

REST

volume 1

Scott Hooks & Scott Pauley

A resource from...

ENJOYING THE *Journey*

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Enjoying the Journey exists to evangelize the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, encourage pastors and local churches, and equip believers to walk with God and serve Him each day. Through audio, video, and print resources we are seeking to preach the gospel, teach the Word of God, and reach this generation for Christ.

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Table of Contents

The Heart of Rest..... 4

A Lesson for Laborers 6

Scott Pauley

Come Ye Yourselves Apart 16

Scott Hooks

The One Commandment We 24

Love to Forget

Scott Pauley

Rest a While 34

Scott Hooks

Working for the Lord of 41

the Sabbath

Scott Pauley

The Heart Of Rest

In 2018, we hosted the first Rest Conference for preachers and their wives in Hickory, North Carolina. As a pastor and as an evangelist we both sensed the need to emphasize the health of the inner man of those in ministry. The rest we need is more than physical – it is spiritual rest found only in Christ.

Weariness is part of life and certainly a reality for those who labor fervently for the Lord. Even Jesus grew weary on His journey (John 4:6). Yet, as you read John 4 you discover that the Master knew how to find refreshment in the midst of the labor. His servants must learn this vital principle if we are to continue in the Lord's work for a lifetime.

Modern culture says work until you drop, and rest only when you are totally spent. But the Creator built rest into the rhythm of creation. He designed our labor to grow out of rest. It is arrogance or ignorance to think that Christian workers can labor without ever having their own souls replenished.

The Lord Jesus said to His first followers, *"Come ye yourselves apart... and rest awhile"* (Mark 6:31). In the following pages, you will read transcripts adapted from live sessions of the first Rest Conference. The content is given just as it was spoken. We would be honored for you to join us for one of these gatherings, but we share these foundational studies with the hope that they will encourage many in God's work.

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will refresh your spirit and strengthen you for the work God has given you to do.



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A Lesson For *Laborers*

GENESIS 1:31-2:3



Scott Pauley

A Lesson for Laborers

Scott Pauley

I grew up in a preacher's home. My dad is in this meeting, and I thank God for his faithful example. To have the privilege to grow up in the Lord's work is a blessing.

I then had the joy of serving under the same pastor for almost two decades—not just a pastor, but a man who had God's hand upon his life—and to glean and learn from him. He had such a burden to encourage preachers, and that rubs off on you.

As an evangelist, I love preaching the gospel and placing an emphasis on revival and prayer. I have come to believe that encouraging the pastor might be the most important thing I do in a church. God's servants are in the battle, on the front lines. Many of them are wounded and hurting. This entire meeting is meant to encourage you to stay in the work that God has called you to do.

The word “rest” is a word from God. It is found 290 times in the Bible. We have chosen seven of these references that are definitive passages on the subject of God's rest. They are listed on the REST bookmark (scan the QR code in the back of the book to download and print this resource). We hope you will make these passages your own. Put this list somewhere so you will see it regularly. Memorize it, meditate on it, and allow the Word of God to minister to you. Nothing will minister to you like the Bible.

One of the first things I learned as a preacher was that no one needs my sermons, because my sermons do not change anyone's life. The only thing that will change lives is the Word of God. Sometimes we get together in a meeting and talk about great ideas or great thoughts, but we do not need that. We need the truth.

Where do we find the truth? It does not come from man. It comes from God. We

could read one hundred books about rest and refreshment, but there is one Book that contains all of the answers.

A.T. Pearson was a great Bible teacher who understood much about effectively studying the Word of God. He wrote about the Law of First Mention – the first time something is mentioned in Scripture it is very significant because it sets a pattern for every time that follows. He also wrote about the Law of Final Mention and the Law of Full Mention.

The first appearance in Scripture of the word “rest” is in Genesis 2. It lays a theological foundation for the concept of rest. Rest is more than just taking a day off or taking a vacation. This rest is more than leisure time.

Let’s begin our study in the book of beginnings at **Genesis 1:31-2:3**:

“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Here is a lesson for every person who labors in the work of the Lord, no matter what your title or position may be. If you are in the Lord’s work, you are in the greatest work in the world. I am thrilled that God called me to be a preacher. There is nothing I would rather do with my life. This is what God created me to do, and it is glorious to be in God’s work.

Yet, the longer you are in the work it is easy to grow cynical and cold. Oh, the irony. We who are so happy and blessed to be in the ministry are sometimes so exhausted by it. How is that possible?

We are servants of the greatest Master in the universe. We are working hard at it. But everywhere I go, I meet people who are utterly exhausted – running on fumes, trying to draw from an empty well. They go to bed at night and stare at the ceiling, thinking to themselves, “There has to be more to it than this.”

Recently I spent a considerable amount of time on the phone with a pastor, a good man, who was going through quite a struggle. I thought, “What this man needs is rest. He needs the rest that only God can give.”

A man who is being greatly used by the Lord called me and wanted to ask me about my schedule. “I want to know how you structure your life, your family and your ministry,” he said. “My wife and I are about to lose our minds. We are doing all the right things and working hard, but we are just exhausted.”

I keep hearing words like “burnout,” “breakdown” and “blowup.” Those are not exactly words of encouragement! Are you telling me that those of us who work for the Creator God of the universe have to run to the ragged edge until we finally collapse? Is that what we have to look forward to – run until we drop and then do it no longer? Is that all there is to it?

By the way, this is not just a ministerial problem. This is a human problem. Our churches are filled with exhausted people. We can fuss at them as much as we like about how they drag into church late after work and why they are not at every event we have, but we need to get real for a moment. We are living in an absolutely

exhausted world. People are tired.

I am not making excuses. I am saying that something is wrong somewhere. Blame it on society, technology, social media, anything you like. But consider this: Could it be that the laborers have failed to learn a key lesson about the Lord Himself?

This is not just for preachers. This is for all men. Maybe one of our problems as preachers is that we forget we are just men. “But I am doing important work,” you say.

There is no end to ministry and the needs of people, but there is an end to you. The ministry goes on and on, and it will continue after you are gone. But there is an end to the minister, and the sooner we learn that and come to the end of ourselves, the sooner we begin to draw from resources far greater than our own.

Our passage in Genesis is the first time in the Bible we see a reference to work. Work is not a dirty word. It was not a result of the fall of man, but was built into creation as a means of giving man purpose. God is a God of work and a God of action. It is significant that the first time work is mentioned in Scripture it is coupled with rest. This is so simple. I thank the Lord for putting it together in this way.

Here is an even greater thought - not only did God connect work to rest and rest to work - He connected both to Himself. The first time you find work in the Bible, it was not man's work. It was God's work. The same goes for the first mention of rest. It was God's rest.

The greatest work is God's work, and the only true rest is God's rest. When we learn this, it opens up resources far beyond anything we have in and of ourselves.

Rest is just as much a discipline as work. We think we are disciplined because we get up at a certain time in the morning, we get to the job and get it done. That is discipline. It takes discipline to do any job when you do not feel like doing it, and that includes preaching.

Recently I drove several hours to a meeting and was already tired when I took my seat on the front row. After preaching I was talking to a young man who was telling me about what God was doing in his life, and I said, “Can I be totally honest with you? There are times when I do not even want to get up and preach.”

He was stunned. “Is that true?”

“Yes.”

“Well, what do you do?”

“I get up and preach.”

Then I shared with him something that God is teaching me again and again - “I preach in faith.” We all love to preach with feeling, but sometimes we have to preach in faith just like we pray in faith. You may not feel it right now, but get up and preach anyway because it is the truth.

Just as there is discipline in work, there is also discipline in knowing when to stop working. God will keep working while you are resting.

That is a glorious truth. Do we really think that the Lord's work is dependent upon our own pitiful resources? Heaven help us! We are finite creatures, specks of dust on the page of human history. It is utter foolishness to think it all depends on you and me.

Perhaps our restlessness is rooted in our pride. We think it is all about us when in reality it is not about us at all. It is all about God. With that in mind, let's consider a few simple thoughts from this passage of Scripture:

1 God Created Rest.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:2). If I ask you what God created on each day of creation you could probably recite it. When I ask what He created on the seventh day, most people would say, "Nothing."

Wrong. On the seventh day, God created rest.

How do we know He did this? Because we know that God does not need rest. The Bible says in ***Isaiah 40:28, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."***

That verse does my soul good. I faint and am weary every now and then. Sometimes I just get run down. I need to be reminded of this about my God.

Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary who did a great work in China, sat down one night and wrote in his journal, "I am too tired to think, too tired to read, and too tired to even pray. But I can rest."

