



SABBATH & WORK

Sabbathing Through Faith

April 14, 2024

[Worship Music Playlist](#)

Prelude – Psalm 92 by Poor Bishop Hooper
Welcome (Dylan)

CALL TO WORSHIP | Psalm 92:1-2, 4, 13

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy... The righteous flourish in the courts of our God.

Song #1 – I Will Sing by Sandra Mccracken
Song #2 – I Will Be Still by Young Oceans
Dismiss Kids

INTRO / ANNOUNCEMENTS | Resources & Faith...Hope Within LOve

Life after Easter is a return. A resurrection of a whole and holy cadence of Sabbath into Work into Sabbath into Work... **How we move *into the rest of God and into the work of God in our working and resting through Jesus with others will be our focus these next two months.*** More than ideas, concepts, and truth, we want to share rhythms and practices:

RESOURCE SLIDE **Our Rhythms** | Sabbath Days (w/guides), Recollected Workday Prayers (push notifications), & Praying the Psalms -- **Our Practices** | Work Inventory, Work Examen, & Entering Awareness

These rhythms and practices help us get to what we desire: to make life, good. In everything we do, in the words and actions that build life, to do so with God, in companionship, **within Love through faith and hope.** That's what the apostle Paul told us [last week](#): life is made good within love, living through faith and hope:

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

As the events of Easter gave witness, we live because of God's love, and so we make life good within love. As we'll begin to see today, our making life begins with **resting through faith in God's good order.** Will you pray with me as _____ comes to read of our return's start once and again in Jesus?

PRE-SERMON READING | Genesis & Mark

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:1, 31)

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Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it God rested from all his works that he had one in creation. (Genesis 2:1-3)

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Then Jesus said, 'The Sabbath was made to serve us; we weren't made to serve the Sabbath. The Son of Man is no lackey to the Sabbath. He's in charge!' (Mark 2:27-28)

SERMON | From the Ceremony Into the Everyday

Genesis Chapter 1 ends having taken us through "In the beginning" to the "very good" work of creation. Yet, as we continue to note in our calendared lives, there are not six days but seven. Genesis Chapter 2, is the chapter in which the very good of creation finds its whole and holy rhythm in companionship with God and union with one another, where vocation in relationship is the work of cultivating creation to flourish. And yet, Chapter 2 begins at an end:

Thus the heavens and the earth were **finished**, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day *God finished his work* that he had done, and *he rested* on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it, *God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.* (Genesis 2:1-3)

Of course, we know the story wasn't "finished," only getting started. And yet, **at the start, there is rest.** At the start is a finish, a ceasing of striving, laboring in the "very good" of what was, what is: life from God, life with God. At the start, God works (creating, good), and humanity (and all of creation) *rests with* God before entering into our daily labors together within God's good design.

That's how our story began, but of course, we know that our companionship with God, our relationship with one another, and our cultivating good became significantly more difficult because of the story that follows in Genesis Chapter 3. In the story's next chapter, humanity chooses life on our own, life without God, and thus life off the mark.

And so, as the story unfolds, we discover that the peace of the first place eluded humanity. In fact, by Chapter 6, violence, not peace, division, not wholeness, degradation, not holiness, are the distinguishing features of the disassociated earth dwellers (both human and divine).

Nevertheless, rather than completely start from scratch, God returned to work *re-creating* from within the mess. Drastically in the flood, graciously in the scattering at Babel, subtly and slowly in the family of Abraham, vividly in the Exodus, persistently through the Exile, patiently in the generations between the remnants return and the first Noel, and once and for all and forever in Jesus, until **the Word through which all things were made** (John 1:3) said again, **"It is finished"** (John 19:30) and rose on what is now the start our week, a day of rest set apart for something special, something like we are doing right this very moment.

As in creation, so in recreation; after God's good work, what God works for, rests with Him.

This is not an accident, no compensation for our state of decay, but a very good design from the beginning. Remember what Jesus said,

'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The Son of Man is no lackey to the Sabbath. He's in charge!' (Mark 2:27-28)

Sabbath is where we start. It was so in Genesis and so again and forever in Jesus. Our good work, everything we do to make life good, comes from *resting* in God's finished work with Him. Now remember [what we have said: Sabbath is:](#)

Sabbath in scripture is nothing less, *or more*, than a full day set aside to **cease work (stop our efforts to make life good, bad, or otherwise) **and be...with God**...resting with God and others in God's finished work of creation and recreation.**

And it is the "finished work" that requires us to live through faith. **As it was in creation, so too in recreation: what is finished doesn't bring the end but is the beginning, the context, reality, and the place of our start.**

Our faith tells us that God was for us in creating, that He created good and very good...even us. And our faith tells us that God is still for us in recreating, in His overcoming what distorted His good intentions...even us. God has and is working *for* us—on our behalf, for our good and that is the true, real, actual world where we make a life. Our faith tells us we live in a good world, where God works for good through all the mess of living. As we said on Easter, Hallelujah is a universal and automatic response precisely,

"because God is here and life is shaped by God for eternal goodness. Grace and love are the centers of existence. *Hallelujah* expresses gratitude toward that reality."¹

Indeed, God has always been working from the good to the very good, for us as individuals and humanity as a history and a whole. Faith sees and strives for that real world, a world easily missed without faith. At least that's how the writer of Hebrews spoke about faith:

¹ Eugene Peterson, *This Hallelujah Banquet: how the end of what we were reveals who we can be*, 149.

Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation [good witness or honorable testimony]...These all died **in faith**, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. **For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.**
(Hebrews 11:1-2 13-14)

Through faith, we see what we seek, our life with God, even from afar. Though, as the author of Hebrews would say at the end of the “roll call of faith,” **what seems far off is already here...**

All these...did not receive what they were promised, since **God had provided something better for us**, that apart from us they should not be made perfect...Therefore...let us run the race set before us, **looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith...** (Hebrews 11:39-12:2)

Or, as one translation paraphrases it:

Not one of these people...got their hands on what God promised. God had a better plan for us: that their faith and our faith would come together to make one completed whole...Do you see what that means...Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both *began and finished* this race we're in. Study how he did it. **Because he never lost sight of where he was headed...And he's there**, in the place of honor, **right alongside God.** (Hebrews 11:39-12:2)

Through faith, we see ourselves at home, abiding where Jesus abides, in the life and love of God. At least that's where John encourages us to make our home:

In this **the love of God was made manifest** among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, **so that we might live through him.** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loves us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sin...So **we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.** God is love, and **whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them.** (1 John 4:9-10, 16)

To have faith is to believe and trust that where we need to be, desire to be, is where we are because of God's work. Through faith, we make ourselves at home, abide, here and now, within the life of God, the love of God, that finished work of Jesus. Because, in truth, our faith, the faith that sets us within such a great cloud of witnesses, a distinguished history, that “Faith,” says Rabbi Heschel, is more than an “acceptance of definitive formulations of articles of beliefs,” it “is an attitude, **the joy of living a life in which God has a stake, or being involved with God.**”²

Which brings us back to the topic at hand: **Sabbathing through faith.** Sabbath, for all that we can do or not do, is a day to delight in being where our very existence begins and flourishes, within the love of God for us. A day in all that we do and do not do is to see and respond through faith to the love of God.

² Abraham Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom*, 66.

This may help. Author, theologian, and Presbyterian minister, Frederick Buechner, describes faith in a way that helps us see how we might make life, good through faith; especially on a day of resting in God's love.

Buechner says,

"To have faith is to respond to what we see [the thing hoped for, the conviction of what we feel] *by longing for it the rest of our days; by trying to live up to it and toward it through all the wonderful and terrible things; by breathing it in like air and growing strong on it; by looking to see it again and see it better.*

To lose faith is to stop looking. To lose faith is to decide...that all you ever saw from afar was your own best dreams,"³ and miss out on "the better" God intends for your life, the very good with/in Jesus.

Will you pray with me?

DISCUSSION |

Now, our desire in this season is not merely to talk about Sabbathing and working within the love of God through faith and hope but to help one another actually make life good through that whole and holy rhythm. One way we'll do that is by having time to share and start processing with one another. Starting conversations here in this time that can continue over dinner tables, in Gospel Community, and through which we can hold each other to abiding, making ourselves at home, in God's life and love.

So here are some conversation starters:

- How do you Sabbath, if at all? Why?
- What role does faith (assurance and conviction of God's love, the joy of "being involved with God") play in your Sabbathing or not?
- How could your Sabbath "live up to...and toward" the love of God we see (know & believe) in Jesus, "looking to see it again and see it better"?

³ Frederick Buechner, *The Clown In The Belfry*, 20.

CORPORATE CONFESSION & COMMUNION⁴ |

LORD of Creation, create in us a whole and holy rhythm of life

composed of hours that sustain rather than stress, of days that deliver rather than destroy, of time that delights rather than degrades.

LORD of Liberation, by the rhythm of your truth, set us free

from the bondage and baggage that break us, from the Pharaohs and fellows who fail us, from the plans and pursuits that prey upon us.

LORD of Resurrection, may we be raised into the rhythm of your Life,

dead to deceitful calendars, dead to fleeting friend requests, dead to the empty peace of our accomplishments.

To our packed-full planners, **we bid, "Peace!"**

To our over-caffeinated consciences, **we say, "Cease!"**

To our suffocating selves, **LORD, grant our release.**

Drowning in a sea of deadlines and death chimes, **we rest in You, our lifeline.**

By your ever-restful grace, **allow us to enter your Sabbath rest as your Sabbath rest enters into us.**

For...

Jesus has done good work for us. The Holy Spirit is doing a good work in us.

And God our Father equips and calls each of us to go out and do good works, works he has prepared in advance for us to do, and that he alone, **by his power and his Spirit, will bring to completion through us.**

For all the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus.

That is why it is **through Jesus we utter our Amen to God for his glory. Hallelujah! Amen.**

Song #3 – Slow Me Down by The Porter's Gate

Song #4 – Come and Rest by Mission House

BENEDICTION | 1 Corinthians 13

As we rest in the day made for us, we prepare to enter into the work for which we are made [**LIGHT THE CANDLE**], remembering the reality in which we live:

Love covers the errors and faults of others.

Love trusts having confidence in the goodness of others.

Love lives towards its confidence with joy.

Love does so for the long haul,

enduring with courage and calmness.

So now, live through faith and hope in love.

DISMISS

⁴ Adapted from *Common Prayer: a liturgy for ordinary radicals*, 554, & *Every Moment Holy*, Vol 3, xv.