in kids is pretty amazing, which is why I believe when they hit their teens they are sleeping all the time.

The word Sabbath means rest. This Sabbath rest originated and was established at the time of creation. It is the day the Lord "rested" after creating everything. The seventh day we should understand is when God "ceased" and ended His work of creation. Some might ask if God needed to rest. Was He tired? We remember that an all powerful God simply spoke the words "Let there be..." and through the power of His words... immediately what He spoke was in existence. God DID NOT speak, and then millions of years later... we FINALLY got the end product as the Theistic Evolutionists would like to believe. No, Exodus 20 is clear when it says that ***in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.***

The week we humans enjoy is the same work week the LORD established in the beginning of time. Six days of work, one day of rest. Some of you may be thinking, wait a minute, I only work 5 days a week, or I'm only part time, or I'm a stay at home mom or dad, or I can't find work right now, am I sinning against God's commandment? After all it says, **12 "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.** What does God mean when He commands and teaches His believers about this 3rd Commandment about the Sabbath? The Sydow Catechism points out very well that: *God required His Old Testament people to set aside Saturday as a day of rest. He wanted them to use the day for worship, sacrifice, and learning about Him, His Son, their Savior, and the gift of eternal life. This was part of the ceremonial law. God has removed the requirement that His people have to worship on Saturday. Yet, He does want us to worship Him.*

In the New Testament, we do not have a single place where Christians are commanded to celebrate the Sabbath. In fact, Paul tells the *Colossians*, ***Therefore let no one judge you in food or drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. (2:16-17)*** What God reveals to us could really be summed up in just two words... "Love God." In this very materialistic, very distracting, very selfish "me first" society we live in... God makes it simple, He tells us don't forget about Me! Set aside time for Me! Take time, find time, and make **time to rest**. God doesn't command a specific day to rest, but He does tell us to take time to do it. Our next point this morning examines the importance of why.

2. The **Need** to Rest

One question often debated is ... why Sunday? Why don't we worship on Saturday if God doesn't command a specific day anymore? The apostles may have chosen Sunday to be the day because of its significance in remembering Sunday was the day of Jesus' resurrection and also the day that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to them on Pentecost. The other reason could be that at the time of the apostles, and still today for that matter, the Word of God was being taught to Jews who thought that they were righteous before God for keeping the Sabbath and worshipping *only* on Saturday as God had commanded. Therefore, the apostles may have made Sunday the primary day of worship in order to show them that the keeping of the Law was not necessary for their salvation. Jesus was asked a similar question, ***"What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (Jn 6:28,29)***

The simple truth is no matter what day we would worship on, the need for this rest remains. Luther once said: *Every day should be a "Sabbath" for us Christians; for we should hear God's Word every day and should lead our lives in accordance with it. At the same time Sunday has been arranged for the common people, so that everyone may on that day in particular hear and learn God's Word and live in accordance with it. For during the other days of the week the common man must tend to his work and earn a living. And God is content to have him do so, for He has commanded man to work.*

The subject of work itself brings up this undeniable **need to rest**. I did something kind of stupid once while working at the Menards distribution center in Eau Claire, WI (Menards is like a Lowes). I was going on vacation early one week and wanted (and thought I needed) to get in as many hours as possible. Menards had three shifts at that time. So I went in early Sunday afternoon after I'd gotten home from church and had some lunch. At about 4 or 5 am the next morning I started to realize that falling asleep while driving a forklift wasn't the best idea, but I stayed another 4 or 5 hours after than anyway. Obviously, the lesson learned is that we need rest! It is as about as obvious as we need to eat. Our bodies need nutrition and time to recover from mental and physical work. You don't skip on meals for weeks at a time. You don't skip on sleep for weeks at a time. And our God makes it clear this morning that you don't skip out on His Word either. THAT is the reason for the Sabbath rest in both Old and New Testament times. We live in a world that attempts to trivialize our faith, we have enemies that want to do far worse than that, and we by nature believe no matter what the odds... "I can survive." It is said that humans cannot survive more than 7 days without water. Is it funny then that Jesus compared His Word to "Living waters?" No, it is serious! We need Jesus' Word to survive. Like refreshing water on a hot day, is like the waters of God's Word that provides rest for our souls.

Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. You and I put valuables like money or heirlooms in a secure place such as a safe at a trusted bank. We can think of the commandments as God's protective safe. Our Triune God has things He wants protected too. With the first commandment = He protects His glory. The second commandment = He protects His name. The third commandment = He protects His Word. God's top priority is to protect His Word in our hearts. It is the Word that reveals to us that He is a loving creator that creates and sustains this faith in our hearts through the message of the forgiveness of sins in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your faith is the result of the rest given through God's Word. Our Lord and Savior wants to demonstrate for you how your spiritual health needs to have the same priority, if not higher priority, than you give to daily food or sleep. **13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do.** Isn't it important that God potentially lists every living thing here in your possession, in order that this observing and keeping of the Sabbath would have ALL your attention focus and rest on Him alone? Every day on this earth establishes the truth that you NEED rest. Thank the Lord that His Word gives finally, the peace and joy in:

3. The **Ability** to Rest

15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. For the Old Testament children of Israel, their enslavement didn't provide much time, if any, for rest... especially the kind of spiritual rest they so desperately needed. Therefore, God demonstrated is **mighty hand** and the power of His **outstretched arm** for the children of Israel in setting them free from their slavery. Our LORD brought them out of Egypt in order that they would be free to serve Him in love. He gave them the **ability to rest** and trust in Him to provide and care for them as their Heavenly Father and Savior. *Proverbs 30:5* tells us that *Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.*

Is it any different for you? Nature, gives the picture of how important it is to rest in our lives. God gave the gift of physical rest to all His creatures. And I am comforted that even my Savior while He walked this earth for you and me took time to rest, and to pray. He took time to refresh in order to continue to serve His Father and this sinful world He came to save. Just think how these verses of Deuteronomy today show what Jesus did for you and me who're enslaved to sin. **Remember that... God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.** My friends just think of the **mighty hand** of God that throughout the course of time kept that first Gospel promise from the Garden of Eden! Think of the **outstretched arms** of our Savior on the cross as He was carrying out that promise of forgiveness for you! It is this act alone of our Savior that gives you the **ability to rest!** It is the ability to rest in the comfort of the promises of God! The ability to rest confidently, in the joy and hope of eternal life!

When your doctor tells you to get plenty of rest, or rest that broken leg, it is for the purpose of healing. The same is true of your Divine Physician – our Lord God. Unlike the game of Balderdash, God defines each of His words carefully like a doctor who writes out a prescription. By God's grace we observe and keep the Sabbath, the day of rest, each Sunday, and any day we read or hear His Word. This is God's prescription for our sinful souls. In this God gives us His Gospel for our spiritual healing in order to nourish and strengthen our faith and trust in Him. There *is* **Time** to Rest. There *is* **Need** to Rest. And through your Lord Jesus Christ He has given you the **Ability** to Rest peacefully in His Word. **DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR REST!**

This peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard and keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.