There comes a time in life when you cannot do the things you think you should be doing. That is when it is so good to know that you can rest in the God who never needs to rest.

We understand that the number seven is symbolic of wholeness and completion. As I meditated on this passage recently the Lord dealt with me about something. The seventh day came right after the Lord finished His work and said in ***Genesis 1:31, "It was very good."***

The Holy Spirit convicted me. I do not rest as I should because the work is never finished and because I rarely think of it as very good. It is extremely rare that a preacher leaves the pulpit thinking, "Oh, that was very good." Usually, once he gets in the car with his wife, he confesses that the opposite is true. As someone is telling you how the Lord used that message in his or her life, you are thinking, "Seriously? It was awful."

But was it man's work or God's work that brought rest? We get so restless because we think it is our work. The rest comes when we remember that it is God's work and we believe that He will finish His work. As ***Philippians 1:6 says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Trust that God is working and He will make it very good.***

One of the great misnomers is that you need to finish your work so you can rest. Your work will never be finished. At some point, you must commit it back to the God who called you to it and say to Him, "Lord, I am spent. But I praise You because I know

You are not. I will go to sleep because You are staying up anyway. I can rest because I know that You are never weary.”

2 God Commanded Rest.

In **Genesis 2:3** we see that God connected rest to blessing and sanctification. **“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”** If you want to be blessed and sanctified, you need to understand His rest.

God’s command to rest did not just show up in the law, but in the way He structured all of life. The Bible says in **Genesis 1:5**, **“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”**

God created night at the very beginning. He turned the lights out. He has done it every day since. He does this so that you will stop worrying and working. He wants you to rest. Even in the way He structured time, He directed us to live this way. It is as if God looks at man and says, “That is enough.”

In our world, it is never enough. There is always more to do. Do you have a to-do list? Nearly everyone does. It is possible that even now you are thinking about something you should have done or need to do. It seems as if it never ends, yet the Lord has organized our days so that the work must come to an end.

Psalms 127:1-2 says: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.”

He is reminding us, “I am building the house, not you. I am watching over the city. You just work for Me. You are a helper, but I am the one who will take care of it.” Instead of staying up late and getting up early so we have more time to worry about things, we need to turn it over to the Lord and get the rest He wants us and commands us to have. Do what God has given you to do and then leave the results in His hands.

One of God’s greatest gifts is sleep, yet we ignore it. We are so busy. We have so much to do that there is no time for it. In our busyness for the Lord, we neglect sleep, prayer, and communion with Him. How amusing that the very things we think we do not have time for are the things God instituted. Frankly, our work is fruitless when we neglect our communion with Christ (**John 15:1-8**).

God designed us to get rest every day. That is not how we do it, especially in our American way of life. We run wide open until we are on the brink of collapse, and we pride ourselves on how long we can go that way. That is not the way God designed us to live and labor for Him.

3 God Calls Us To Rest.

Did you ever notice that man’s first full day on this planet was not a work day? He was created on the sixth day and God rested on the seventh day. If I were the Creator, I

would have said to Adam, “All right, let’s get to work. There is a lot to do!”

God did not do that. He knew there was time to get everything done and that He would help Adam do it. “First things first,” He said. “You are going to rest with Me.”

Man’s first day on the planet was not spent with the animals. It was spent with the Creator. It was not a work day; it was a rest day.

We have it all reversed. We work, work, work until we cannot work any longer and then we say, “Oh Lord, I need rest.”

The Lord replies, “I wish you had learned this at the start. You need to rest first, then all of your labor grows out of your rest.” All of the resources you need – the grace, the wisdom, the power – will grow out of time spent with the Creator.

I am so deeply convicted of all the days when I am in such a hurry. I get up in the morning, read some Scripture and breathe a prayer to God, but my mind is already out the door. I race through the day and rush headlong into all of the things I have to do, struggling in my own energy and power, until I get to the end of the day and collapse in exhaustion while thinking to myself, “That was frustrating.”

I am sure during these times that the Lord looks at me and says, “Oh, Adam, you have to rest in me.” I want to be more like my second Father, my Heavenly Father. Too often I am just like my first father, Adam! This sinful heart of mine thinks that I have the resources needed, and I try and try. It may be a sincere effort,, but it is not work that grows out of the overflow of time spent with the Creator.

When we were planning the REST Conference, we kept coming back to the basic idea that the rest we all need is the rest that comes from God. If we only got that right, so many beautiful things would grow and flow out of that.

Do you think that some of the things you are trying to pump and prime, motivating into existence, simply need one touch from Almighty God and He would get more done than we could in ten lifetimes? If only we gave more of our time and energy to being with the Creator and resting in Him. Just as in the New Testament we see Jesus calling the disciples to be with Him before He sent them out to labor (**Mark 3:14**), God called Adam to Himself for a time of rest that would set everything else in motion.

One of the great devotional books of a past generation was called Streams in the Desert. The lady who wrote and compiled it, Lettie Cowman, also penned another book, Springs in the Valley. In it she told the true story of a scientist who had gone to Africa on an excursion. As he traveled into the jungle, he hired a number of locals to work for him and guide him.

The first three days the team made excellent time. The man was convinced that he would accomplish the purpose of his trip much more quickly than he had imagined. He got up on the fourth day and was packed and ready to go, but no one else was moving. They all sat in their places and looked at him.

"Come on, we have much to do. Let's go," he said.

No one responded. He asked the translator about the delay. "They said that they had gone so fast the first few days that today should be a rest day so their souls can catch up to their bodies," he explained.

As I read those words, I wondered if it was possible that our bodies had not only gotten ahead of our souls but also ahead of God. Perhaps we have been out in the harvest field plowing and planting seed but have failed to nourish the inner man and have neglected the rest needed for our own souls.

You can get rest for your body and still not be rested. You may cease physical activities but your mind is still racing and your emotions are still raging. Listen to the call of Jesus: **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).** We preach that text to lost people, but Christ spoke those words to His disciples. He followed His invitation with this promise in verse 29: **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."**

I want to know the soul rest God has for me. A.W. Tozer described our need and God's way of meeting that need:

"Jesus calls us to the rest, and meekness is His method. The meek man cares not at all who is greater than he, for he has long ago decided that the esteem of the world is not worth the effort. The rest Christ offers is the rest of meekness, the blessed relief that comes when we accept ourselves for what we are and cease to pretend. It will take some courage at first, but the needed grace will come as we learn that we are sharing this new and easy yoke with the strong Son of God Himself."

I want that strength. Don't you?

Speaking to the children of Israel, the Lord said in **Exodus 31:17**, **"It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."**

God's rest brings refreshment. That word "refreshed" means not that someone else refreshed Him, or He took time (we know He did not need that), but it literally means that He refreshed Himself. The only refreshing you will ever find is the refreshing that comes from God. The only way you will ever get your soul refreshed is when you come into the Lord's presence and begin to draw from His sufficiency.

We are all different. What refreshes some people drains others. Practically, you have to learn what refreshes you, but spiritually you must keep in mind that refreshment for the soul comes only from God.

How can we as ministers ever think we will refresh others when we are not refreshed – when we are stale, with no **"rivers of living water" (John 7:38)** flowing out of us? No life-giving power, no joy, no glory.

At some point, we must go back to the basics, back to the beginning. We must ask God to forgive us for thinking that our work is more important than His rest. By His grace, we need Him to teach us to rest so that we can work as we never have before. Then our work will grow, not out of our resources, but out of the One who said, **"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).**

If we do not
come apart,
we will surely
come apart.

- *Vance Havner*

Come Ye Yourselves *Apart*

MARK 6:30-31



Scott Hooks

Come Ye Yourselves Apart

Scott Hooks

“And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:30-31).

We have taken a theme for this meeting that we are calling the Rest Conference. “REST” serves as an acronym: Refresh, Encourage, Strengthen, Train.

We all need seasons of rest. It is difficult to separate ourselves from the demands and responsibilities we face. Therefore, we must become intentional in our efforts to schedule times of rest and refreshment.

In this passage, the Lord Jesus invited His disciples to come apart. What a wonderful and kind invitation from a gracious and loving God who saw their weary faces and saw that they needed rest.

We are thankful that God has given us the great privilege of serving Him. He has allowed us to pursue **“the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14)**. Are you glad that God chose you to serve Him? I am overwhelmed that the people of the Tabernacle Baptist Church allow me to be their pastor. I am grateful for the privilege the Lord has given me, and I trust you are as well.

The word “rest” means “to cease, to be quiet, to refresh, to recover and collect one’s strength.”

