

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

Scripture

Exodus 20:8-10
Leviticus 19:18
Mark 2:27-28 & 12:31

Core Idea and purpose

Core theological ideas from earlier sermons in the series:

- (02/01/2026) We encourage people to wrestle with God so they can come to Jesus and be reconciled with God
- (02/08/2026) Reconciliation with God gives us peace and this peace empowers us to reconcile with others.

Core theological idea: The Sabbath is a gift. We use it to love ourselves so we can love other people. We use it to also reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with other people.

Challenge/purpose: To exhort the congregants to seek reconciliation with themselves so they can have reconciliation with other people.

The Sermon

God has given us many wonderful nature cycles. These cycles bring us life, joy and peace. One such cycle is the seasonal cycle: Fall turns into Winter, Winter turns into Spring, Spring turns into Summer, and then it starts over with Fall. I love this cycle. It is refreshing and exhilarating! Another cycle is the water cycle: Water evaporates, the clouds form, the rain comes down and then it starts over with the water evaporating. This is a great life-giving cycle! Let's not forget about the oxygen cycle: Plants take in CO² and release oxygen while animals breathe in oxygen and exhale CO². (Yes, there are more elements to the oxygen cycle, but we can keep it simple for the sake of this sermon.)

As wonderful as all these cycles of nature are, there is another group of God given cycles that is even more wonderful. I call this group of cycles the 'Loving Relationship Cycles'. This group consists of three cycles, and they are based on the two greatest commandments - 1) To love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and 2) To love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Let's look at the first cycle. It's simple. It goes like this: The more we love God, the more we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. The more we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, the more we love God. The more we love God....and on it goes.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

The second cycle highlights the relationship between loving ourselves and loving our neighbors. It goes like this: The more we love God, the more we love ourselves. The more we love ourselves, the more we love our neighbors. The more we love our neighbors, the more we love God. The more we love God...and on it goes.

We need to break this cycle down a little bit more.

- The more we love God, the more we love ourselves.
 - As we love God, we learn that God first loved us.
 - The Lord created us in God’s image and loves us even when we do not deserve it.
 - God loves us because it is God’s nature to do so.
 - So, we realize, if God loves us, then we can love ourselves.
- The more we love ourselves, the more we love our neighbors
 - We realize that if God loves us just because it is God’s nature to do so, then God loves all other people – even the people who bother the mess out of us.
 - The Lord loves the murderer and rapist just as much as God loves us.
 - If God loves everyone, then so should we.
 - We also realize that we love ourselves so we can better love our neighbors.
 - We love ourselves enough to take care of our health so we can be healthy enough to serve other people.
 - ✓ My dad used to smoke all day every day, until the doctor told him that if he didn’t quit smoking, he would not live long enough to walk his college age daughter down the aisle when she got married.
 - ✓ So, he immediately threw away his cigarettes and quit cold turkey.
 - ✓ My dad decided to love himself enough to take care of his health so he could love his daughter.
 - We love ourselves enough to earn and save money so we can help people with our money.
 - We love ourselves enough to learn new skills so we can help people with those skills.
- The more we love our neighbors, the more we love God.
 - The more we love our neighbors, the more Christlike we become.
 - This increases our love for God

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

The third cycle reveals that there is a similar relationship between reconciling with God, reconciling with ourselves, and reconciling with our neighbors. Before we go over this cycle, we must remember that reconciliation requires repentance and forgiveness. The person who needs to repent, must repent AND the person who needs to forgive, must forgive. With this reminder, we can now review the third cycle. It goes like this: Reconciliation with God brings us peace. This peace empowers us to have reconciliation with ourselves. When we have reconciliation with ourselves, we can have reconciliation with other people. This helps us to have reconciliation with God...and the cycle continues.

We need to break this cycle down a little bit more:

- Reconciliation with God
 - God offers us forgiveness and we receive God’s forgiveness with repentance
 - This gives us peace and this peace empowers us to have reconciliation with ourselves
- Reconciliation with ourselves
 - We have already repented of whatever bad thing we have done
 - When we realize that God forgives us, we can forgive ourselves. In other words, if God forgives us, who are we not to forgive ourselves?
- Reconciliation with our neighbors
 - The peace we receive from having reconciliation with God and with ourselves, empowers us to have reconciliation with our neighbors.
 - Peace empowers us to repent if we need to repent and forgive if we need to forgive.

Two Sundays ago, we talked about reconciliation with God. Last Sunday, we talked about reconciliation with our neighbors. Today, we talk about reconciliation with ourselves. The ‘Loving Relationship’ cycles show us that we cannot reconcile with our neighbors without also reconciling with ourselves and we cannot love our neighbors without also loving ourselves.

So, we must love ourselves and reconcile ourselves with ourselves. This is the purpose of God’s commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. This commandment is the 4th commandment in the 10 commandments. The first three commandments tell us how to love God – 1) No other gods before me, 2) No idols, and 3) Do not use the Lord’s name in vain. The last six commandments tell us how to love our neighbors – 5) Honor parents, 6) Do not murder, 7) Do not commit adultery, 8) Do not steal, 9) Do not give false testimony, and 10) Do not

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

covet. The fourth commandment – the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy - tells us how to love ourselves.

