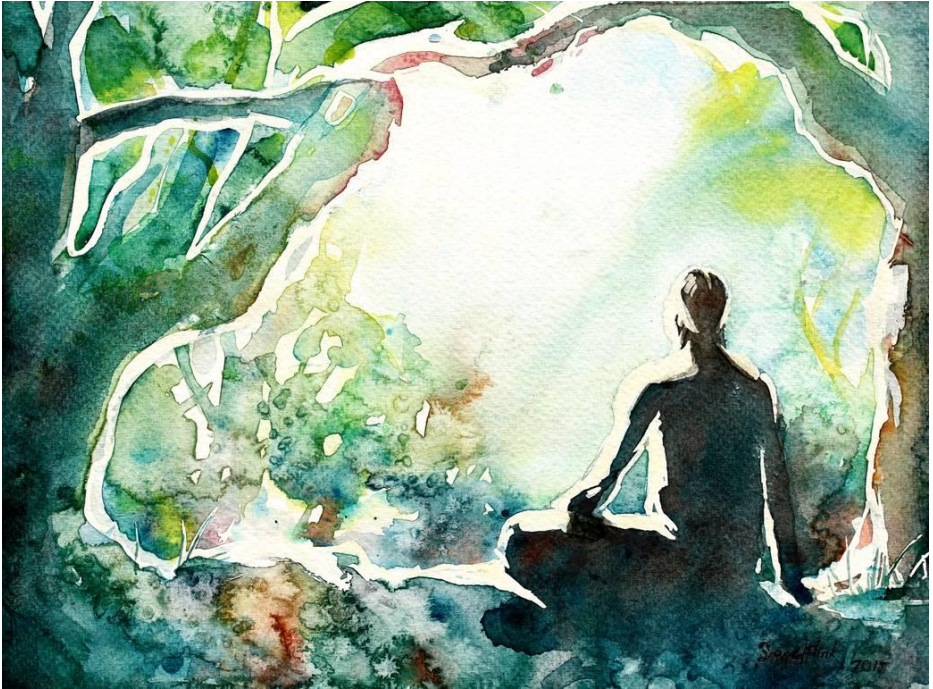


REST



Messages from R.E. Bieber

REST



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

Matthew 11:28

He's not talking about lying around on cushions while angels serve you cheese and crackers.

He's talking about rest for your burdened soul.

Your mind is alert.

Your body is active.

But your soul is at rest. You have peace within.

Storms can be raging all around you.

Things can be going crazy in your circumstances.

Still your soul is at rest, because it has found the true Sabbath.

It has entered the Sabbath that never ends.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

John 14:27

This Sabbath invitation and Sabbath promise is not for the future, it's for now.

It is yours as you open your heart to the living Word who is Jesus himself.

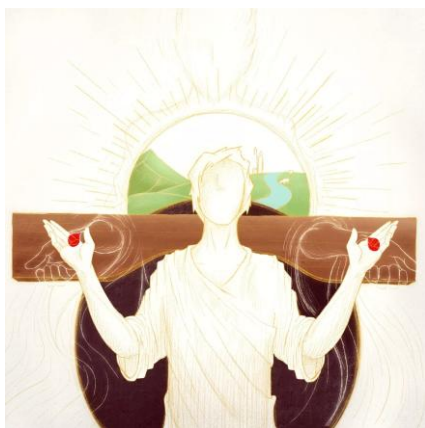
Jesus IS the Sabbath.

Abide in him, and allow his words to rule in you, and peace which passes all understanding will keep you safe through any storm.

Whenever this peace is lacking, we need to go back to square one and listen again to his Sabbath Invitation....

*"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 11:29



Prayer: Jesus our Sabbath, our true rest, we open our hearts to you within all the challenges, hurts, and burdens we face. As we take your yoke upon us, we will not be afraid or overcome, because your peace will comfort us and carry us through all things. Amen.

REB 2019

Art: 1st piece unknown 2nd piece Chris Powers at Full of Eyes.

THE YOKE



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

"Lord, I did that, and nothing happened. I'm still as burdened down and weary as ever."

"You came to me? How did you come to me?"

"I answered an altar call. I came forward and prayed the sinner's prayer. For a few days I had great peace. Then it all evaporated."

"But did you get under my yoke?"

"Your yoke?"

