

THE LORD'S SABBATH



Resting in Me You Will Be Saved
Signe Flink

There is no such thing as weariness in the life of faith. Of course we can be physically weary if we've worked twelve hours straight, or mentally weary trying to deal with a string of problems that come all at once.

But when we find ourselves feeling spiritually drained so that we're overwhelmed with the thought of taking even one more step on the road of faith, this is a sign that we've lost touch with our source of life.

It often happens that believers seem to be moving along with zeal, sharing life with people, getting things done. Then it's as if they suddenly run out of gas and everything stops. Perhaps after a month or two, or even a year or two, they get going again with more zeal than ever. Then again without warning they burn out. They may be good for one or two more infusions of life then they seem to die out for good. If you ask them what went wrong they often say, "I just got tired of it. I couldn't keep it up any more." There's not one of us who hasn't been through some of this ... and it will happen to us again until we learn that weariness in the life of faith is un-necessary.

God has provided for every child of faith a permanent, continuous Sabbath Rest.

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven...

Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus goes on to define and clarify the law in such a way that we are driven to throw ourselves on the mercy of God and pursue a righteous-ness which comes only from him.

But there is one law about which Jesus is strangely silent in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus talks about murder, adultery, covetousness, the idolatry of mammon, taking God's name in vain, but he says nothing at all about the law of the Sabbath. Moreover, as Jesus' ministry gets going he is very soon in trouble with the religious establishment because from their point of view he's breaking the Sabbath law.

One Sabbath as he was going through the grain fields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him; how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."



Healing on Sabbath Days
Jeremiah Yao

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger; grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Mark 2:23-3:6

Here are two episodes early in Jesus' ministry which already have him a target of the leadership of Israel over the Sabbath law. In John's gospel we see this same tension. Jesus heals the man at the pool of Bethesda...on the Sabbath. He tells him to carry his pallet on the Sabbath. Jesus heals the

man born blind on the Sabbath by making clay... illegal on the Sabbath. The Pharisees insist, "This is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath."

So what was Jesus doing? Abolishing the Sabbath? Changing the law?

***Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets;
I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.***

There probably was not a Sabbath day in Jesus' life from the time he left infancy, that Jesus wasn't found in the synagogue or the temple.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day...

Luke 4:16

But for Jesus; the Sabbath was not some meaningless rule to add another burden to men's lives and to bore them to death.

This is what religious flesh has made the Sabbath ... another burden ... one more thing to weigh down their lives and weary them and add to their guilt.

What was the purpose of the Sabbath?

Very simple: rest. A gift whereby the human race, worrying its way through life outside the Garden of Eden, might have a little rest, a little peace, a chance to heal and recover.



Peace
Signe Flink

The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath...

Mark 2:27

....a chance to taste a little of the joy of Paradise in the midst of desolation.

Just as night was given for sleep so that our bodies and minds and earth-weary spirits can be renewed and wake in the morning fresh and ready for a new day, so the Sabbath was given for an even deeper rest, a break in the monotony of time whereby we get a taste of eternity to keep us going.

The Sabbath was for Israel in time what the temple was for Israel in space...a chance to turn from all the distractions of life and come into God's presence and find God's peace again.

A place of rest.

A place of prayer.

A place of cleansing and refreshment.

The Sabbath law actually pointed to the time when everything will be at rest and the lion will lie down with the Lamb. But the Sabbath law also points to a time this side of glory when it would be possible to experience Sabbath rest continuously, even in the midst of the turmoil.

***Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary,
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.***

Isaiah 40:28-31



In the Shelter of the Most High
Signe Flink

This is a description of a continuous Sabbath rest, a resting even while we're in motion, a renewing even while we're pouring ourselves out...like eagles that soar without getting tired, like a heart that keeps pumping for 70, 80, 90 years and never misses a beat.

***...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...
John 2:19***

"I will raise it up to be your temple. I will be the place where you meet God."

Jesus could also have said, "Bury me on the Sabbath eve and when the Sabbath is past I shall rise from death to be your Sabbath, your continuous rest, your never ending revival."

...so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath,

Mark 2:28

because the whole meaning and power and glory of the Sabbath is found in him.

Jesus is our Sabbath for the weariness of spiritual fatigue.

Many of us are laboring under loads we were never meant to carry. For instance, we're exhausted trying to carry the load of our own guilt, or trying to live up to some ridiculous reputation we think we have, or should have, or trying to achieve some vain goal, or trying to make something happen that was never meant to happen.

Whatever it is we're trying to carry, Jesus says,

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

"If you're outside the Kingdom, come in.

If you're inside the Kingdom, leave all that alone and come to me and be renewed

Get under my yoke and I will teach you how to spend yourself, pour yourself out and never get weary.



Forgotten

In fact, you'll get stronger and fresher all the time. While your outer man is wasting away, your inner man will be renewed day-by-day."

Jesus is our Sabbath from the weariness of dissatisfaction.

When you're dissatisfied you tire very quickly. And one of the most unsatisfying, frustrating situations to be in is to be religious and yet never touch God.

To be reaching out for God and never finding him ...thinking about God but never communing with him.

***On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed,
"If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink..."***

John 7:37

Drink what?

Drink God.



My Soul Thirsts For God
Signe Flink

Literally satisfy your thirst with a deep satisfying draft of God himself.

***"He who believes in me, as the scripture has said,
Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."***

John 7:38

Jesus is our Sabbath from the weariness of an aimless life.



Stop and Hear God's Voice

And how many believers are still drifting, lacking a dominating interest, a consuming passion aimless! And when we lack a dominating interest we're always tired.

It's much easier to see how absurd other men's goals are than it is to *abandon ourselves* to the pursuit of God.

Rest comes to our spirits when we have truly found the way and are walking in it.

***And I will pray the Father, and he will give you
another Counselor, to be with you forever....***

John 14:16

When I find myself drifting, losing my sense of purpose, I turn to him who is the way.

And as I walk with him and in his will of mercy

...I find God, and in God, peace.

There is no such thing as weariness in the life of faith because the life of faith is *lived in a continuous Sabbath*.

And if we take one day in seven to come together and worship him who is our Sabbath, it's only because he goes with us into those other six days to be our daily, heavenly rest.

***The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,
so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.***

Indeed the Son of man is the Sabbath.

***Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.***



Be Still and Know That I am God

Prayer- Lord we do want to find you, to commune with you... to find rest from our weariness, our strivings, our dissatisfaction and our aimless wandering. Instead of being spiritually drained and burdened ... may we be filled with delight in your presence, overflowing with awe and joy. Lord help us to know that we can release our cares because you are in control, you are God, and you offer us the gift of your Sabbath rest. May we thirst for you, with all we have. May we find continuous rest and never-ending renewal in your presence as we drink from you dear God may your living water flow into and from our hearts.

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