

Sabbath: Sacred Rest for a Hurried World

Week 3: Rest

May 24, 2026

Introduction

Aloha everyone, I'm Mark and I want to welcome you to our service! This week we continue a series that may prove to be one of the most radical we've ever done — a series on sabbath. Last week we saw that 'sabbath' simply means to stop and that the God of the Bible commands His people to Sabbath from all labor once a week. A primary reason for this is that God established this rhythm of rest and labor into the very fabric of creation, so violating that rhythm comes with natural consequences. It's less a matter of right and wrong or good and evil and more a matter of natural order. Asking if we still need to obey the law of sabbath is like asking if we still need to obey the laws of physics or thermodynamics. You can try to defy gravity but it might not go well for you. One of my favorite things about last weekend was all of the conversations it generated. People immediately started thinking about their own rhythms and schedules to see how sabbath could work. And if you spent any significant amount of time thinking about it, you probably reached the same conclusion — this is going to be a radical shift. Yes, it is one day, but it's one day that changes every day! As one person told me last week, "It takes a lot of work to rest!" Absolutely. Rest is not something that just falls into our laps. It takes tremendous discipline and intentionality. But most of us didn't stray from sabbath rest overnight so finding our way back will require time and patience as well.

Rest

As we continue to plan and pray for sabbath, I want us to have a conversation about the next major component of sabbath — rest. Sabbath is not just about removing something from our lives, it's about replacing it. We remove work, distractions, planning, producing, and so on but we replace it with rest. Admittedly, we kind of stink at rest. Most of us don't know how. This is why we've invited a professional here today.

Dr. Brian has been one of the most significant voices in Jalee and my life. He helped us navigate the pre-marital season, the marital season, and again with kids. I would not be the husband, father, or pastor I am today without his wisdom, friendship, and experience. Please give a warm welcome to Dr. Brian Misaka!

Dr. Brian, for those who may not know you, can you give us a brief introduction?

Restlessness

Dr. Brian, we're trying to learn balance and rhythm when it comes to rest. I'm trying to think of rest less as an event and more of a lifestyle or rhythm. Why do you think it is so hard for us to stop and rest? What is fueling our restlessness?

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 male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do,"*

(Deuteronomy 5:12-14 NIV).

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," (Deuteronomy 5:15 NIV).*

This isn't a contradiction of the reason given in Exodus, it is a deepening. The Israelites knew what it meant to be slaves. They knew what it was like to be exploited. They asked for time off to worship God on His mountain and the boss chastised them, called them lazy, and then doubled their work. But God liberated them from that. Sabbath is a reminder that we have been liberated from slavery and are now sons and daughters. This is why Jesus healing on the sabbath is very on-point. Sabbath is a day of liberation and deliverance. We were not created to be bound or exploited but to delight in God. But this isn't just personal liberation. Their children, their servants, their animals, and even the land enjoyed rest. So the sabbath had social and economic ramifications. It said, "Not only are you not to be exploited but you are not to exploit others." We sort of saw a snapshot of this during the pandemic when the world entered into forced sabbath and we saw parts of nature start to heal and animals multiply. So sabbath is so much more than just rest — it's resistance. It's standing up to the machine, it's standing up to 'the man' and reclaiming our humanity, our dignity, and our identity in God. When the Church understands sabbath, the world is a different place.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Where are you most tired? Physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually? What is the greatest drain on your energies?
2. What is the strongest force of resistance in your life (external or internal) that attempts to keep you from sabbath rest?
3. What are the hardest things for you to say 'no' to on the sabbath?