"You really haven't come to me....."

Until you're under the yoke with me.

Until you're walking with me, obeying me, learning from me."

"But I thought salvation was free. Now you tell me I have to do something!"

"Salvation is free, but you won't find it anywhere but under my yoke."

So join me under this yoke of servanthood.

You will learn from me to be meek and lowly of heart.

You will experience unspeakable peace as we serve together.

Come!"

*"I have been crucified with Christ.
It is no longer I who live
but Christ who lives in me.
And the life I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God
who loved me and gave himself for me."
Galatians 2:20*



Crucified with and Alive with Christ

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may we truly join you under the yoke. where we will find the salvation from darkness, rest, unspeakable peace and the abundant life you have for us. Amen.

Written 2003 REB

Fr. James Hasse's art can be found at claverjesuit.org

REST FROM UNREST



There was a time when the stars made music as they traveled in their courses like a giant choir out there in space, a time when the whole universe was filled with joy. Until one day a seed of suspicion was sown among the stars; and each was told that other stars were trying to outshine it. Suddenly the music stopped.

The festival of joy became a contest in vanity. Some of the brighter more "intellectual" stars began to attract to themselves lesser stars who would say, "You're the brightest star in the universe! What a privilege it is to shine in your presence!"

Gradually the din of competition began to degenerate into a divided universe, descending, at last, into outright war.

Far off in one of the darkest regions of the universe, billions of light years away, so far away from the other stars that only God knew it existed, was a tiny star, unaware that a tragedy had occurred.

This tiny star went right on shining to God's glory.

It had no thought of trying to outshine others.

It never felt neglected.

It just kept shining to the glory of its Creator.

And as it did, it created music that spread through the dark vastness until it reached the other stars.

When the music from this one little star was heard among the warring ones, some of the warring stars stopped their fighting and began to weep.

For the first time in centuries these weeping stars tasted inward peace.

They became so homesick for the blessedness they once knew that they gave up all thoughts of fighting and began to sing once more to the glory of God.

“Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30

The rest Jesus is talking about is not the rest of idleness. The laborers standing idle in the marketplace were far more restless in their hearts than those who were working hard in the vineyard. Nor is the rest Jesus talks about a rut of boredom. There are people who get up in the morning, have their breakfast, go to work. They come home in the evening, have their supper, watch television until 10:30, have their cocoa, go to bed; get up in the morning have breakfast, go to work, come home have their supper, watch television have their cocoa, go to bed.

On and on and on, for what? That's not rest.

Nor is the rest, to which Jesus calls us, a cop-out. There are those who are forever quitting the rat race, not because they see it as a rat race, but because they are losing — so they pick up their marbles and go home. They think they are out of the rat race, but they are deceived—they still have no peace.

The rest to which Jesus calls us is the mysterious peace....
which comes to a person when the heart is focused on God alone.

When the heart is settled---fixed on just loving him.

***My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:
I will sing and give praise. (Psalm 57)***

Most of us have no conception of how restless, how unsettled, seething, troubled and anxious we are within until we taste the rest which comes from God.

God's rest is inner peace, the end of the war within.

Once you have true rest, you can live with all kinds of pressure, you can work so hard that you're half dead at the end of every day---and still your spirit is never weary; your soul never faints.

You go from strength to strength.

You mount up on wings as eagles.

You run and are not weary.

You walk and never faint.

This is the rest Jesus enjoyed through all his trials. He was resting in his Father's will in the midst of slander, envy, threats, and anger. Jesus never lost his inner peace. Whether he was laboring in prayer, teaching, feeding the multitude, or healing the sick, he was inwardly at peace. Whether he was asleep in the storm-tossed boat, or hanging on the cross, inwardly Jesus was flooded with the Father's peace.

His spirit kept burning --- like the star out in the darkness of space -- to the glory of his Father.

And this inward peace he longs to give to each of us.

"Come to me all you who are inwardly laboring, who are heavy laden ... troubled, upset, confused and disturbed, and I will give you rest."

The rest which Jesus offers us, even now, takes specific forms:

1. The Rest of His Lowliness... from the unrest of vanity

If we will let him, Jesus will bring us from the unrest of vanity into the rest of his lowliness.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls."

There can be no rest for us as long as we think that we have to "be something" in the eyes of men. How can there be peace, when inwardly we know how childish, how vain, petty and frail we are?

