**The commandment that doesn’t feel like a commandment**

**Sky Cady 5-29-2022**

**Intro**: Some things are so important they need repeating. I’ve been thinking about our journey through the 10 commandments and David has done a great job explaining and teaching through the last few. And the more I thought about them, the more one of them just stuck out. It seemed so different from the rest. It seemed like it was in a different category – one that I wouldn’t categorize by being right vs. wrong, good vs evil, righteous vs wicked. Most of us in here would readily acknowledge that we’d never want to steal. We don’t murder people. We don’t have little wooden figurines that we bow down to at home on our window sil. But, we do have a very hard time keeping Sabbath (REST). It doesn’t seem like a command, but more of a suggestion for a healthy life – like eating your vegetables, exercising and staying away from sugar. This commandment is **more serious than a good suggestion** It’s as wrong to violate the sabbath as it is to kill, steal or lie. Ex. 35:2 Whoever does any work on it shall **be put to death. And even though sabbath may look a little different today – it’s still a command.** Today, I want to take some time and look at the command of Sabbath and let the Lord convince you that he has something particular in mind a **Rhythm of Rest.**

**Big idea: The Sabbath is a Rhythm of Rest to cease from work and delight in God**

And I chose to hit on this again because I see a need for it in myself. In the last two months I’ve noticed a shift in my feeling of being refreshed. At times when previously I would have been and should have been refreshed I wasn’t – and we’re gonna talk about that.

**Transition:**

Going to talk about

1. Origin of Sabbath
2. What does this commandment prohibit?
3. Why is it so important?
4. How do I respond to this commandment?

**Reading**: Ex. 20: 8-11 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and **rested** on the seventh day. **Therefore** the Lord **blessed** the Sabbath day and **made it holy**.

**Origin of sabbath: Background to the 7th day of creation:**

It’s an old idea: (at least 6,000 years, 2500 years before Moses)

* The idea of rest is original. Did not come from the heart or mind of a human. God established it the day after he created man.
* *God didn’t need to rest because he was tired or because he was striving*
* God did two things on the 7th day..
  + - **Blessed** the day. There’s a special significance that comes with blessing. God putting his favor, and focused approval, with low hanging fruit to be harvested on this day.
    - **Made** it holy. Set apart. Different from all other days, with a pure purpose in mind, distinct from the rest of creation. This is the first time in the history of creation that God makes Holy. He sets aside time and makes it holy, not a thing.
    - all blessing and setting apart is God’s work. We follow in his example as we image him in this practice. We carve out holiness in the world by resting.

Israel is always seeking rest:

* **1. Before Egypt**: Israel went to Egypt to find rest (lack of food) and they were captive to Egypt unable to rest. As slaves there were forced to work continuously. No break.
* **2. In Desert**: Then they sought out and got an opportunity to enter rest after the exodus (Num. 10:33) and had the opportunity to rest in God’s provision for them but they did not because of their lack of faith.
  + Grumbled and said Moses brought them out there to die, (manna, quail)
  + didn’t follow his law,
  + Korah’s rebellion, didn’t want to follow Moses – God’s chosen leader
  + worshipped golden calf.
  + In Hebrews 3:7-4. They saw God’s works for 40 years and still they did not believe he could provide for them. So, they were unable to enter God’s rest because of their unbelief (Hebr. 3:19).
* **3. Entering the promised land**. The promised land was supposed to bring them the rest they craved:
* Josh. 1:13 “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.’
* Josh. 21:43-45 Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. 44And **the Lord gave them rest on every side** just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. 45Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

TRANSITION: But it lasted barely a generation, the next generation didn’t know or follow the Lord and they abandoned the LORD (judg 2:11-15) and God gave them over to their enemies.

* But in the ensuing millenia, as the Jewish people bounced on their **rubber band between repentance & rebellion, and some practices of sabbath started to take root.**
* 4. In following the law: The Jews today still practice varying forms of “not working” on the sabbath. Such as….
  + Can’t add fresh water to a vase of flowers
  + Brush dried mud off of your feet
  + Rub soap to make lather

**What does the command prohibit?**

Definition of Sabbath: (shabbat)

* + To CEASE (STOP – NOT RESTING): images of fluffy comforter, laying on beach, twenty something playing guitar on the couch watching the rain fall. Images of Sabbath

A day for **us** to stop and for **those we influence**, & **creation** to stop (not considering rest for creation).

