

Jesus and a Different Kind of Sabbath

August 21, 2011

Focus: 'Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.' Three things I believe it means for Christians who are still called to 'Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.' First, Sabbath is for us, as it was for Israel, a day of protest. Second, it is about work—worship. Liturgy, which literally means 'work of the people.' It is holy work, it is the work of praise and prayer. Third, Sabbath is Jesus.

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns.

¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Hebrews 4:1-11

¹ Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. ³ Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. ⁴ For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: On the seventh day God rested from all his works." ⁵ And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." ⁶ Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who =formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹ There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.



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Psalm 92

¹ It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, ² proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, ³ to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp. ⁴ For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. ⁵ How great are your works, LORD, how profound your thoughts! ⁶ Senseless people do not know, fools do not understand, ⁷ that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be destroyed forever. ⁸ But you, LORD, are forever exalted.

⁹ For surely your enemies, LORD, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered. ¹⁰ You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured on me. ¹¹ My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries; my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes. ¹² The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; ¹³ planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, ¹⁵ proclaiming, “The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.”

Matthew 11:28-12:14

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 12

¹ At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

³ He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? ⁶ I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁹ Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰ and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

¹¹ He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

¹³ Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

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