Yet we think we have to make the world around us see us as persons of distinction. At the same time there is the constant anxiety that a gust of wind may suddenly blow off our mask.

The thing which unsettled people concerning Jesus was that he was the only one in Israel who walked without a mask. Everybody had a mask.

Some masks were beautiful.

Some were hideous.

Some were angry.

Some were ugly.



But here's a man with no mask! What's wrong with him?!

***"Take my yoke upon you,
(learn from me how to live without a mask.)"***

To live without a mask is not an external matter. It's a matter of the heart.

The minute you pull your outer mask off, another one will grow --- as long as your heart is enslaved to *a spirit of pretense*.



Your mask is a sign of a puffed-up heart. It will be there as long as your heart is inflated.

Let your heart come down to size and the mask will disappear. My heart comes down to size when I am willing to settle for shining with God's glory in whatever out-of-the-way spot in his universe he chooses to place me ---

When all I want to do is shine for him, like that star in the middle of nowhere.

When I am willing to do quality work, even when there is no one around to appreciate it.

When I am willing spend myself for his glory, do what needs to be done, even if there's no one to see my "sacrifice."

When I am actually able to praise God that he has put me where only his eye can appreciate what I am doing.

When I come to this place, I have peace.

2. The Rest of Trusting God...from the unrest of fear

Jesus will bring us into rest if we allow him to bring us out of the unrest of fear into the rest of trusting God.

***Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."***

When the disciples cry out to him in the boat as it's about to sink, "Master, save us!" he calls them into the rest of faith.

"Why are ye fearful, O ye, of little faith?"

Perhaps there is someone reading these words who is anxious about tomorrow... about your health, your job, your family, your children ... in this dangerous world.

The Lord is saying to you, *"Fear not, only believe. Do your work well. Do everything that is within your power. Be wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove ... and leave the rest to your Heavenly Father."*

Know that your Father will watch over you.
He will not suffer your foot to be moved.

*The Lord watches over you
The Lord will watch over
your coming and going
both now and forevermore.
Psalm 121:5+8*

3. The Rest of Dwelling in His Mercy, from the unrest of anger

If we will let him, Jesus will bring us out of the unrest of anger into the rest of dwelling in mercy.

Many of us are so full of anger toward people who have wronged us, so full of blame toward those who put us in these "circumstances," we can't possibly have peace in our hearts.

How easy it is to remember the wrongs that have been done to us, while we pass blindly over the kindness we have received --- often from the same people! Think of the kindness which has been shown us---without strings. Think of the total strangers who appeared just when we were at our wit's end, who helped us with such grace! People who happened to "show up" people who spent time, effort, even money, helping us out of our predicaments --- and never asked for a thing in return.

Behind these people is a God who, like the Samaritan, appears out of nowhere to rescue us.

The God of all mercy!

And the incarnation of that mercy is Jesus, who takes the blame that should have been ours upon himself and washes it away with his own suffering!

Who ever since, has shown us nothing but mercy, if we have eyes to see it.

But the Lord Jesus wants to do more for us.

Not only does the Lord Jesus show us mercy, he wants to teach us how to dwell in mercy.



To bring us out of the kingdom of blame and anger... into the Promised Land of Rest, where mercy reigns.

4. The Rest of a Concentrated Life ... from the unrest of wandering thoughts

Jesus will bring us out of the unrest of wandering thoughts into the rest of a concentrated life.

From where our thoughts are forever flying off into ten different directions to the place where we are focused --- where we are able to concentrate on just loving God.

You're trying to pray. After the first ten minutes, your thoughts begin to wander. You have entered the realm of fantasy. You begin to rekindle old fires that should have been extinguished long ago. Suddenly you wake up and realize what's happening.

You cry out for help, and the Lord comes to you once again with a living Word, beside which those wandering thoughts become pale.

In a certain city there was a garden owned by a billionaire. In this garden were magnificent flowers that could be seen nowhere else on the planet. People crossed continents to see these flaming reds and beautiful blues, these blazing orange blooms. The flowers themselves were aware of how unique they were. After all, aren't we the most beautiful garden on earth? Don't people come from miles around to see us? One day the flowers began to argue over which of them was the most glorious.