* Exodus 20: 10-11: *On it you shall not do any work, you, or your* ***son****, or your daughter, your male* ***servant****, or your female servant, or your* ***livestock****, or the* ***sojourner*** *who is within your gates.*
* God knew we would have a hard time keeping it so he had to be specific. No – you can’t send your people to do your work for you on that day. No – can’t have your machines running so that you’re still making money even when you’re not there.
* No – the visitor/non believer (sojourner) can’t be working if you have some power or authority over them to make it so.
* This is not just something I’ve given to you as a chosen people, but this is something that I’ve **designed to be healthy for the fabric of all creation**.

**TRANSITION: BUT We are New Testament believers not under the law! In Scripture the practice of sabbath has as it’s principle a resting in Christ and a resting from work. (not resting in Christ)**

**Following Sabbath is not because it’s LAW but resting from work and resting in Christ.**

When to take sabbath?

* Nothing in NT says we need to have a weekly sabbath.
* TELL STORY JESUS TOLD ABOUT GRAIN & DAVID Jesus speaks about sabbath
* Mark 2:23-27 23 “…**The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.** So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”
* You have Jesus living in you and with his discernment you can decide **when** to take sabbath.
* We rest because God rests. The sabbath should not be taken because it’s part of the law, because we are not under the law. we are under the new covenant, and the new law that gives freedom. The law of Christ. This law of Christ (1Cor. 9:21, Gal. 6:2) looks very different from the old law, but both reflect the character of God.
* 3 places in Pauls letters makes this clear
  + 1. Romans 14:5
  + 2. Col. 2:16-17
  + 3. Acts 15

How does Jesus transform and apply this commandment?

**Rest in Christ**

* **In Jesus Christ is the only way that we can enter God’s sabbath rest**, for Jesus
  + Hebrews 4:8-10
  + (1) fulfilled the sabbath and offers us his own sabbath-keeping righteousness by faith, but even more practically
  + (2) Jesus is what sabbath-keeping is pointing to. To say it in another way, the whole reason we were called to rest was to point us to resting in Christ all along. It’s the same reason that Israel never had/entered rest because they didn’t believe (Heb 3:19). And believing is the only way that we can enter rest.
  + Non-Christians cannot have sabbath rest until they have faith in Christ.
  + *The exodus Sabbath pointed to Christ!*
    - *STORY:* ***collecting manna*** *in the desert God provided enough to skip the 7th day of gathering. Exodus 16:23-25.*
    - *APPLICATION: Are we trusting God that he will give us enough to meet our needs by working for the time he has allotted and being obedient to rest on the 7th day?*
* **Rest & Remember**: Deut. 5:12-15, “You shall remember 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.”
  + The sabbath points back to the rest lost in creation and forward to the rest that will ultimately be enjoyed in Jesus Christ.
  + Keeping the sabbath day is linked to remembering where you came from, how you were liberated and what you were liberated from.
  + But in taking sabbath believers should remember how they were redeemed by Christ and set free to rest in God because of the resurrection of Jesus.
* **Sabbath Definition** (to stop): other part of the definition is **DELIGHT**:
  + We delight in the sufficiency of Christ who worked for us. In God’s love for us. In the rest of God that he has given us in him. Not striving to work ourselves into heaven, but accepting the rest and grace God has given us in Christ.
  + It’s a day of delight for humankind, animals and the earth.
  + Not merely a pious day for going to church or performing religious acts, a break, a day off or a twenty four hour vacation.

What happens if I don’t rest? Here is the warning or the very practical answer…

* Burnout: Then God will force you to do it. You’ll break down from overexhaustion or you’ll die early. In Japan they have come up with a new word because there has been a consistent problem of people working themselves to death: **Karoshi** is the Japanese word for, “Working insane hours, under intense pressure, with little to no rest.”
* God gave the land a break **when the people wouldn’t honor him with Sabbath**. He had to send them to captivity to do it. **2 Chr. 36:21** He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, 21to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, **until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths**. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.
* I commit **idolatry**: Work becomes the thing that I run to to make me feel good. SometimesAre we running to our work to provide for us a sense of significance that can only be found in Christ?
* **Imbalance** in life putting work ahead of God & family: Rhythm is built into God’s creation. Weekly rhythm. **If it’s not a weekly Rhythm then pray and ask the Lord what it means for you to faithfully follow the sabbath in your profession.**

**How am I to respond to this commandment?**

**Rest in Christ**

* Know that you have entered God’s sabbath rest. Remind yourself of that, and stop striving to achieve righteousness through your works. Let his peace and love fill you by being grateful for who he is in your life and what he’s given you.

