

July 8, 2018
#31
Sabbath not for me?

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. ⁹ Six days you may work and do all your tasks, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you. ¹¹ Because the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days, but rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

LIVING WELL



The last four Sundays we have been looking deeper into ourselves and our walk with God. We are realizing that there is much more beneath the surface of lives and the lives of others than we can see.

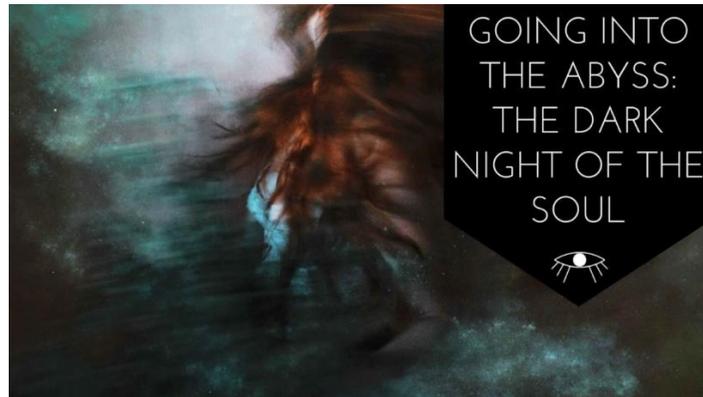
We saw how Jesus dealt with his emotions with the death and resurrection of Lazarus.



Emotions will leak. We can try to ignore or suppress them but they will come out. The emotionally unhealthy will especially leak in very hurtful ways – to themselves and to others.

**Do NOT get over the past
Get THROUGH the past**

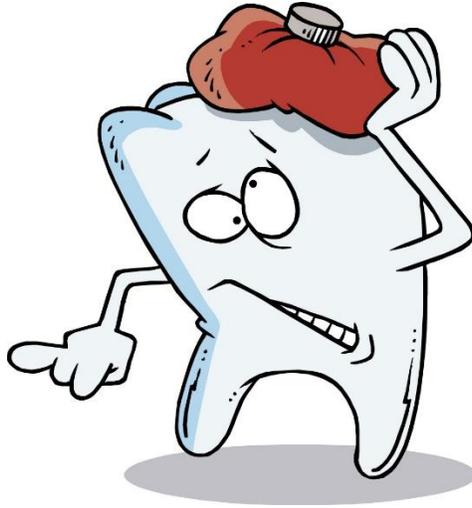
The second week we talked about the importance and of forgiving and forgetting. Joseph and his brothers showed us how to do that. "You meant it for evil. God meant it for good."



The third week Jesus in Gethsemane showed us how to get through the dark night of the soul. Those walls that block us in mean it is time to pray. The more depressed we are, the more we are filled with anxiety, the more distressed we are, the more we need to pray. Yes, we are to pray in the good times as well. When all is going wrong, victory can ONLY be won in prayer.

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Last week we Jesus explained, through the Good Samaritan, that eternal life is found by keeping the two greatest commandments. Seize every opportunity to enjoy, love and praise God. Love everyone – even your enemies – regardless of the inconvenience. After all, if we are follows of Jesus then we should be imitating Jesus. While we were still sinners (enemies of God) Christ died FOR us.)



Let me give an example of an immature person. I have been having a tooth ache. I did not want to go to the previous dentist because her dental work brought more pain and I still felt that my teeth are not good. I went to another doctor and this one said I have to have a root canal and a crown. It will cost me about 2000 dollars. So I decided to take an ibuprofen. Not smart. After a week the pain was less. But a month later it came back with huge pain. I had to go to the dentist. I was desperate to find the right one and just to take care of the problem.

Isn't this the way we deal with our problems in life? When we face a problem we do not want to deal it. We try to soothe the pain thinking maybe it will go away. We do not want to go to others for help and we do not want to spend the money. I need to grow in my thinking.

It is the same with our faith, our soul and our spirituality. We have to recognize that we need to grow. We have to admit and be willing to change. Change brings pain. Changes has a cost. But without a change we are not growing.

24 / 7 / 365

Today we will talk about another difficult, painful issue. As a foreigner I noticed that you all are super busy. I mean try to arrange a meeting with you... oh, with some people I think it is almost impossible. For some I am lucky and I get to meet. On one hand I admire your ethic for work but on the other hand I think it is very sad: we live with endless to-do lists, constant pressure and a world around us which requires and tell us we need more and to do more...

We have no freedom or we think we do not have. So let's look at today's first reading from Exodus. You noticed it is one commandment from ten. We know some of the

commandments, like do not murder, do not steal, do not commit adultery. We take them seriously. Right? How about the fourth one? Remember the Sabbath day, you must not do any work...

In the video sessions of the Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Peter Szazero gives a wonderful example of company B&H.

<https://www.bhphotovideo.com/find/HelpCenter/StoreInfo.jsp#hoursOfOperation>

“Over 3 million professionals and enthusiasts in the world of imaging, audio and technology rely on B&H for their equipment needs.

More than 5,000 people per day flock to our 34th Street SuperStore in New York and upwards of 12 million consumers visit our online store every month.”