Three miles from the billionaire's garden was a slum. In the slum was an alley, which reeked of filth, flies, broken bottles, smelly cans, stray cats. Yet one flower managed to push through the filth ... and bloom.



A little girl came wandering down the alley, covered in dirt from head to toe. When her eyes fell on that flower, her face beamed. And the flower beamed right back.

Do you think that flower ever had the slightest twinge of envy toward the flowers three miles away in the billionaire's garden?

If, wherever we find ourselves, we settle for simply living in God's love, focusing on his glory

--- everything around us will be touched with healing;

--- everything within us will be filled with rest.

The One who can teach us to live this way ...

is closer to you at this moment than the air you breathe.

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

Matthew 11:28-30

Prayer: Magnificent, Perfect Lord, you who are closer to us than the air that we breathe... bring us into your rest. Bring us into the peace that comes from focusing on you with all our hearts, the peace which will keep our lives singing a beautiful song to you. A song that will cause others to sense your beauty and majesty. Lord save us from the unrest of our vanity, bring our hearts down to size so that the masks of pretense we wear disappear, and we are content to shine with your glory, wherever you put us. Loving Lord save us from the unrest of fear, into a faith that is all trusting, knowing all is well within your hands. Oh God of Mercy, save us from the unrest of anger, blame and bitterness, draw us into living your mercy where we will find true rest. Dear God, bring us out of our wandering thoughts, our confusion and help us to concentrate on loving you. And may we like the flower that blooms despite the filth and despair around it, beam with your radiance and glory bringing healing and rest to all who wander our way. Amen.

LEARN FROM ME



Most of us stopped learning about Jesus when we graduated from Sunday School.

Most of us never did get around to learning from Jesus---actually learning from him.

If we are ever to find rest for our restless souls, we need to learn from Jesus....not just about him.

“Get under my yoke, and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:29

Most of us have not yet figured out how to be “meek and lowly in heart”.

We’re pretty good at talking humility.

Faking humility.

But *actual* humility?

We will never have the real thing until we come to the Master, get under his yoke and learn---from him.

As we walk at his side,

As we stay in step with him,

As we bear the invisible weight of glory with him,

Jesus alone teaches us how to walk with our feet on the ground and our hearts in heaven.

Here's how:

When I'm under that yoke with the Master....

If I start blowing my own horn,

If I begin "talking down" to people,

If I climb up on the bench and play the judge, he nudges me again and again, warning me to change my attitude.

If that doesn't work, he lets me do my thing, until I expose my own hypocrisy.

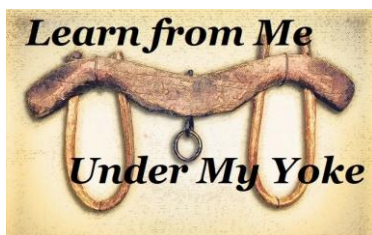
One way or another I will learn the value of doing things his way.....as long as I stay under his yoke.

No other teacher can help us.

No Rabbi, no Professor, no Bible Teacher is up to the task.

"You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren."

Matthew 23:8



June 2020 REB

Prayer: Dearest Teacher, we need help for these restless souls of ours. Draw us under your yoke with you. We need to truly learn from you. Teach us to have true humility. When we falter, correct us, redirect us. Never let our hearts forget the beauty of your meek and lowly heart. Amen

BE STILL.....BUT DON'T FALL ASLEEP!



"Be still, and know that I am God,"

....is the Lord's word to us when we're inclined to panic over the disintegration around us.

***"I will be exalted among the heathen,
I will be exalted in the earth."***

God doesn't need our help, or our worry.

He knows why he allows what he allows and does what he does.

So be still, and refresh your mind as to who's in charge.

***"Know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the heathen
I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10***

But don't err at the other extreme and fall asleep.

Knowing that God is God (and not you) means that your job is to fit into his program.



And you can't do that in a trance of stagnation.

"What must we do to be doing the work of God?" they asked.

"This is the work of God," said Jesus, "that you believe in him whom he has sent."

And you only "believe in him whom he has sent"

.....when you start walking with him, and doing the things he tells you to do.