The religious leaders of the day often accused Jesus and his Apostles of disobeying this commandment to observe the Sabbath. Jesus was not disregarding this commandment, nor was he ignoring the rules about following it. He simply had a better understanding about the purpose behind the commandment and wanted to teach that purpose to the people. (This shouldn't surprise us, considering that Jesus is fully human and fully God.)

Jesus was speaking of the purpose behind the Sabbath when he said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” In other words, God gave us the Sabbath to help us in our efforts to be good people. It's not just a command with a bunch of rules. It is also a gift. We use this gift to love ourselves so we can love our neighbors. We also use it to reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with our neighbors. Let me say this again: The Sabbath is a gift. We use this gift to love ourselves so we can love our neighbors. We also use it to reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with our neighbors.

So, with this in mind, what should we do on the Sabbath day? Should we sleep in, watch football, eat dinner, and go back to sleep? Well, doing all that can be part of our sabbath, but if that is all we do, I don't think it will help us to love ourselves so we can love others or reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with our neighbors. We should spend the Sabbath day by following the 3 Cs: Corporate worship, Chilling, and Contemplation.

Corporate worship. We go to worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We do not go to worship just to check the block. We go to worship surrendering to the loving authority of God. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 12:1. “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” As we surrender ourselves to the loving authority of God, we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, who will use worship to bless us, convict us, and change us.

Chilling. On the Sabbath, we chill. We rest, take part in relaxing activities, and do not do any unnecessary work. So, if watching football relaxes you, then watch football – enjoy yourself. If working in a garden, reading, or watching television brings you pleasure, then do those things. Notice that we do not do any **unnecessary** work. If a person needs help, we help him/her. We don't use the Sabbath as an excuse not to help people.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

Contemplation. On the Sabbath we think about God and ourselves. We take part in Bible study – either personal or corporate. We may also review the Scripture or sermon from the worship service – perhaps over family dinner.

Observing the Sabbath by following the 3 Cs – Corporate worship, Chilling, and Contemplation – is an act of self-love. As we love ourselves, we will love our neighbors. As we reconcile ourselves with ourselves, we will reconcile ourselves with our neighbors.

Let’s pray.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

Sermon Outline

- I. God has given us many wonderful nature cycles.
 - A. These cycles bring us life, joy and peace.
 - B. One such cycle is the seasonal cycle:
 - Fall turns into Winter, Winter turns into Spring, Spring turns into Summer, and then it starts over with Fall.
 - I love this cycle.
 - It is refreshing and exhilarating!
 - C. Another cycle is the water cycle.
 - Water evaporates, the clouds form, the rain comes down and then it starts over with the water evaporating.
 - This is a great life-giving cycle!
 - D. Let’s not forget about the oxygen cycle.
 - Plants take in CO² and release oxygen while animals breathe in oxygen and exhale Co².
 - (Yes, there are more elements to the oxygen cycle, but we can keep it simple for the sake of this sermon.)
- II. As wonderful as all these cycles of nature are, there is another group of God given cycles that is even more wonderful.
 - A. I call this group of cycles the ‘Loving Relationship Cycles’.
 - B. This group consists of three cycles, and they are based on the two greatest commandments
 - 1) To love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength
 - 2) To love our neighbors as we love ourselves.
- III. Let’s look at the first cycle.
 - A. It’s simple.
 - B. It goes like this:

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

- The more we love God, the more we love our neighbors as we love ourselves.
- The more we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, the more we love God.
- The more we love God....and on it goes.

IV. The second cycle highlights the relationship between loving ourselves and loving our neighbors.

A. It goes like this:

- The more we love God, the more we love ourselves.
- The more we love ourselves, the more we love our neighbors.
- The more we love our neighbors, the more we love God.
- The more we love God...and on it goes.

B. We need to break this cycle down a little bit more.

- The more we love God, the more we love ourselves.
 - As we love God, we learn that God first loved us.
 - The Lord created us in God’s image and loves us even when we do not deserve it.
 - God loves us because it is God’s nature to do so.
 - So, we realize, if God loves us, then we can love ourselves.
- The more we love ourselves, the more we love our neighbors
 - We realize that if God loves us just because it is God’s nature to do so, then God loves all other people – even the people who bother the mess out of us.
 - The Lord loves the murder and rapist just as much as God loves us.
 - If God loves everyone, then so should we.
 - We also realize that we love ourselves so we can better love our neighbors.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