For a long while I have had a desire in my heart to encourage preachers. My parents raised me with the belief that one should never speak ill of the preacher. Choose, rather, to pray for him. Love and encourage him. Because of God’s grace and that upbringing, I have developed a burden to help strengthen God’s men. He put the Rest Conference in my heart.

We have no agenda. We are not here to market anything. We do not desire to find out what stripe you are, and we do not desire to change your stripes. We simply wish

to encourage one another and sit at Jesus' feet.

When it comes to rest, we struggle to find the time to do it. Vance Havner said, "Resting for God is as important as working for God." As we learn to rest in Christ, we will discover that we can do more by doing less. If we do not "come apart," we will certainly come apart. Some of us have found that out the hard way.

Havner went on to say, "God is not interested in our quantity of production but our quality. Frazzled workers can easily spoil their message by their manner."

Do you ever get frazzled? Do you ever get frustrated or irritated with that church member who just never seems to get it? You wish you could say something, but you know that you will regret it later if you do. You are tempted to try to impose your will and demonstrate your authority, but you know it will only weaken you in the end. That is why we need to come apart from time to time so we can rest and spend time with the Lord Jesus.

Christopher Ash, who wrote "Zeal Without Burnout," said this, "God so often allows His ministers to come to the end of themselves in order that they might begin to be more useful in His service."

The Lord will allow us to reach a breaking point, where we realize that we do not possess the ability within ourselves to do what He would have us do. We reach the end of the rope, and in desperation, we look to the Lord Jesus.

It is estimated that hundreds of men are leaving the pastoral ministry each month due to burnout, conflict, and sin. Similar statistics exist regarding missionaries who leave the field. We learn that we are simply dust, made from dust, and destined to return to dust.

The Bible says in II **Corinthians 4:16** that **"our outward man" is perishing**. Our strength, our energy, our talent, our ability, our passion, our drive — all of that, which is in the body God gave us, is dying. Although we are no more than dust, the good news as expressed in **Psalms 103:14** is this: **"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."**

God created us. He gave us life. He knows what we are made of. Therefore, Jesus invited the weary disciples to come apart. We can learn many valuable lessons by examining those things they needed to come apart from and unto Jesus.

1 The Demands of Ministry.

The disciples were invited to come apart from the demands of ministry. Prior to the events recorded in Mark 6, the disciples observed Jesus as they followed Him. Their ministry demands significantly increased when the Lord Jesus sent them out to preach in **Mark 6:7**. **"And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits."** It was time for them to preach what they had heard from Him.

In verses 12-13 the Bible says, **"And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."**

It was after this time of intense ministry that Jesus invited them to rest. As verse 31 points out, ***“they had no leisure so much as to eat.”*** There were so many needs and demands upon them that they had no time to rest or even to eat.

Fellow laborer, have you ever been there? Does it seem that there is always someone with a need who is looking to you to help meet it? A pastor who was on his way to attend this meeting got a call informing him that someone in his congregation had gone to be with the Lord, and he was needed by the family. The demands of ministry seemingly never end.

2 Self-Reliance

Notice their instructions in verses 8-9: ***“And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.”***

The Lord Jesus commanded that they go out without any provisions. He taught them to trust Him to provide what they needed. In the challenges of ministry, we learn that the provisions we think we need are not necessary. We must go in faith, trusting in God for His provision. He has proven Himself over and over.

3 Pressure to Perform

No matter the area of responsibility you have been assigned, there is pressure to perform. Missionaries are questioned about their chosen field, support levels, and more. Youth pastors are judged by some by the size of their youth group! the activities they schedule, and the camps or conferences they attend with their teens. Whether you serve as a pastor or assistant pastor, there are pressures to perform.

When I came to Tabernacle more than a decade ago, I became a pastor for the first time. (That was obvious to the people here.) Prior to my arrival, our Christian school realized a decrease in enrollment for 12 consecutive years. Under my leadership, the school continued (for 5 more years) to decrease in enrollment. I wanted to get it turned around. I also wanted to see improvement and growth in a number of our church ministries.

I remember the pressure I put on myself. I remember going into deacons' meetings with a financial report and foolishly thinking to myself, “I have to get this together or the men are going to think I am not getting the job done.” Finally, I learned that they were not pressuring me to present a good report to them. They were not evaluating my performance as their pastor. They simply wanted to serve alongside me and help me do the work of the ministry.

In addition, I put pressure on myself in many other areas, wondering what people might think about me or about the church. I worried about Sunday school attendance and enrollment, keeping this and that program in place, and attempting to make Brother So-and-So and Sister Such-and-Such happy. It was pressure to perform.

In verse 14 we see something interesting. ***“And king Herod heard of him; (for his***

name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him."

That is our primary job, to "spread abroad" the name of Jesus. When we put pressure on ourselves, we can easily miss the point. Our work is not done in order that people think highly of us. Our work is to encourage people to think highly of Him. Paul called himself the chief of sinners, and every one of us should be saying, "No, you're not. I am." But as **Romans 5:20 tells us, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."** God is so gracious and kind to us in that He allows us to serve him. To think that He would use us, as broken and frail as we are!

Yet we put pressure on ourselves or allow others to put pressure on us, thinking that we have to do certain things to make everyone happy. We forget who it is really all about. We should be more concerned with these questions: Is He happy? Is He pleased? We need to concentrate on what He has called us to do: make Him known.

Everyone in Hickory, North Carolina, does not have to know about Tabernacle Baptist Church or about Scott Hooks. But they all must know about Jesus.

When the disciples went into the villages where they encountered great unbelief, I imagine that they looked on their failures and inabilities. However, they were successful in making the name of Jesus known more widely than before. Even Herod heard of Him. Oh, that we would strive to make Him known. That is why we are here — not to make ourselves known, to become celebrities or sit on a board or speak at a conference. We must make the name of Jesus known.

Vance Havner wrote, "Samuel Rutherford, Robert Murray M'Cheyne or John Bunyan would be brushed aside today by church workers headed for another committee meeting. Whether or not they whittled I cannot say, but they took time out and lost no time in so doing." What a great statement! They would win no awards in today's church growth movement, but they knew God. That is the greatest reward of all.

4 The Unbelief of a Hardened World

Verses 10-11: "And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."

Unbelief and hardness of heart seem to be far more common than belief. If we are not careful, we will spend more time thinking about what is NOT happening and who is not responding and lose sight of what God IS doing and who is responding to His Word!

5 The Disappointment of Bad News

The disciples learned the news that John the Baptist had just been beheaded during their ministry journeys. John was the forerunner of the Lord Jesus. If anyone was expected to enjoy success in ministry, it was John. Yet he was imprisoned and then killed because of the lust of a perverted king and the foolish fancies of a bitter woman.

God's ministers often receive disappointing news, and we tend to think that the only news we ever receive is bad news. We tend to dwell on the negative and forget all of the blessings and progress we have seen. We must step aside from negativity and come to Jesus.

Jesus has invited us to **come apart**.

How do we do that? For one thing, we need sleep. A few years ago, some things happened in our church that ultimately adversely affected my health. My doctor diagnosed me with sleep apnea. I had gained about 40 pounds. My weight gain contributed to the sleep apnea, and the sleep apnea adversely affected my weight even more. He explained to me that the sleep apnea severely hindered my ability to get quality sleep. I was getting essentially no sleep and no rest.

I learned that sleep is a must. We are able to sleep because ***"he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4)***. We have to recharge. We need sabbaths, time off, and distractions.

I have lived under a self-imposed guilt that has caused me to think that it was wrong to do anything fun or apart from "the work." Such an attitude is unbiblical and unhealthy.

Spurgeon said, "The bow cannot always be bent without fear of breaking. Repose is as needful to the mind as sleep to the body. Rest time is no waste of time. It is economy to gather fresh strength. It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run we shall do more by sometimes doing less."

We also need solitude. Where did Jesus take the disciples? "... into a desert place." Get alone with God, away from the hustle and bustle. Get away from the cell phone and the laptop, and unplug.

We have been given this invitation from the the Lord Jesus.

We are invited to **come apart together**.

Jesus said to the disciples, ***"Come ye yourselves ..."*** He wanted them to be together and come apart from everything else. It is special when preachers spend time together. We need friends. We need human companionship and fellowship with one another, especially in the work of the Lord. ***As Proverbs 27:17 tells us, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."***

We need each other. I know there are turnoffs when it comes to some preachers' meetings, but we need each other — especially in the hour we live. We can help one another. ***The Bible says in Hebrews 10:24, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."*** I need to think about you, and you need to think about me. We are not in competition. We are not called to judge one another; we are brothers who serve the same Lord. It is good for us to be together.