"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you". John 14:15-17

Prayer: Yes, Lord...help us to be still...to wait for you...to look for you.... but not fall asleep. Our temptation is to see the disorder and chaos around us and to give up, to fall into a helpless, sleeping stagnation. Forgive us Lord. Father, we know that in it all you are still in control, and you will be exalted through it all. Pull us from any stagnation we find ourselves in, help us to keep believing, to keep following your commandments, and to ask for and receive the Holy Spirit...who will continue to dwell with us, to help us and to keep us awake, aware, and willing to the end of our days. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber September 2019

Featured Artist: Signe Flink at deviantart.com/signeflinkart

THE INNER SABBATH



*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's
sake.*

Psalm 23:1-3

What a wonderful thing it is for us to be able to come together with other believers each week and sing praises to God, offering our lives back to him in thanksgiving. To listen for some word from him that's fresh, helpful and new. To feast on the body and blood of the Lamb, as we break bread together. And hopefully go forth from our worship with a load of fresh bread for the people out there in the world beyond us. It's a privilege that many these days no longer have and for which all of us are grateful.

And yet, who of us does not feel frustrated, knowing that something's missing? Who of us is not aware of a lack of decisive action in our lives? A need for more power from God. More love ... clear, unpretentious love for each other and for people beyond our meeting place.

"Lord God, heavenly Father, what's missing?"

And the answer which comes from the Father may seem strange at first...

"If you yearn for more decisive action; more power, more love in your hearts---if you desire more of my joy, then be still ... inwardly still. Find the inward Sabbath which I have prepared for you. When you enter my inward Sabbath, my life will burst forth in your assembly in ways that you have never seen or heard. Healing will flow from your hands. Rivers of living water will pour from your mouths".

Find the inner Sabbath.

When God gave the law to Israel on Mt. Sinai one of the laws that he gave was,

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God and in it thou shalt not do any work.

God gave this command to Israel as a gift. Not to make their lives miserable, not to add another burden to the burdens they already had, But to give them a day when they could put down their tools, turn away from their work, and come together in a mystery to the inner Sabbath which he had prepared ... the Sabbath where they could dwell not one day out of seven but seven days out of seven. It was to be a blessing. And for many it was a rich blessing, a wonderful day, the opening to a Sabbath deep within that continued every day.

But, by the time we get to Jesus, the Sabbath law as it was practiced in Israel had been corrupted into a system of legalism, rules and regulations that one had to be a lawyer to figure out. How many steps you could take? What kind of food could be eaten or prepared? Whether you could light a fire or light a lamp, etc. And so Jesus takes the Sabbath law, as he does with every one of the laws from Sinai, and he gives it a new focus.

"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

What does this mean?

"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 meek and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28

The same God who gave the sabbath law to Israel as a rich blessing now gives his Messiah, his Son, Yeshua, the Savior, to the world to be the door through which all people can find the inner Sabbath.

In fact, **he is the inner Sabbath.**

Interesting that we read in the very next verse following that passage,

At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath."

Matthew 12:1-8

The disciples have come to him, submitted to his yoke, and found rest. In that rest they have begun to taste true freedom. For them the Sabbath has become the doorway to freedom, not bondage. Freedom to walk through the grain field and pluck ears of grain and eat without guilt.

And he went on from there, and entered their synagogue. And behold, there was a man with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. He said to them, "What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep. So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, whole like the other. But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him.

Matthew 12:9-13

Notice how often Jesus heals on the Sabbath day, makes an issue of healing on the Sabbath day. He heals this man on the Sabbath day. The man was healed at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day and told to rise and take up his bed and walk. You don't carry your pallet on the Sabbath day ... that's breaking the Sabbath! But Jesus tells him to do it. He heals the man blind from birth on the sabbath day. He tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; and the man comes back seeing.

Healings which takes place on the Sabbath are a sign that out of the inner Sabbath rest comes life, the resurrection power of God, to bring healing, joy, peace, forgiveness and salvation.

Jesus did not preach a word or perform a sign until he had himself first entered the Sabbath rest of the Father. Jesus was baptized at the age of 30, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and then the Spirit drove him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

In the wilderness Jesus entered into the Sabbath rest of his Father.

Satan came and said, *"If you're the Son of God, command these stones be made bread ... take some initiative!"* Jesus answered, *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"* He settled into the Sabbath rest of simply trusting his Father and doing only what he was told.

"If You're the Son of God, jump from this pinnacle for it's written, 'His angels shall bear you up in their hands lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus responded, *"It is also written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"* Again he rested in his Father.