**Rest from work**

* Even in preparing for this sermon, I kept feeling like it wasn’t good enough – I need more time. And God said, “it’s not about more time, I’m gonna teach these people what I’m gonna teach them, and you’re just gonna stand there and talk.”
* **Sabbath as a resistance**: Israel lived under the grinding oppression of Pharaoh and Egypt. Egypt was a cruel and devouring task master with a continual lust for more. They had an empire so ravenous that they had to build store cities. To get as rich as pharaoh you need slaves driving themselves into the ground til there’s nothing left but ash and dust. Slaves don’t get a day off, they work til they die. Well, today, Egypt is alive and well! We live in a culture of more. More stuff, expand our space, more places to store it, more value to our net worth. Though here in Alaska indoor storage is at a premium, I found it interesting to find that in the US we don’t have storage cities but storage units, and most of the yards I see here (including my own) prove we don’t need a storage unit to store things. Observing sabbath is like an act of guerilla warfare in a culture that says you need to use every waking minute to produce more for yourself. So that you can accumulate more so that you’ll be safe and secure. It’s kind of like scheduled social justice. If you’re an employer giving your people a real day off. What we really need is not more stuff or time to make money to accumulate more stuff but time to enjoy what I already have with God.

**What do I actually do on Sabbath?**

* in fact he is your sabbath, and as you rest in him you are permitted to do what his spirit in you permits.
* It’s a **palace in time** - I don’t need a big house, amazing view, and plenty of man-toys to enjoy this palace. Every believer gets access to it. And it’s a palace that when you rest in it, you get rejuvenated. As a believer I am always at rest and peace in Christ’s holiness
* Not a vacation – You can go on vacation and rest, and you can go on vacation and not rest. Vacation is society’s attempt to get a rest that they can never really achieve without Christ. the modern day vacation that has the allure of cotton candy but leaves a sticky residue and even more hungry afterwards. Lying on the beach with earpods and a novel – distracting ourselves from the real business of rest. Because there is no Christ. Sabbath rest is most ultimately fulfilled by resting/believing in Christ.
* There is a **rhythm** to sabbath and as well as a rhythm to work.
* Do things that refresh us,
  + Physiologically relative & wise
  + If you work at a desk – use your muscle, If you work on the boat, sit and take a nap.
  + The day when I feel most awake and more at peace
* My guess is that the practice is so foreign in our culture, and especially the culture of the summer in homer that it’s gonna take you awhile to hone and define exactly what it means for you. (**MY STORY of REDEFINING SABBATH)** You don’t have to work more hours Sky – I’ve got it.
  + We find Gods will for our lives in our limitations. I can’t do it all, when I realize that and stop, then God speaks.
* I know when I’ve taken Sabbath, if I’m really trying to rest and be in the moment, it’s like my **soul catches up with my body**. I slow down and separate enough from the never-ending task of to-do’s, emails & phone calls to make for work, let alone my basement construction & yard work, and breath in. I feel free, light, in tune with the Lord, responsible in obedience, and present to see what he has next for me.
* People who keep sabbath live all seven days differently – Bruggemann

**Closing questions:**

1. **In what area do I not trust God enough to take weekly Sabbath?**
2. **What activities or non-activities refresh me and delight me in God?**
3. **Do I rest in Christ’s finished work on the cross or do I strive to attain what Christ already given?**
4. *What would it take for me to cease & delight?*

Life Group Questions:

Opener: Describe the time you’ve felt the most rejuvenated in life?

Head:

1. Look at Exodus 20:8-11. What do you think is the connection between God’s resting, making the day holy and blessing it?
2. Why did God rest?
3. Why do you think he includes animals and slaves in this command?
4. Is the Sabbath a command for believers today? Look at these verses. Romans 14:5, Col. 2:16-17, Acts 15
5. What does this story teach us about God’s provision regarding sabbath? Ex. 16:23-25

Heart:

1. When have you done sabbath well?
2. When have you failed at practicing sabbath?
3. What would help you to practice sabbath better?
4. What keeps you from trusting Christ to be your rest?

Hands

1. What is one thing you can stop doing to rest better?
2. What is one thing you can do to relax in Christ’s rest?
3. Is there anything we can ask you about to help remind you to rest in Christ?