We are directed in ***1 Corinthians 7:3, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband."*** The greatest companion I have on this earth is my wife. The same should be true of you and your spouse.

Verses 4-5: ***“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”***

The devil wants to divide husbands and wives. With the many demands of ministry, it can be all too easy for that to happen. Our most significant companion can become our most neglected. We must be watchful because we need that fellowship and companionship.

We are invited to come apart to Christ.

The Bible says in **2 Corinthians 4:16**, ***“But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”***

Once more, Havner said, “Brainerd knew God, and to know God through Christ is the supreme privilege of every soul. Anyone can know God and walk with Him day by day. It is the not peculiar right of ascetics and cloistered saints who have nothing else to do.”

In the Bible we think of Martha, who was so very busy. She was serving, getting the job done. Then there was Mary, sitting there at the feet of Jesus. But Martha also had the opportunity to sit at Jesus’ feet, and so do we. If we do not choose to do so, we are going to grow weary and frustrated.

Martha developed the wrong attitude. “Lord, don’t you care? Mary has left me.” Sometimes we get the wrong attitude. But Jesus said Mary ***“wrought a good work” upon Him (Matthew 26:10; Mark 14:6)***. She did that because she took the time to sit at His feet. Out of all the disciples and all of those who listened to Him, she was apparently the only one who got it. She would eventually anoint Him for burial, because she spent time at the feet of Jesus.



The One Commandment We Love To *Forget*

EXODUS 20:8-11



Scott Pauley

The One Commandment We Love to Forget

Scott Pauley

Genesis reveals that God created man on the sixth day and then, on man's first full day on earth, the Creator rested. From the beginning, God modeled the principle of rest. This was a principle built into the very fabric of creation.

Man was not to begin his labor in his own energy. God's way is that man would learn to rest in the Lord, and out of the energy and strength of that rest, he would be divinely given what was needed to get his work done.

God instituted an official day of rest in **Exodus 20**, as He gave the Ten Commandments. Many have noted that nine of the commandments are repeated in the New Testament but the commandment to "remember the Sabbath Day" is not repeated. Therefore, they presume it was only part of the Mosaic Code and no longer applicable to us. That is incorrect. In fact, the fulfillment of that commandment regarding the Sabbath cannot be understood or fully applied without the New Testament.

Every one of God's commandments had a purpose. God's heart is revealed in the giving of the Law. God was revealing what He wanted for His people. Such is the case in this particular commandment, which we see in **Exodus 20:8-11**.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

In this study, we are not dealing simply with a day. We are discovering a way of life. I want to help you understand a principle that will help you every day that you live, no

matter what day of the week it is. We need God's rest as much on Monday as we do on Sunday – if you are a preacher, sometimes more so!

The first day of the week – Sunday – is the Lord's Day. In our civilization and our culture, much has been lost by neglecting that day and the celebration of our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection. But that is really a separate issue from what we are discussing now. In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was Saturday, and it was a weekly reminder of a truth God wanted His people to remember..

The commandment regarding the Sabbath is the one commandment we love to forget.

If I asked you what the most important commandment is, you would remember the words of Jesus in **Matthew 22:37-39** – ***“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”***

If I asked you to go back to the Ten Commandments found in Exodus and identify the most important of those, your answer might vary depending on what is going on in your life or the culture around you at that time.

If you are rearing children, you will say, “Honour thy father and thy mother.”

If you are fighting the pro-abortion crowd, the answer will be, “Thou shalt not kill.”

If you are lamenting the rise of crime in your community, you will say, “Thou shalt not steal.”

All of these commandments reveal something about the holiness of God and His desire for His people. All are equally important. But have you ever noticed that He gives more explanation in Exodus 20 to remember the Sabbath than to any of the others? Yet, it is the one commandment we love to forget.

Why do we love to forget it? Because we do not like to obey it. We tend to quote “thou shalt not commit adultery” or one of the others because we know we should not commit that sin, and because we tend to isolate and focus on the sins of others. What ever happened to Sabbath rest?

Some laborers who are busiest in the Lord's work are the most restless in their own souls. Many of those who do the most around the church house are the most unsettled at their own house. Even the most admired in public for having it all together are the very ones often coming apart at the seams. It is all because they have neglected the principle of rest that is found in this commandment: ***“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”***

We preach about holiness, and we should. Consider the things we love to list and the things we leave out. Why do we talk about so many things we think are crucial to a holy life yet omit this commandment? We love to forget it.

Of the seven days on our weekly calendar, when God created each day, He numbered the first six but named the seventh. He never named Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday. He did, however, name the Sabbath. I wonder why.

1 The Purpose of Rest

What is the reason for the Sabbath?

Jesus addressed it in **Mark 2:27-28**. ***“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.”*** He was talking to religious leaders who were arguing over the Sabbath. Religious people certainly love to argue. Jesus was so good at putting a stop to debates by getting right to the spirit of the law – the purpose behind it.

Our all-wise God has a reason for everything He does. Nothing is by accident. There are no accidental or incidental words in Scripture. Every “jot and tittle” is a revelation by God of something about Himself.

The word “sabbath” literally means “stop.” It is as if God leaned over the balcony in Glory, looking at a world that has gone mad, and said to just stop it! We live in a world that has lost its mind. We work night and day, going 100 miles an hour, faster than our souls can keep up, not giving God His rightful place. I think the Creator is looking down from Heaven and saying, “Hey, would you just knock it off?”

One day every week He tells us to stop, and it is the hardest thing for His people to do. You think you are having a hard time getting people motivated and moving in the right direction, but when God gets hold of someone’s heart, that will take care of itself. The hardest thing is getting people who are in motion to stop long enough for God to direct them on the next step.

George Mueller, that great man of prayer, said that he was reading through his Bible one day and came to **Psalms 37:23**, which says, ***“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.”***

“I like that verse,” George Mueller thought, and he claimed it as his own. It was then that the Holy Spirit arrested him and he looked at it again. It was as if God told him, “I not only order your steps; I also order your stops.”

We always want to know what the next step is. But sometimes, God’s next step is a stop. Occasionally you need to stand still before moving forward. That is why **Psalms 46:10** commands us, ***“Be still and know that I am God.”***

In our frantically paced society with its barrage of technology and social media, the pull of people, and the pressure of life, we do not like to be still. When was the last time you got in your car and did not turn on any noise? When was the last time you sat in a room with no television on, no earbuds in, no cell phone in hand, and just sat there in silence?

God speaks best in quiet places. He whispers. He speaks in the ***“still small voice”*** (**1 Kings 19:12**). It could be that we are afraid of stopping or taking a sabbath because we are afraid of what God will say to us.

When I am in public, I can be who you think I am. I can portray something that may not be true. I can pretend, and so can you. But when I am alone with God, I cannot be what I think I am or you think I am. I must be what God knows me to be.

One of the greatest words in the Bible is found repeatedly in the book of Psalms: “Selah.” It literally means, “Stop and think about that.” We would get more out of the Word of God if we did not race through it – if we stopped, prayed, and thought about

what we were reading and what God is trying to say to us.

Perhaps we would get more done, and our steps would be more ordered, if every now and then we stopped long enough to look toward Heaven and say, “Lord, I need You to speak to me.”

Here is what happens to us. Our identity gets so wrapped up in our work. I had to deal with this when I left the place where I had been serving for nearly 20 years. My identity was so closely tied to a pastor, a church, a college – a great place for which I am very thankful. I had a title, an office, a schedule, and a host of responsibilities. Then God said, “You are leaving. I want you to go into evangelism.”

I argued with the Holy Spirit, which is never an argument you can win. Ultimately I had to deal with my pride and the fact that my identity must not be in anything apart from Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in **Colossians 3:4**, ***“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”*** Are you there yet? Is Christ your life? If your life is the church, then you lose your identity the minute the church is gone or you are gone from that church. If your life is your position or title, once it is gone, everything is gone.

If your identity is in your God, that is something no one gives you and no one can take away. Go ahead and work six days out of the week, but you do not belong to your work. You belong to God. You are not what you think you can produce; you are a servant of the living God.

2 The Person of Rest

Look again at verse 10. ***“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.”*** It was not the sabbath of the children of Israel or of Moses. The Sabbath is just a revelation of who God is.

My God is a God of rest, and what wonderful rest He gives. Yes, He is a God of labor, but He is always a God of rest.

Notice the second mention of this commandment in **Deuteronomy 5:13-16**.

“Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.”

When God repeats Himself in Scripture, it is always on purpose. God does not forget what He says. He wants to make sure we do not forget.

What does the Sabbath have to do with the children of Israel being delivered from Egypt? God was telling the people in these verses, “I want you to stop once a week and remember that I am a different Master than the one you used to serve.”