This store is closed from Friday 2:00 PM till Sunday. It is closed all day Saturday. As if this not be enough, you cannot even purchase anything on line for 24 hours on Saturday. It is crazy, who in his right mind would close the store on Saturday when most people shop that day. How is the company able to stand with such a pressure and refusing get their business to an even higher level in New York?

How are you with your Sabbath? Are you able to stop and not to work? Are you able to hear the Lord’s commandment?



On their website the Chick-fil-A company explains why they are closed on Sundays: “Our founder, Truett Cathy, made the decision to close on Sundays in 1946 when he opened his first restaurant in Hapeville, Georgia. Having worked seven days a week in restaurants open 24 hours, Truett saw the importance of closing on Sundays so that he and his employees could set aside one day to rest and worship if they choose - a practice we uphold today.”

Chick-fil-A now has 2,200 restaurants and since 2010 has lead the industry in average sales per restaurant even though it is only open 6 days per week.

Did you notice that the fourth commandment is the longest commandment? It goes into details.

“Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you. ¹¹ Because the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days, but rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy”

The book, on which these sermons are based, suggests that we have:

- **to stop**
- **rest**
- **delight**
- **and contemplate.**



Let's start with the stop. 😊 In the book of Genesis, we read: “On the sixth day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done. ³ God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation”. God stopped creating. He completed all the work and God stopped. Sabbath was because God rested on the seventh day, why did God rest on the seventh day? Was it because he was tired after six days of hard creating? You know, having made the

world he sat down, "Whew, that was tiring; need a day off." No, it tells us God rested, not because he was tired; he rested because he was finished. It says that. He was finished.

God was finished with His wonderful work. He stopped, rested and was delighted in the work He did.

I can never say that I have finished fully my work. I always think there is more to do. One thing came to me as a realization was this: The reason is because all the time there is a temptation to be independent of God instead of dependent on God. When I continue to work non stop -- when I do not stop --I think I am a center of the world. If I will not do it the world will stop going around. People will die. I tell myself a lie that the Sabbath is not important: my work is. I am dependent on myself, on my constant productivity.

Sabbath is to **EMBRACE** my limits.

I tell you the truth. The world continues to working fine when I stop. It was not easy to leave Lithuania UMC. What they will do without me? Methodists will die without me in Lithuania. Who do I think I am? Sabbath is to embrace my limits.

The word Sabbath comes from Hebrew word which means : "to cease, to stop working". God says I made this day Holy. I am so guilty, because what God made holy I make it ordinary.

Holy means "Separate, a cut above different". God made that day Holy for the Lord. This day should be so different from all the six days we have. It is a gift and it is a commandment.

I am God's servant – not the servant of work

Why are they to rest in Deuteronomy 5 on the Sabbath day? "Because God delivered you out of Egypt, because you are resting in the fact that the journey that we are on (and they weren't yet in Canaan) is one which is destined by God, predetermined by God and is going to be fulfilled by God." It is the powerful thought for me. I will never be able to finish my work. I will be lying dead and the work will not be done. When I stop for the Sabbath I acknowledge God and the work He is doing in this world. I am His servant not the work servant. We humans all have a tendency to be slaves of something or someone. Who is your Master?



The second part of the definition of keeping the Sabbath is rest. I feel guilty if I am resting. I could, I should do something. If God stopped to see how good is the work he has done, shouldn't we stop and see what God has done? Should I not be reviewing what God is doing in my life?

We are instructed to rest in the sufficiency of God and to rest in His strength. Saying it is enough is hard for us. "Just one more piece of candy." "Just a little be more money". "Just another chapter in the book I am enjoying." "Just one more piece of the jigsaw puzzle." When is enough of what I have done and what I have. I worked 6 days. All I did and do is by the grace and the strength of God. It is His. I am His. What a gift if we will just receive from His grace.

What do we do on Sabbath? Do we rest? How do we rest? It is a holy day. What makes you closer to God? What makes you more holy? What would you do to rest in the Lord? This is His day for you to rest in Him.



We delight. Delight in what you have. Be happy with what you have. St Paul talks about the importance of contentment not matter the circumstance. Slow down in your eating, slow down in walking, slow down and truly listen. Make time to feel, to hear, to taste. What do you love to do? What gives you a smile and delight in the soul?

I Thessalonians 5 tells us that the will of God for us in Christ Jesus is to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks. God created you to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.



Lastly, contemplate. The central focus of the Sabbath should and must be God. You are not resting just so you can do more work another day. You are resting because you love God. You spend time worshipping him: Singing, reading, listening, walking, writing or painting. Take that time. I know how hard for us is to have even time for a little prayer. So it looks like more impossible to have a 24 hour Sabbath. But we can start with half day. It is still progress. It still offering and having this time to stop, to rest, to delight and contemplate.

As you contemplate the wondrous love of God expressed through His Son Jesus, your soul with exhilarate.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” Did we forget? Yes, we did. What do we need to remember? God is God. God delivered Israelites from Egypt slavery. He delivered me from my sins. I am His. I know I am not where my destiny is. I totally recognize that I must train myself and choose to stop. All the world can scream around me: you cannot stop. I must listen to the voice of God. I must recognize the voice of my Shepherd. I will continue to marvel at the grace of God every day and especially on the Sabbath.