Then Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time. "Here they are Jesus; this is what you came to take ... they're mine, and I'll give them to you without a fight if you'll bow down and worship me." *"Get out of here Satan! For it is also written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.'"* He settled down in the complete rest of dwelling in his Father, in his perfect will.

Jesus comes out of the wilderness and begins to exercise his ministry, but he always stays inside that inner Sabbath.

In the morning a great while before day he goes off to a lonely place and there he prays. And there in prayer *he returns to the Sabbath* and dwells at rest in the center of his Father's heart.

After he feeds the 5000 with the five loaves and two fish he withdraws into the hills by himself alone and *returns to the Sabbath*.

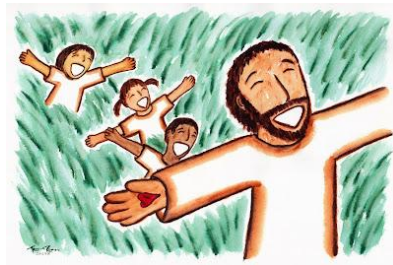
As he approaches the cross he enters into the Garden of Gethsemane ... he withdraws to be with his Father. "*Father, if there is some way this cup can be taken from me ... nevertheless, not my will but thine be done*" ... *back into the Sabbath*.

He hangs on the cross on the eve of the Sabbath ... dying "*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*." His *Spirit rests in the Father's hand*, His body comes to rest in the grave. His soul rests in the region of the dead where he preaches the gospel, we are told by Peter.

The Sabbath ends, and at the end of the Sabbath from that awesome, wonderful, beautiful rest Jesus rises up ... the Firstborn of the New Creation alive, never to die again, to bring life to this world such as it has never seen. And if we are going to walk in his steps and do the things he calls us to do, we have to learn to follow him into the inner Sabbath rest of God.

The 23rd Psalm is a Sabbath Psalm. It's a Psalm of rest, refreshment and renewal. The central verse of the Psalm is,

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.



And the paths of righteousness are to do the will of the Father - to walk in the footsteps of Jesus....

.... power, life, love, joy, to set the captives free.

To get to the paths of righteousness there are four steps:

Step one: *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*

Step two: *"He makes me to lie down in green pastures."*

Step three: *"He leadeth me beside the still waters."*

Step four: *"He restoreth my soul."*

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

Step number one: *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*

Our first step is to be absolutely confident that the Lord will provide for us whatever we need. One reason why we don't act decisively and manifest the power of God is that we're drained by anxiety. Worry that tomorrow will not be safe. Fear that things aren't going to work out as planned. Ambition to make tomorrow safer. And in the process we lose our strength. The one who teaches that the Lord is our shepherd is Jesus himself. He teaches us that the Father will provide everything we need in the physical realm and in the spiritual realm as we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

Step number two: *"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures".. the symbol of rest.*



Another reason why we are so ineffective is that we're burned out. We're half asleep always tired. Part of the reason may be that we don't get enough physical rest, but another part is that we're never at rest in our spirits.

When Jesus fed the five thousand he told the people to sit down. And "they sat down upon the green grass." *"He makes me to lie down in green pastures."* ... here they sit, with their hands out, and they receive provision. That's exactly how we are to live all the time ... in the Sabbath rest ... inwardly.

He provides for us. Everything's going to be okay! ... Rest! ... Settle down! ... Be at peace!

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

Step number three:

"He leadeth me beside the still waters," ...a symbol of peace.



The first words Jesus speaks after his resurrection to the disciples, "***Peace be unto you ... peace be with you.***" And the room filled with peace. It was a living, shining peace..

Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.... And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

We see Jesus asleep in the boat ... they're crossing Galilee. The storm comes up, but Jesus is so filled with peacehis Father's peace ... that he

goes right on sleeping. The disciples panic, "Lord, save us, we perish!" He gets up. "Why are you fearful, O men of little faith? Peace be still" And peace sweeps down over that sea like a living thing and settles it like oil. That's the peace he gives to us if we follow him into the *inner* Sabbath and learn from him.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me"

Step number four: *"He restoreth my soul."*



Our pattern so often is that we receive a vision, we run with it for all we're worth, and then burn out. There's a long interval until we receive another vision ... run for all we're worth ... burn out again. But in the kingdom of God the order is:

- Vision
- Action
- Restoration

... all the time. Paul says, "*Our outer man is wasting away, but our inner man is being renewed day-by-day*"... constant renewal. And in that inner sabbath there ought to be a continuous building up ... healing of the tears and the wounds that come to us.