God was not the same as Pharaoh. Egypt used them and abused them. What a

picture of the world and sin. When the world, the flesh, and the devil are finished with you, they will cast you aside and say, “We are through with you.”

Our God is not such a Master. He replenishes, renews, refreshes, and provides rest. He is **“my shepherd”** who **“restoreth my soul”** (Psalm 23). If you ever need your soul restored, our God is the One who restores us perfectly.

These passages are not just showing us principles but revealing something about who God is. In Hebrews 3–4, God speaks of rest 10 times. All of that rest revolves around Jesus.

Jesus is my Sabbath. He is my rest. He is my peace. He is stillness for my soul.

A Historical Rest in Jesus

He came to this earth and labored for just over 33 years, 3 ½ of those years intensely. He labored in Gethsemane in prayer, and then He suffered and died on Golgotha. He labored in the grave, where He took the keys of death and Hell before coming out of the tomb victoriously. When His labor was finished, He returned to Glory and sat down at the right hand of the Heavenly Father. The labor was done. “It is finished.”

A Prophetic Rest in Jesus

The day is coming when Christ will return for His people. If it happened today, that would be fine with me. When He comes, He will bring rest like we have never known. **“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Revelation 14:13).** Our eternal rest will be unbroken rest with the Savior who accomplished salvation for us.

A Personal Rest in Jesus

Knowing the rest that will come on that glorious day, why are we so restless now? It has been said that “our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” We live in a world of anxious, fretful people who are frayed around the edges. Sadly, this does not just apply to unbelievers. God’s people are so anxious and restless, possibly because our eyes are on everybody and everything except Jesus. He gives rest for your spirit.

When I was saved as a child, I could not explain all of the theological foundations to you. Looking back, I realize that on that day I entered into rest. My spirit was worked up and sin was weighing me down, but on that day God gave rest to my inner man. I stopped working for my salvation and trying to work my way to God. All of my fruitless labor ended that day because I met the God who is rest.

The same God who gives rest to the spirit gives rest to the body. Most importantly, He gives rest to the soul. That is why He said in **Matthew 11:28, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

A group of professional painters gathered for a competition, and each was asked to paint his or her rendering of what “rest” looked like. If I asked you to draw “rest” on a piece of paper, what would you draw? A bed? A place on a map?

For this contest, the participants were told that they could paint anything they

liked, but there could only be one winner. When they finished, the two men's entries hung next to each other but were very different.

One pictured a lake with beautiful water. A cabin sat on the shore with smoke billowing out of the chimney under a beautiful hue that told everyone it was dusk. The leaves on the trees were perfectly still.

The other was vastly different but was declared the winner. The winning artist displayed a crashing waterfall with thousands of gallons of water cascading over the crest, the spray shooting violently in all directions. In the foreground was a small birch tree with a limb hanging out over the waterfall, and in the fork of that limb was a nest with one tiny robin sitting in it. The bird was perfectly still and at peace amid all of the noise and activity surrounding it.

The first example is the kind of rest we all seem to want. The second example is the kind of rest that God gives. ***"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).***

We want the Lord to take away the crashing waterfall and all of the noise, and just give us the quiet place by the lake. That sounds great, but we all know that is not real life. You cannot stay there forever.

God's rest does not come after your labor. It comes amid your labor. It is a rest in the middle of the battle, the friction, the circumstances you want so desperately to escape.

True rest is found in the Person of Jesus Christ.

3 The Practice of Rest

This will sound strange, but you must work at resting. There is a great deal of preparation required. It will not happen accidentally; you must choose it.

I used to think there would come a point in the Christian life where I finally crested the hill and things got easier. That never happens. The burdens do not go away and the decisions do not disappear. The stress, strain, and struggle of life do not lessen with advancing age. It usually increases. Perhaps God is not waiting for things to get better for me, but instead, He is waiting for me to start practicing what He taught in His Word.

The practice of the Sabbath must be intentional. In the Old Testament, in addition to a Sabbath Day every week, God proclaimed a sabbath year every seven years so the land could rest. He had special sabbaths, high and holy times. Each was different in various ways, but they all had one thing in common. They all brought the people back to God.

Rest reminds us that we do not have what we need or what others need, but God has enough for us all. It is not just one day. It is what one dear pastor friend of mine called "the sabbath life."

Are you living a sabbath life? This is what it is:

A confession of humility. That is what takes place when you finally come to God and acknowledge to Him that you do not have rest but you need it. It is an admission to

Him that your resources are limited.

A confession of faith. While our resources are limited, we proclaim our conviction that His supply is never strained. God has everything we need. When we rest in Him, it is our declaration that we need Him to work where we cannot. Maybe God let you work o the point of near-collapse so you would say, “Lord, I cannot do this on my own.”

A confession of worship and surrender. As Bible commentator wrote, “It is not about doing less. It is about being more.” Some people want rest to evade responsibility. That is not what we are talking about. It is all about being more with God and drawing closer to what He wants us to become.

As I prayed and thought about this passage recently, I noticed something I had missed for so long. This particular commandment is in the context of the family. It starts with the individual, but for the Sabbath to be properly applied in our hearts, it must get into our homes. You are no better Christian than the Christian you are in the privacy of your own home.

I sincerely believe that my wife is a better Christian than I am. I often tell people that there is no way I could do what I am doing with my life if she were not doing what she is doing with her life. God gave me the perfect wife for me, and she has been a great blessing to our children. One way she does that is by living in this rest we have been talking about.

I am not always the person you see on the platform or behind the pulpit. Sometimes I get worked up. It is something we all like to attribute to our own personalities or “that’s just how I’m wired,” but in reality, it is a sinful way to try to excuse personal failure. I can get really irritable.

Because of my wife’s walk with the Lord, there was peace and tranquility throughout the transition period a few years ago that saw our family of five move to another state and re-establish our daily life. It helped me and it helped our three children. There was a rest during that time.

We are reminded in **Exodus 20:10** that the sabbath is meant to affect everyone. ***“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.”***

That is clearly in the context of the home, yet most of our homes are more like battle zones than havens of peace. We are frenzied, frantic, and fraying around the edges. While we are constantly going at one another, God is saying, “Stop it! I want to give you rest.”

I wonder if our children would grow up wanting more of the Christian faith if they saw more of this kind of rest. It ought to be so embedded within us that those who know us best see it in our lives.

Listen to this description of a Sabbath celebration by a typical family during ancient times:

An observant Jewish family prepares for Sabbath for an entire week. On Friday at sundown they unplug from culture and reconnect with God, family and friends. In the days prior to Sabbath, the mothers clean the house and prepare a three-course meal that includes a kind of bean soup. A crisp white tablecloth adorns the table. Eighteen minutes before the sun sets, she lights candles and places braided two rolls of bread

at the center of the table. The two rolls symbolize the double portion of manna God gave for the sabbath to the wandering Israelites.

The traditional sabbath meal begins with the singing of two songs. One song refers to the choices one makes on the sabbath – either to squander it or make it something valuable. The second is a song of gratitude to the one who made the sabbath preparation. After the family has sung, the father blesses each of his children. He speaks three-sentence blessings over them based on verses from the books of Numbers and Genesis. He lays his hands on the children's heads and kisses them, and they in turn kiss their father and mother. Next, the father sanctifies the meals, performs a ritual hand-washing and blesses the bread. Then the family eats the three-course meal and sings ancient songs.

After the meal is finished, the family retires for the evening. The next morning the family walks together to the synagogue, where they hear the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) read and prayers offered. They will worship God together with friends and family from morning until noon, then they will walk home again. The mother serves the noontime meal that she prepared beforehand. The father again blesses and the family eats. When the meal is done, family members nap or read. At around 4:30 they will return to the synagogue for more prayers, songs and instruction from the Torah. (Excerpt from: *Out of Control* by Ben Young and Sam Adams.)

People today would likely say, "That sounds boring to me." But they were making time for God, for family, and for their own souls.

If we are going to live in God's rest, we must reorder and reprioritize. Some things may need to be eliminated so that God can be in His rightful place in our hearts and homes so that families have time together, and so that His rest can reign in our souls.

Yes, it is the one commandment we love to forget. Forgive us, Lord, for our forgetfulness. Help us to remember.

Rest *Awhile*

MARK 6:30-52



Scott Hooks

Rest Awhile

Scott Hooks

In Mark 6:30, we read, “And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus ...” That is the best place for us to gather!

Previously, we noted that the disciples came apart unto Christ from the busy pace of ministry. The Lord Jesus Christ extended a gracious invitation to them.

Like the disciples, we have been invited to come apart together. There is something special about God’s servants coming together, just as when God’s people gather on the Lord’s Day. You may listen to a recorded sermon and be stirred, but it is not the same as when you are in a congregation singing and praising Him. It is powerful.

We need one another. We need time together. We need to encourage each other.

As we continue our study of this passage, let us ask the Lord to help us discover the rest that the disciples experienced—because, at first glance, it looks like they experienced nothing but rest.

Look at **Mark 6:32-37**.

“And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat.”

Jesus invited them to a desert place for rest, but when they tried to “come apart,” the multitude followed them. The ministry from which they desperately needed a break continued.

When I think about coming apart, I think about all the places I would like to visit. In the words of those great theologians, the Beach Boys: “Aruba, Jamaica; ooh, I wanna take you to Bermuda, Bahama; come on, pretty mama; Key Largo, Montego, baby, why don’t we go down to Kokomo; we’ll get there fast, and then we’ll take it slow. That’s

where we want to go ...”

Just those words get you ready to go. The disciples were ready to go somewhere. Instead, they went to the multitude. The Lord Jesus told them to come and rest. But when I look at this passage, I do not see any rest.

Yet there was rest. How could the disciples rest when the demands never ceased but increased?

It does not seem to be slowing down for us, either. Every day, as I come and go, I see people on their cell phones constantly. I go to preacher’s meetings for fellowship, and some of my friends cannot be there because of things they are dealing with at home. Right now, you are probably thinking about things you will have to deal with later. It simply does not slow down.

How do we get the rest we need?

Jesus said in **Matthew 11:28-30**, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

The word “weary” refers to someone at the point of exhaustion. It speaks of those who toil to please God in their own strength and resources. It is interesting to note that we believe that salvation is by grace through faith, not of works; but in ministry, we tend to measure everything based on our works and our worth.

Those who are “heavy laden” are people who have placed heavy burdens upon themselves or accepted them from others. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees in **Matthew 23:4**, *“For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”*

How many heavy burdens have we allowed others to lay on us? The Lord Jesus gave His invitation to those who were trying to earn favor with God, who were trying to serve God in their own energy and to gain His approval. They carried heavy burdens, and Jesus invited them to take their rest.

In the words of one Bible commentator, “Jesus gives a call to repent from the self-centered and work-centered life and come to Him. The person who is heavy-laden despairs his ability to please God. He comes to the end of his resources and turns to Christ.”

The Lord allows us to come to the end of ourselves. We may think it is the thing that will destroy us, but it is the thing that God uses to bring us to the place where we find rest in Him.

The English dictionary defines “rest” as “a cessation from action; to stop motion, labor, or exertion; freedom from that which wearies or disturbs; being confident and trustful; leaning, reposing, or depending on.”

The Lord Jesus invited His disciples to rest, but that rest was not in a place. It was in a Person. It was in Christ. Their refreshment did not come with a trip to the mountains. It came from a time of ministry in the presence of the Lord Jesus, where the disciples recognized they had to learn to cease from their own labors. They had to lay down their heavy burdens and learn to rest in the work He would perform in and through them.

In this passage, we see the miracles and how Jesus dealt with His ministers who needed rest. There are many things here that can help us today.

1 They Had No Peace.

The disciples desired to spend time with the Lord and give a report of the ministry they had conducted in the villages where He had sent them.

Verse 31 says, “**they had no leisure so much as to eat.**” There were so many people coming and going, and their pace was so hectic that they had no time for a meal. The multitude was always there. There was always something to deal with. It is the same for us today.

A troubled teen needs counseling.

Someone has a few questions.

A sick person in a hospital needs a visit.

A faithful shut-in is wondering when you will come by.

A visitor needs follow up.

A new convert needs to be disciplined.

An absentee member needs to be checked on.

A program, a campaign, an event, or a meeting needs to be planned.

Ministry training needs to be conducted.

A leaky faucet needs repair.

A dirty bathroom needs cleaning.

A phone message needs to be returned.

Prayers need to be offered.

A bus needs fuel.

The deacon meeting must be conducted.

Your financial reports must be prepared.

Someone needs benevolent assistance and a word with you.

A missionary has called and needs encouragement and support.

The list goes on and on. Some of the scariest words a pastor will hear are, “Can I talk to you about something?” or “Can I meet with you this week?” You do not know the reason for the meeting or the topic they wish to discuss. Your mind races with all the

possibilities, and then you get the phone call that someone in your congregation has been taken to the emergency room. Meanwhile, your wife wonders when you will get home and have some time for her, and your kids ask the same thing.

There is no peace. There is no leisure. In addition to all of that, you have to preach this Sunday. You desire to develop a tremendous theological message to help your people. You want to give them a \$100 message but have only been able to invest 25 cents worth of preparation.

Then God steps in! You wonder, “How did that happen?” You know how it happened. We serve a faithful God. When there is no peace, He is there and gives us the peace that passes all understanding. He IS our peace. Just a moment in His presence is what we need.

2 They Had No Provisions.

Look again at verses 35–36. ***“And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.”***

The disciples anticipated a trip to Kokomo. Instead, they were in the desert, and the multitude was there. They wanted rest, and they developed a plan to secure it. They suggested that Jesus send the people away.

“Lord, it is late, and we are tired. We just met to report to You about what we have been doing, and You just told us we were going to rest. We got on this boat, and these people followed us. We cannot get away from them. Now, they are all hungry. Would you tell them to go back to town and buy food for themselves?”

Their grand plan was to let the people fend for themselves. There were no restaurants or markets in the area.

Verse 37: ***“He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?”***

The disciples said that the people needed to go eat, and Jesus’ response was, “All right. You feed them.”

They thought they were getting rest. Now, their wheels were turning even faster. Would they set up a kitchen and start cooking? Would they get food delivered? Then, the treasurer told them they did not have enough money. They were convinced that it could not be done.

Verse 38: ***“He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.”***

News flash: Jesus already knew how much they had. He wanted them to take inventory so that they would understand. They confirmed that they only had a little boy’s lunch and a small amount of money. There was not enough provision.

When you think about the needs in your church, do you ever feel you are in over your head? I hear other pastors preach and say the same things I say, but they seem to say them so much better than I can. None of us have enough within ourselves to

meet the needs. The demands are too great.

In **2 Corinthians 2:16**, Paul asked the question you and I often ask: ***“And who is sufficient for these things?”*** The answer is nobody. The guy you think has it all together is not any more together than you are. None of us are sufficient.

In **Romans 7:24**, we read a confession from Paul, who many of us consider the greatest Christian who ever lived. ***“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”*** He also knew that he did not have the ability or the provisions in and of himself.

He provided the answer in **2 Corinthians 3:5-6**. ***“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”***

Our sufficiency is of God. We have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us. We have the precious Word of God that we can deliver to our people. We have the power of the Holy Ghost. We have the promises of God. We have the presence of Christ. We are not sufficient, but He is sufficient through us. As **2 Corinthians 12:9** states, ***“My strength is made perfect in weakness.”***

Annie Flint wrote the lyrics to this classic hymn. I can hear Lester Roloff singing it now:

He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;
To added afflictions, He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, He multiplies peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing;
The Father both thee and thy load will upbear.

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

Jesus never asked the disciples to buy food. He just asked them, “What do you have?” He was willing to take it when they gave it to Him, and then He did something amazing with it.

He blessed it and broke it, and it began to multiply. They took the baskets, had the men sit down in companies, and distributed the food. When they ran out, they returned

with empty baskets and found Jesus. What was He doing? Blessing and breaking.

There are times that we realize that we have been out far too long, standing with the multitude. The only way to get more bread is to return to Jesus and receive it from Him. We cannot give out what He has not given us. We must go to Him to get more bread. He is our provider.

3 They Made No Progress.

Look at verses 46-52.

“And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.”

Notice how they were “toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them.” Why does the wind always seem to be contrary? Do you ever think about what you could get done if it were not for that needy or difficult person in the church or if you just had enough money or more people? Why is ministry so hard?

The disciples were doing what the Lord told them to do, trying to get to the other side. They were working to the point of exhaustion. The word “toiling” literally means “to be in torment or distress.”

At different times, we have all felt that way. I remember, after I surrendered to preach, some of the people came up and spoke to me as if they felt sorry for me. I did not like it at the time. Ministry is a wonderful calling. I have been blessed beyond measure; but, after becoming more acquainted with the toil of ministry, I understand their sentiment better now.

The disciples were toiling but not getting anywhere. Sound familiar? You are preaching, but they are not listening. You are visiting, but no one is coming. You are witnessing, but no one is getting saved.

There is much more happening than we often see because we see the empty seats and not the full ones. We see the problems and not the possibilities.

But what does verse 48 say about their toiling and rowing? “And he saw them ...” You may think that no one sees you, but I can assure you that **Jesus sees you**.

Does Jesus care? Oh, yes, He cares. I know He cares. **In 1 Peter 5:7, the Bible says, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”**

When He was up in that mountain, He was interceding for them. Scripture tells us that He does that for us today.

According to **Hebrews 4:15-16**, ***“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”***

He saw them, and He sees you. ***He is praying for you.***

As they rowed, it was dark, and the wind was blowing hard. The rain was coming down, and the waves rocked the ship. They thought they were about to go under.

Have you been there? I have.

After my first business meeting as a pastor, I thought I was finished. My ministry was starting, and the devil convinced me I was done.

I remember calling a particular person to get his thoughts about the meeting, and his wife answered the phone with a deep sigh, saying, “Oh, pastor.” My heart began to sink. I knew she was about to let me know her husband was very unhappy after the meeting.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Our dog died.”

I was sad about the dog, but I was also relieved. I asked to speak to her husband and get his thoughts on the meeting.

“I thought it went well,” he said. “Everything was clear, and it was helpful.”

I was surprised because I had convinced myself I was going under. I was going to have to resign as pastor and go back to Knoxville. Everyone would know I had failed. I imagined how it would all fall out. The devil convinced me it was true, but it was not.

He will try to convince you that it is true, but it is not. Even if you go through some things more severe than what I described, Jesus is with you, and as He tells us in **Hebrews 13:5**, ***“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”***

Christ saw the disciples and prayed for them. Next, He came to them. Their first reaction to seeing Him pass by was fear, but He told them not to be afraid. The One they thought had come to haunt them had come to help them.

He is passing by you as well. Will you invite Him into your boat?

According to **John 6:21**, ***“Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.”***

Wait a minute. They were in the middle of a storm, going nowhere. When Jesus got on the boat, the wind and waves stopped. There was perfect stillness and the sweetness of His presence. Then someone said, “Look. We made it to the shore.”

Their rowing did not get them safely through the stormy sea. The Lord Jesus took them to the other side.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:6).

“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

You say, “But I have to get the job done.” No, you do not. If the job is going to get done, He will do it. He will use you, but He is going to do the work.

***“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”
(Philippians 2:13).***

The only reason you are here, and the only reason you are doing the things you are doing for the Lord, is because God worked in you. He chose you, and He is using you for His honor and glory.

The disciples found rest in the midst of their ministry. It was found in the presence of Jesus – as they learned to take His yoke (submission), as they learned that He can do whatever He wants to do, with five loaves and two fishes or with a boat thrashing about in the middle of the sea.

Once they realized that, they did not need to look at their hoarded resources or figure out a way to scheme and work to get the job done. They no longer wrung their hands or filled their minds with anxiety and nervous energy, wondering how it would all turn out. They learned to rest in Jesus and know that He would do it right.

He is still doing it today. He will do it in and through you. There is no need for you to be fretful or anxious. You can learn to rest in the Lord, no matter what.

Working For The Lord of *Sabbath*

MARK 2:23-28



Scott Pauley

Working For The Lord of Sabbath

Scott Pauley

“And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath” (Mark 2:23-28).

You have to love the Lord’s sense of humor. In response to a comment from the Pharisees, the most educated religious men in the land, Jesus replied, “Haven’t you read the Bible?”

There are many names for Christ in the Bible, but “Lord of the Sabbath” is increasingly precious to me. He did not come to take away the Sabbath but to fulfill it. He came to apply it, to exemplify it and to give it.

The Sabbath is not an event or a day on the calendar. It is rest itself. Our God is the God of true rest.

One of the first things I learned as I began my tenure as a staff member many years ago was that I needed to know the person for whom I was working. Every employer, every boss, every supervisor is different.

If we are working for Jesus, we need to learn as much as we can about Him. If you learn the Lord of the Sabbath, He will give you everything you need to do what He calls you to do.

The book of Mark is my favorite gospel record, and one reason I love it is because it is a gospel of action. Fourteen of the 16 chapters start with words like “straightway” or “immediately.” It is a fast-moving drama. It is inspired irony that the Holy Spirit would teach us the most about rest in the gospel account characterized by action. But this gospel record, that talks so much about the works and movements of Jesus,

emphasizes that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Rest is not about us. It is not about a day off or the demands of ministry or the pressure you get from people. Rest is really all about knowing the Lord. If you learn the Lord, you learn how to rest.

In this passage, it was the religious leaders of the day who could not understand. But in some way, those of us in full-time ministry especially, are religious leaders. And sometimes it is the leaders who miss the most obvious truth. While trying to lead others into truth, we may miss this very truth in our own lives.

There is a Pharisee in every church. We all know that. The dirty secret, however, is that there is a little bit of Pharisee in every one of us. There is something in all of us that thinks we know better than others, and sometimes we even think we know better than the Lord.

As we go back into the harvest field, there are some principles to keep in mind. Having learned about rest, the hardest thing to do is to go out and live it.

1 Know Yourself

This phrase is not meant humanistically, but in a humble, holy and God-honoring way. You need to know the kind of person you are and how God made you. Aren't you glad God knows you? ***"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust"*** (***Psalms 103:14***). The problem is that, while He remembers, we do not.

You need to know your limits. It may sound simplistic, but you need to know how much sleep you need and what kind of margin is required in your life to keep your mind sharp and fresh. You should be aware of what healthy distractions are good for you.

That latter phrase gets the attention of some young men. What do I mean by healthy distractions? We all need distractions. If you do not find healthy and holy ones, the devil will give you unhealthy and unholy ones.

You cannot work all the time. You need distractions every once in a while.

Frank Boreham was the last student admitted to Spurgeon's college by Spurgeon himself. He wrote some classic books that were reprinted a few years ago, including a set called "Life Verses" about life texts of famous Christians. He was quite a preacher and quite an author.

He also loved cricket. He received some criticism for playing it so often. He once said, "I was asked why I devoted so much time to cricket, and here is my threefold answer:

"Number one, I love it. Number two, I find it the perfect holiday. When at the beach or in the bush, I find my mind racing to sermons that must be written. But when I am playing cricket, I can think of nothing else. Number three, it is a good way to form friendships outside the circle I am in."

By the way, that last point would be good for all of us – to get outside your bubble, outside your routine. Vance Havner said, "Many people are in a rut and a rut is nothing but a grave – with both ends kicked out." What you think is your routine might

be a rut, and a rut can become death. I am not saying you need to take up cricket, but you should find your own healthy distraction. You need to know yourself.

In our text, Jesus referenced the example of David – the man after God’s own heart, the sweet psalmist of Israel, the king. In verse 25 the Lord noted that David “had need.”

We all have needs. You have them, your spouse has them, your children have them. While you are resting, don’t leave your family behind.

Years ago a man with whom I worked on staff was a man who was the nervous type – working all the time. One day our pastor asked him, “Do you ever take a vacation?”

“Oh, no. I don’t need that, pastor. I take vacations in my mind.”

Pastor asked him, “Do you take your family with you?”

This is not just for you; it is for your family as well.

If you are a pastor, you are not just a leader. You are a follower first. You are not just a shepherd; you are also a sheep. You do not exist solely to minister. There should be times when the Spirit of God is ministering to you.

You must know yourself well enough to understand when you need rest and what lesser things you might have to eliminate in your life to give yourself time for it. This is something great men throughout history have learned.

Thomas Jefferson, who would never be mistaken for a preacher and whose Bible was much different than mine, was a very busy man. He wrote one day to some men and told them, “Leave all of the afternoon for rest and recreation. They are as necessary as reading.” This was a man who was as well-read and learned as anyone, but he knew that neglecting rest would mean neglecting an important part of life.

Alexander Whyte was a Scottish theologian who wrote classic books on Bible characters. If you ever find anything written by him, you should get it and read it. It is rich and powerful.

Whyte was a wise man. One of his associates said that of all the advice Whyte had given him, the admonition to “take good holidays” stood with him the longest. Whyte was sitting in the room when the former assistant said that to a gathering of men. Dr. Whyte looked at everyone before turning back to his former assistant and asked, “Did you ever regret keeping that advice?”

Of course, “holiday” is the British term for vacation. But the principle is an important one. If you take the proper amount of time away, you will be better for it – as will your own family as well as the family of God which you serve. You will return refreshed and renewed for the work that God has given you to do.

I remember from my earliest days as a child how my parents were so good about having family vacations and scheduling regular family nights for us to enjoy. I am so grateful for that. In the early days of my time working for Clarence Sexton, he came to me one day and asked if I was taking a vacation that year.

“Yes, I am.”

“Where are you going?”

“I’m not sure.”

“When are you going?”

I said something about taking some time a few months down the road. What he said next was of immeasurable practical help to me and my young family.

“When you plan a vacation, plan it at least a year in advance and then talk about it all year long. It is not just for you but also for your family, and 75 percent of the fun is the anticipation leading up to it!”

He explained how doing this would give all of us something to look forward to, and that in stressful times, just talking about the rest that was coming would get us through that labor.

Charles Simeon was pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge in the late 1700s. While a professor who trained men for the ministry, he wrote thousands of handwritten letters during his ministry and edited about 50 volumes of his printed sermons. He was a worker who did not let the grass grow beneath his feet.

He lived in a second-floor apartment that opened to an adjoining roof, and many people reported that he could be seen at the same time every day going for a walk on that roof. He exited his study like clockwork, walking many circuits around that roof while talking, although he was by himself. He had learned that if he stepped away from his work and spent some time talking to God, his work was much more fruitful. When he died, that rooftop was named “Simeon’s Walk.” The people who gave it that name had learned from a man who was a great worker but had also learned how to “come apart.”

Many of us right now are in need of our own “Simeon’s Walk.” A place to go, something to do, a way to re-energize ourselves. We must keep in mind that what invigorates some people will drain others. I enjoy playing golf, but I have heard from others who consider it the most stressful pastime they have ever tried. Find what works for you.

I have often encouraged people to read Vance Havner’s book *Rest a While*. Havner was a bird watcher who could walk through the woods and identify each bird by the sound it made. Havner said, “Jesus knew how to rest for God, a forgotten art. Many a Christian would best glorify his Lord by a fishing trip. Maybe fishing in the creek would improve our fishing for men. We can get closer to people by getting away from them for a while.”

Sometimes we are so irritable and frustrated with people because we never disconnect from them and get by ourselves.

2 Know Your Enemy.

Christ had many enemies. In this passage, the enemies were the Pharisees – not necessarily the people – a religious system that insisted things must be done their way.

One of the great enemies of rest is this mentality where God is in a box we created and we think that things have to be a certain way. At times it might be good to recognize that such thinking could be the enemy trying to destroy you.

There will always be critics and cynics. Ignore them. Remember that you do not work for them. You work for Him. There is One you must please above all others. Do not waste your time trying to please everyone else.

I realized a while back that one of the most liberating things about being an evangelist is the fact that nobody pays me for what I am doing. Yes, I receive honorariums and love offerings, but I am on no one's payroll. I work for the Lord, and however He wants to pay me is His business. If He chooses to do it in a way I would not have expected or chosen, that is perfectly fine. It is a reminder to me that I am not beholden to please men or be what anybody else thinks I ought to be. I only have one Person to please, and so do you.

In the Lord's work, we all work for the same Person. Always remember who that is. When Christ is great in our thinking, the enemies will be much smaller in comparison.

3 Know the Hurting

Read beyond our text to the first five verses of Mark 3.

“And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.”

You can never minister to restless people until you learn to rest yourself. It was the Lord of Sabbath, who understood rest, who was the only One able to minister to this hurting man.

When those in the Lord's work get away for rest, they know that they eventually will return to withered souls and wounded hearts. There will be weak families and hurting people who need to be ministering. God wants you to minister rest and refreshment to them, but you can never do that until you first understand it and then apply it to your own life and ministry.

This truth reminded me that the Sabbath is not all about me. One of the dangers of such an emphasis is that it can be taken too far, until it is all about YOU getting rest and time off. If you are not careful, you will lose the passion and heart of Christ, which is to rest in Him and let Him meet all of your needs so that you can minister effectively to wounded souls out of the overflow.

D.L. Moody said, “A restless man will never be a very godly man, and a godly man will never be a very restless man.” Think about it. If we want to be godly, we must understand this concept of rest. According to Scripture, the only ones who cannot rest are the wicked (***Isaiah 57:20***). That means it is a holy thing to find rest in God, and it is wonderful because once you find it, you do not want to keep it to yourself. You want to share it with needy souls all around you.

4 Know the Master.

As we read in **Mark 2:28**, *“Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.”*

Vance Havner said, “I have no sympathy for those who say the devil never takes a vacation. I am not following the devil. I am following the one who said, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’”

The devil may not take a vacation, but you need one. But beyond that, you need rest of spirit. That is what the Master offers us.

In our text, Jesus referred to Himself as “the Son of man,” which was His favorite title for Himself. It was the title of His humanity and humility, and every time He used it, He was identifying with us. It was His way of saying, “I became one of you. I know what you are going through.”

The Son of God became the Son of Man. This is a reminder of the great truth found in **Hebrews 4:15**: *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* The Lord understands our weakness.

The last part of verse 28 emphasizes that He is the Lord of rest. His tender care and keeping will **“keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7)**. Sin is an awful taskmaster, but Christ is a loving Lord.

If you think that psyching yourself up and pulling yourself up by your bootstraps will keep you going...you are going to be very disappointed! You will ultimately hit a wall somewhere and run out of steam. But if you keep coming back again and again to the Lord of Sabbath, the Son of man, you will find in Him all of the rest that you need.

When we think about men God has used through the years, they are remembered mostly for their public ministry. You say a preacher’s name and someone will mention a particular sermon or a popular book with which he is identified, or the church he once led. While such men may be known for extraordinary days, we must remember that they were made on ordinary days.

I look forward to one day meeting the Apostle Paul. The mere mention of his name conjures an image of him standing on Mars Hill or some similarly imposing scene. But have you ever thought about all of the days of Paul’s ministry that were not recorded in the Bible? Many days consisted of nothing but a long walk from one village to the next. In fact, **Acts 20:13** notes that Paul sent his associates by a different route so that he could walk by himself. There were times when Paul wanted to be apart from others and alone with the Lord.

You may have seen the Academy Award-winning film “Chariots of Fire,” the true story of, among others, Eric Liddell. He was set to run the 100-yard dash in the 1924 Olympics in Paris, but his race was scheduled for Sunday. As a faithful Christian, he refused to run on Sunday.

The man who took his place was Harold Abrahams, who said before the race, “I have ten seconds to justify my existence.” What a stark contrast between the worldviews of two men.

We look at that comment by Abrahams and think how sad it is, but don’t we all

have that mindset at times? We think we need to work a little harder or do a little more to justify our position, our paycheck or what other people think about us.

Abrahams said years later, "I am ever in pursuit, and I do not even know what I am chasing." What an empty way to live.

On the same day Abrahams ran that race, Liddell preached in a church service. His text was *Isaiah 40:31*. ***"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."***

Liddell ran a different race on a different day and won an Olympic gold medal. He later went to China as a missionary, where he was ultimately arrested and put in a prison camp. Other prisoners observed how he rose every morning and sat in a corner of his tent, reading his Bible under a lamp and praying. "We knew there was something different about that man," they said.

There may be moments in life when you cannot run anymore, but you can always rest. Spiritual men know that there is a time to run and there is a time to rest. The Lord of Sabbath is the one who makes the assignments and provides the rest. We work for Him.

Further Reading

Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul

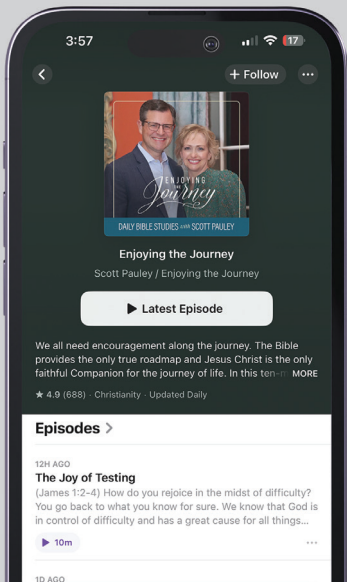
Lance Witt

Zeal Without Burnout

Christopher Ash

Out of Control

Ben Young and Samuel Adams



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New Testament Marriage:

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By Scott Pauley



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"If we do not come apart, we will surely come apart." - **Vance Havner**

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

Mark 6:31

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Exodus 33:14

SPEAKERS:



Scott Hooks
Co-Host



Scott Pauley
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“

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"I understand that it's hard to break free and set things in order so that you can be away. It will be worth the investment. I have gone to conferences and come away feeling burdened by things that I need to do, with a list of things to do better. Here I come away with a greater love for the Lord Jesus Christ, my batteries recharged, and my cup full. You won't regret it; make the time to come."

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