- We love ourselves enough to take care of our health so we can be healthy enough to serve other people.
 - ✓ My dad used to smoke all day every day, until the doctor told him that if he didn’t quit smoking, he would not live long enough to walk his college age daughter down the aisle when she got married.
 - ✓ So, he immediately threw away his cigarettes and quit cold turkey.
 - ✓ My dad decided to love himself enough to take care of his health so he could love his daughter.
 - We love ourselves enough to earn and save money so we can help people with our money.
 - We love ourselves enough to learn new skills so we can help people with those skills.
 - The more we love our neighbors, the more we love God.
 - The more we love our neighbors, the more Christlike we become.
 - This increases our love for God
- V. The third cycle reveals that there is a similar relationship between reconciling with God, reconciling with ourselves, and reconciling with our neighbors.
- A. Before we go over this cycle, we must remember that reconciliation requires repentance and forgiveness.
- The person who needs to repent, must repent AND the person who needs to forgive, must forgive.
 - With this reminder, we can now review the third cycle.
- B. It goes like this:
- Reconciliation with God brings us peace.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

- This peace empowers us to have reconciliation with ourselves.
- When we have reconciliation with ourselves, we can have reconciliation with other people.
- This helps us to have reconciliation with God...and the cycle continues.

C. We need to break this cycle down a little bit more:

- Reconciliation with God
 - God offers us forgiveness and we receive God’s forgiveness with repentance
 - This gives us peace and this peace empowers us to have reconciliation with ourselves
- Reconciliation with ourselves
 - We have already repented of whatever bad thing we have done
 - When we realize that God forgives us, we can forgive ourselves.
 - In other words, if God forgives us, who are we not to forgive ourselves?
- Reconciliation with our neighbors
 - The peace we receive from having reconciliation with God and with ourselves, empowers us to have reconciliation with our neighbors.
 - Peace empowers us to repent if we need to repent and forgive if we need to forgive.

VI. Continuing our series on reconciliation

- A. Two Sundays ago, we talked about reconciliation with God.
- B. Last Sunday, we talked about reconciliation with our neighbors.
- C. Today, we talk about reconciliation with ourselves.
- D. The ‘Loving Relationship’ cycles show us that...

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

- we cannot reconcile with our neighbors without also reconciling with ourselves
- and we cannot love our neighbors without also loving ourselves.
- So, we must love ourselves and reconcile ourselves with ourselves.

VII. This is the purpose of God’s commandment to keep the Sabbath holy.

A. This commandment is the 4th commandment in the 10 commandments.

- The first three commandments tell us how to love God
 - 1) No other gods before me,
 - 2) No idols,
 - and 3) Do not use the Lord’s name in vain.
- The last six commandments tell us how to love our neighbors
 - 5) Honor parents,
 - 6) Do not murder,
 - 7) Do not commit adultery,
 - 8) Do not steal,
 - 9) Do not give false testimony,
 - and 10) Do not covet.
- The fourth commandment – the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy - tells us how to love ourselves.

B. The religious leaders of the day often accused Jesus and his Apostles of disobeying this commandment to observe the Sabbath.

- Jesus was not disregarding this commandment, nor was he ignoring the rules about following it.
- He simply had a better understanding about the purpose behind the commandment and wanted to teach that purpose to the people.
 - (This shouldn’t surprise us, considering that Jesus is fully human and fully God.)

C. Jesus was speaking of the purpose behind the Sabbath when he said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

- In other words, God gave us the Sabbath to help us in our efforts to be good people.
- It’s not just a command with a bunch of rules.
- It is also a gift.
 - We use this gift to love ourselves so we can love other people.
 - We also use it to reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with our neighbors.
 - Let me say this again:
 - The Sabbath is a gift.
 - We use this gift to love ourselves so we can love other people.
 - We also use it to reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with our neighbors.

VIII. So, with this in mind, what should we do on the Sabbath day?

A. Should we sleep in, watch football, eat dinner, and go back to sleep?

- Well, doing all that can be part of our sabbath, but if that is all we do, I don’t think it will help us to love ourselves so we can love others or reconcile ourselves with ourselves so we can reconcile ourselves with our neighbors.
- We should spend the Sabbath day by following the 3 Cs:
 - Corporate worship,
 - Chill,
 - and Contemplation.

B. Corporate worship.

- We go to worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We do not go to worship just to check the block.
- We go to worship surrendering to the loving authority of God.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Reconcile with ourselves, so we can reconcile with other people”
(Part III of “Our Ministry of Reconciliation”)
February 15, 2025

➤ As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 12:1. “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

- As we surrender ourselves to the loving authority of God, we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, who will use worship to bless us, convict us, and change us.

C. Chill. On the Sabbath, we chill.

- We rest, take part in relaxing activities, and do not do any unnecessary work.
 - So, if watching football relaxes you, then watch football – enjoy yourself.
 - If working in a garden, reading, or watching television brings you pleasure, then do those things.
- Notice that we do not do any **unnecessary** work.
 - If a person needs help, we help him/her.
 - We don’t use the Sabbath as an excuse not to help people.

D. Contemplation.

- On the Sabbath we think about God and ourselves.
- We take part in Bible study – either personal or corporate.
- We may also review the Scripture or sermon from the worship service – perhaps over family dinner.

E. Observing the Sabbath by following the 3 Cs – Corporate worship, Chill, and Contemplation – is an act of self-love.

- As we love ourselves, we will love our neighbors.
- As we reconcile ourselves with ourselves, we will reconcile ourselves with our neighbors.

Let’s pray.