We're not promised no disruption ... there will be disruption..
We are not promised that there won't be violence against us.

But in the midst of it

.... there will always be healing and restoration.

**"Take my yoke upon you....
.... and learn from me how to live in the inner Sabbath."**

So, how do we enter this Sabbath?

There are two basic places to enter the inner Sabbath of God.

The first is the gathered assembly...



One of the most blessed things about gathering in the name of Jesus, partaking of the body and blood of the Lamb in the breaking of bread, worshipping him in song, prayer and praise is that we are enabled to enter afresh into the inner Sabbath. We come to bring a blessing and offer something up to God, but we also come to find rest in him as we surround his cross together.

The second place where we find inner rest is in our daily time alone with God.



He gives us this time as a gift.. he provides an example in his own time alone with the Father – and he calls us to do the same. Go into a room, shut the door, go out in the woods, stand under the tree, wait by the river ... whatever ... just be alone with him. In order that, alone with him, we can enter into the Sabbath rest of God.

The harvest fields are ripe, people are responsive. But if we're going to reap the harvest effectively, we need to do it the way Jesus did it --- by dwelling constantly in our inner Sabbath.

"Come to me and learn...

what it means that the Lord is your Shepherd...
what it means to lie down in green pastures...
what it means to walk beside the still waters...
what it means to have your soul restored..."

And once we've come into that Sabbath rest of God and are dwelling there, life from the kingdom will burst forth and we will experience the power of his resurrection as never before.



Prayer: Lord, help us to make you our inner sabbath, to take your yoke upon us and learn from you how to truly live in your inner sabbath. Help us to be still and to open this precious gift to us. Help us to follow you into the paths of righteousness for your name's sake. May we know to the core of our beings as we follow you...that we will lack for nothing and that we are safe in all your all-knowing, tender hands. Help us to trust enough to lie down in green pastures...to allow your rest to enter us. Lead us to the still waters of your peace...to the peace that does keep us still, that allows us to settle into awe of you. And Lord may we allow you to restore our souls as we face our powerlessness, the discouragement, the disappointment, the despair, and the horrors of this sin sick world. And yes, Lord, as we accept and come into the inner sabbath you have for us, may life from the Kingdom and resurrection power burst forth in our lives stronger than it ever has before. Amen.

Message: REB Unknown Date but most likely after 1989 in Nova Scotia.
Featured Art: Ramone Romero at ramone-romero.blogspot.com

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 unnecessary.

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



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

Mark 2:27

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.



In the Shelter of the Most High
Signe Flink

***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

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...

**"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...

... 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.

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.



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.

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
Signe Flink

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.

Art: Signe Flink (deviant art [signe flink](#))

FROM THE RAT RACE



"Late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

William Wordsworth

We're scared to death to leave the treadmill.

Even our times of "relaxation" are filled with stress

Without a deliberate decision to take time out to meet with God daily, we are consumed by the pressures and distractions that flood our minds and bombard our souls.

There is no other way to ***"humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God"*** than to become still before him.

Jesus promises that if you ask the Father for the Holy Spirit, your prayer will be answered.

But it is impossible even to pray this prayer, much less to receive the answer as long as your mind is distracted.

**Take time to draw back...and think....and wait...
....and open your soul to the living God.**



"But I cannot afford to take the time," you say.

Listen.....you cannot afford not to take the time.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?.....Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

Matthew 6:25



Prayer: Holy Lord, we continue to be distracted, our minds bombarded with worries, sadness, petty concerns and bad news. Help us to take ourselves off these treadmills, to remove ourselves from these rat races of futility, from this hopelessness. Lord, help us not be satisfied until our biggest concern, our greatest comfort is being still before you, seeking your presence, your righteousness, your nature, your kingdom above all else. Starting now, help us to stop, to take time to wait, to open ourselves in every way to you, to absorb you into every fiber of our beings, and to breathe in the joy of who you are. Amen.

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Featured Artist: Courtesy of Deborah Nell at deborahnellart.net/

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN