

MEET WITH ME: Sabbath
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES SERIES - Part 6
Ben Rudolph

Good morning Life family. It is good to see you here this morning. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 92 where we are going to be this morning. I don't know how many of you were here last Sunday, or how many may have watched the service online, but I would encourage you if you haven't to please go back and watch it. If you did see the service I am sure you just had to feel the Spirit of God moving in our midst last week. One of the things I have been doing is thinking and praying about what we heard last week. I have heard from many of you who have emailed me or talked to me letting me know what God was saying to you last week.

Carole Ward was with us last Sunday and she is a missionary with Favor of God International. My heart has been stirred in a deep way and I am still trying to find out from God what he wants us to do. And the thing that I am feeling right now is I want to see God move in a powerful way. That is what I want to see. What I know is that what we have to do as a church is we need to pray like we have never prayed before. And I believe that God is calling us to do that. What I am working through in my own heart and mind is finding a time on a weekly basis for us to come together and pray. Praying not just for our nation, because I am really burdened for one of the things Carole said about how she sees our kids being taken. I think we all feel for that and we need to be praying for the next generation.

I am so burdened about that, but I am not ready to make any declarations or decisions this morning; I am just letting you know that God is stirring in my heart that we as a church need to be growing in two ways. Number one, we need to be more desperate for God every single day. We have to be more desperate for God. And prayer and fasting is a means by which we show Him how desperate we are. And number two, we need to be expectant. We need to be an expectant people wanting and expecting God to do what He has called us to do and what He expects us to do.

So I feel like I had to share that with you as God has been working in my heart this week. I don't want things to come out that is just me talking; I really want the Holy Spirit to be speaking. But I just wanted you to know that God has been working in my heart in a powerful way this past week. I am just going to keep listening to God for what He has for us in our church. And I hope that you will be doing the same thing as we are discerning what God has for us as a church.

Today we are going to talk about Sabbath, really Sabbath rest. And when we think about Sabbath and when we think about taking a break it can feel very counter cultural in our day and age. Maybe it is true of more men than women, but it is almost like people brag about how much they work, the amount of hours they work in a week. It is like, *'Man, I worked X amount of hours,'* and people are like, *'Oh my, I can't believe how many hours you work.'* It is like we live in a culture that almost values workaholism. And Sabbath is one of these things that really confronts that.

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Here is what I know, some of the most dangerous idols that can be out there for us are good things that we make into ultimate things. Good things that we make ultimate things are the most dangerous idols, because we view these good things and we pervert them in such a way they become an ultimate thing. And I think for some of us in this room work, achievement and success are the thing by which we hang our hat on and say, *'Hey, this is what defines me. This is what gives me value. I am working toward being known as someone who will accomplish some great things or someone who is a super hard worker.'*

Listen, I grew up in a German family and they were farmers, and let me just tell you that they valued work. The worst thing you could call someone in my family, the Rudolph side of the family, was lazy. I mean that was like the scarlet letter you could put on someone's chest. *'The scarlet 'L,' that means they are lazy. I can't believe how lazy they are.'* To be called lazy was the cardinal sin in my German farmer family upbringing. You did not want to be called that. Even today there are times where I have this little whispering voice in my head saying, *'Don't be lazy. You need to work extra hard.'*

So we live in this culture that values these things. And this idea of Sabbath sometimes feels very foreign to us. We will think, *'Isn't that an Old Testament thing? Isn't that something that we don't need to worry about today?'* We find as we are reading in the New Testament a lot of the arguments that Jesus got into with the Pharisees and religious leaders had to do with Sabbath. The religious leaders had all these ritualistic and rigid rules for the Sabbath and then when Jesus came He did things on the Sabbath like healing people. And the leaders were freaking out.

So we almost look at observing the Sabbath as a negative thing. And what I want us to do right now is to take a step back and realize that Sabbath rest is something that is a good thing that God has created for us. And what I want to do this morning is just basically spend a few minutes on the history of what Sabbath rest is in the entirety of Scripture. I want to spend a few minutes on that, and then we are going to look at Psalm 92 about why Sabbath is so important, and then we will learn how to do Sabbath, how we are to do Sabbath rest.

Sabbath is something that I have spoken on before, and it is something I have done some podcasts on. It is something that is very near and dear to my heart because about six years ago I had a real turning point in my own life where I was just exhausted. I was worn out. And I was taking days off, I was taking my vacation time because I just felt empty inside. There is a little meter on the dashboard of our car that shows the level of our gas tanks. And I felt like if I had a little meter for my body, that little meter would be in between the E sign for empty and just a quarter of a tank. That is how I felt, I just felt so drained. And maybe you feel like that this morning as well. Maybe you just feel constantly worn out, constantly tired, just constantly burdened down by life. And God does not expect us to live that way.

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So first I want you to see the history of the Sabbath. We are not going to look at all of these Scriptures that I have on the screen for you, but I want to take you through a journey of the idea of Sabbath this morning. The first time we see Sabbath is in the book of Genesis in Chapter 2. And what happens is Genesis Chapter 2 is that God has created the world in six days out of nothing, and then on the seventh day it says that He rested. He declared the seventh day holy because on it He rested. And that is so important. He didn't call the seventh day holy and then rest on it, because that would have made the seventh day holy in itself. No, He says He rested on the seventh day and therefore called it holy which means that it is rest that is sacred.

Rest was the ceasing of God to look back and reflect on what He had done. So God rested and He called it holy which is the introduction of this idea of Sabbath rest. Then we have Exodus Chapter 16 where the Israelite nation has come out of Egypt and they are in the wilderness. God has sent manna down from heaven. He tells them on the sixth day they were to gather enough manna for two days because on the seventh day they were not to gather any food as it was a day of rest. That is what we read in Exodus Chapter 16.

And then we see God instituting the Sabbath in Exodus Chapter 20 when He gives the Ten Commandments. It is the fourth Commandment, "***Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.***" And of the Ten Commandments listed in Exodus Chapter 20 we should note that more verbiage is given to the Sabbath Commandment than any of the other nine Commandments. So it was important to God.

In Leviticus Chapters 23 and 25 we learn about the Sabbaths of the nation, these festivals. There is the Day of Atonement that is called the Sabbath. Then there is the Passover which is called the Sabbath. And many times we read in Scripture that they were profaning His Sabbaths. So Sabbath was first a weekly observance of God's rule and reign and they were to rest from work. But there were also these celebrations, these festivals that were known as Sabbath. In fact there was something in the Law that said on the seventh year they were to let the land have a Sabbath. That is all found in Leviticus.

Then in Deuteronomy Chapter 5 we see this idea of God identifying a Sabbath people. He was telling them they were about to go into the land and He gives them the Ten Commandments again. He tells them to remember how they were slaves in Egypt and when they go into the land He wanted them to make sure that every single person, their spouses, their children, even their servants, making Sabbath not just personal, but corporate. It is almost something that they were to all do together and He did not want them doing something that was going to make someone else work on the Sabbath.

Maybe you are old enough to remember that there used to be a time when on Sundays nothing was open. Do you remember that? I remember the first time that the Mall opened on a Sunday. It was open from 1:00 to 5:00, and I remember my town made a big deal that on Sunday the Mall was going to be open. It is one of those things that

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just kind of took over our culture that if I wanted something, then I wanted it when I wanted it. How many times have you left church on a Sunday morning and said, ‘*Hey, let’s go to Chick-fil-A.*’ (Laughter.) And then we realize we can’t go on Sunday. There have been times I have almost been upset because I thought, ‘*Why? All I want is a chicken sandwich right now.*’

But you know what I love? I love how places like Chick-fil-A can say to their employees, ‘*I know people want a number one meal with half sweet tea and half lemonade right now, but we think it is important that you all get a chance to rest on Sunday.*’ And I think we have lost that in our nation, just the value of ceasing and resting. But that was God’s intent for His people. On the Sabbath day which was traditionally Saturday, He did not want anyone working.

So we see this really heavy introduction and explanation of Sabbath in the first five books of the Bible. When we get to the middle part of the Old Testament we really don’t see a lot of people talking about the Sabbath in the history books of the Old Testament. But then you get to the prophets, and all of a sudden whether it is Jeremiah or Isaiah, or some of the Minor Prophets, one of the major issues that God was upset with His people was because that they were profaning His Sabbath. They were not really observing the Sabbath the way that God wanted them to do, and He warns them that judgment would come unless they did it.

And guess what? They did not listen and He sends them into captivity. If you are familiar with this you know that God sends the children of Israel into captivity for seventy years. And the reason why He gives them seventy years of captivity was for every year that they did not observe the Sabbath year for the land. Do you think God is serious about Sabbath? Yes, He is serious about it. He gives His people over to another nation so that His land can have rest for seventy years because that is the way He wanted it.

So when the people of God come back from captivity, which was around the fifth or sixth century BC, all of a sudden they start observing the Sabbath again and they observe it religiously. And one of the dangers of spiritual disciplines, whether we are going to talk about reading our Bible, or praying, or fasting, is that any one of us can turn something good into a legalistic standard, and we need to be very careful about that or it can happen.

When Jesus shows up He starts saying some radical things. In Matthew Chapter 11 He says, “***Anyone who is weary and heavy laden come to me and I will give you rest for your soul, for I am meek and lowly.***” And there is this idea that Jesus is becoming this person that personifies Sabbath rest. We can go to Him if we want real rest and we will find it in Him. Jesus stressed in the gospels that He was fulfilling the Law. He was telling them that every single Law was fulfilled in Him, even the Sabbath.

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So Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath requirement in Himself. In fact in Matthew Chapter 12 there is the story of the disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath. And the leaders were freaking out because they were doing that on the Sabbath. And Jesus says, “***I, the Son of Man, am Lord of the Sabbath.***” Later on He said that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. What Jesus was acknowledging is that we all need a rest. The last time we really see the Sabbath idea in the New Testament is in Hebrews Chapter 4. And the author of Hebrews is giving this picture of the Sabbath using it as a picture of salvation. He is saying that when we enter into a relationship with Jesus, when He becomes our Lord and our Savior, we enter into this position of perpetual rest for our soul. So that is the history of the Sabbath.

Now after two thousand years removed since Jesus was on the earth, what we find ourselves today thinking about the Sabbath, or about Sabbath rest is that it was just an Old Testament thing, or it was just a Jewish thing, and we really don't exercise and practice a Sabbath rest in our own lives the way that God intended us to do. Remember this is what God did before the Fall. Whenever we see something in the Bible where God is doing something before Genesis Chapter 3 and the Fall, God is saying that was the good life. It was His good plan for us to flourish, to grow and to be whole again. And Sabbath is one of those things that if we don't rest, if we don't take a twenty-four hour period ceasing from our work, or work related things, then we will wake up one day and our tanks are going to be empty, and our souls are going to be worn down.

Yes, you may be working sixty or seventy hours a week, and you may be accomplishing great things, but you will feel empty inside. God wants us to re-align our hearts, our minds and our souls to observe a Sabbath rest. As I was getting ready to preach this series I remembered doing a six week series on rest at my former church. And I was wondering if I should just pull my old sermons out, or if I should just put all six of these sermons together into one, or should I go through all the Scripture references on Sabbath? But then in my study this week I came across Psalms 92, and I realized that I have never preached on Psalm 92 before.

If you look at the beginning of Psalm 92 it says this: ‘*A Psalm for the Sabbath.*’ And what I love about this is that here is a Psalm that they were to sing and they were to recognize Sabbath. What they sang here was in a way to reset their minds of what Sabbath was all about. So let's read Psalm 92 now to get a feeling and a picture of what Sabbath is supposed to be like for us.

“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, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep! The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: that though the wicked

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sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; but you, O Lord, are on high forever.

For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

This is a Psalm by which the people of God in the Old Testament would reset their hearts and minds with. They would ask themselves what was it that God wanted them to remember. They knew that they were to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, so they would ask themselves what God wanted them to remember. And as I was reading and studying this passage I found a chiasm and you know how much I love chiasms. A chiasm is a structure of a Hebrew passage that is kind of like a sandwich. There would be two pieces of bread, then toppings and then there is the meat in the middle.

And there is a meat statement in this Psalm that I want us to see. What we see here in verses 1 through 3 is the idea of declaring, the declaration of God’s love and His goodness. **“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.”** And then look in verse 15: **“To declare that the Lord is upright.”** That is the same Hebrew word, so whenever you see patterned words in the Hebrew you have to realize that there is something going on here. So there was a declaration and another declaration and then what you have is Yahweh’s work for us bringing joy. In verses 4 and 5 we see it is talking about the work of the Lord and what is the result of God’s work? It is joy and gladness for us.

So the response to God’s work, not our work, is something that we need to realize. And then we see God’s work for us, and in us, is flourishing. He uses the image of a palm tree that is bearing fruit, full of sap. So it is God’s work around us, it is God’s work in us, and it is leading to gladness and flourishing. Then there is the discussion of the evil, the wicked. In verses 6 and 7 the wicked are destroyed and then you have the idea of the evil being doomed.

And then right in the middle you have verse 8 which is the main point of this Psalm. It says: **“But you, O Lord, are on high forever.” “But you, O Lord, are on high forever.”** This is what He wants us to understand. The whole point of the Sabbath, the whole idea that what we do on the Sabbath is we remember who is in charge. We remember who is God over all, who is the highest, who is the One whose work is greater

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than our work. It is Yahweh; it is God. And what we need to be reminded every single week is that He is God and we are not. Every week we need to be reminded that He is God and we are not. He is the most high, we are not. His works are the greatest work, not our work.

What He wants to accomplish is greater, the position of Yahweh is far greater than anything that is in us. And we need to take a step back and cease from our work once a week and realize there is something important for us to remember. Here is the main idea I want to give this morning. The main idea is that what we do is never as important as what Jesus has done. What you and I do is never as important as what Jesus has done. The point of the Sabbath is to stop, to cease, and to reflect on the work of God around us. And if we don't do that we will think that the world is dependent on us, and we will start thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.

What Sabbath does is it realigns, it refocuses and it refreshes our soul to truly trust God to take care of things that are bigger than us. Listen, what Jesus has done is far greater than what we may be doing right now. God wants us to work; He has created us for work, and work is holy, but what He also wants us to do is to take a step back and remember that He is the One who is on high, He is the One who is in charge, He is the One who is greatest, He is the One who is better, and it is His work that is more important than anyone else's work. That is what we need to remember on the Sabbath.

So that is the what and the why of Sabbath, now let's talk about the how. How do we Sabbath? This can feel like the anti-spiritual discipline because the whole point of doing Sabbath is to not do something. All the other spiritual disciplines are like, '*Make sure you read your Bible. Make sure you pray.*' It is like we have to add these things to our lives. What Sabbath is it is actually asking us to not do something. It is asking us to subtract things from our lives which almost feels worse than adding something to our lives. You and I are creatures of habit and there are certain things that we just get in a routine of doing, and that is just what we do on our days off. And what God wants us to do is to cease working and to rest. It is a new pattern that He wants us to develop.

So how do we practice Sabbath? Number one, and this may be mind blowing, but we have to rest. We have to rest. Whatever your day off is, there needs to be one day that you cease work. That is what Sabbath means, it means to cease from work. When God rested He ceased from work and He just looked at what He had created. It was about enjoyment. It was about enjoying the work that He had done.

So what we need to do is to cease, to put down our phones and not answer emails. This is going to be hard but on a practical level that is what it means. And what I do is for twenty-four hours I do not respond to emails. If you were to email me on a Friday most likely I will not email you back for twenty four hours. I am not perfect at this but I have learned that on my Sabbath I have to put down my phone or I will be tempted to do stuff. My wife is so good because she is helpful to remind me of that. (*Laughter.*) And

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she will say, *'Hey, it's your day off.'* And I need that voice reminding me because there is something in me that wants to believe that I am necessary, that the world needs me, that this person needs me and this situation needs me. But guess what; the world doesn't need us, the world needs Jesus.

And what we do as an act of humility is to say, *'You know God, I am going to put away my phone and I am not going to answer my emails. I am not going to answer phone calls. I am going to cease from working.'* Yes, there are things that have to be done. I may even be thinking about the work that has to be done, but I need to put it aside and realize that doesn't need me as much as I need Him.

Remember I shared with you that I go on a prayer walk every morning and part of my prayer routine is praying for our church. And it may sound sacrilegious, but on Fridays I don't pray for Life Fellowship. Do you know why? It is because I will be tempted to start thinking about Life Fellowship and the work that needs to be done. So I have to say no and realize that God is in charge of this church and not me. And I have to let Him carry that today. I will try to not think about it at all, or if I do I will keep turning it back over to Him.

We have to learn to rest realizing that what we do is never as important as what Jesus has done, and what he is doing. One of the things that we need is boundaries. We need to decide what kind of boundaries we need in our lives. I think one of the top ten books that any follower of Jesus needs to read is the book, *'Boundaries,'* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. If you have not read that book I will give you permission to get out your phone and order it now on Amazon. *(Laughter.)* That is a really, really good book because that book teaches us is that we need to have boundaries in our lives. We need to learn how to say no to people and we need to learn how to say no to ourselves and no to things.

And it is because if we are just ping ponged around the court, thinking this person needs me, and then there is this situation that needs me; we will feel like we are just going in circles. And what God wants us to do is to settle down and realize that the world doesn't need us today. And then we can just enjoy our family, we can enjoy the world around us and we can enjoy God, realizing that what we do is never as important as what Jesus has done. And when we rest, when we cease it can be a good thing.

Listen, this is something that was an idea that I had to die to, and maybe you have to die to it as well, and that is this: Jesus is not impressed with our seventy hour work week. He is not impressed with that. Jesus is not impressed with our busyness. There are so many times we see in Scripture where Jesus was pulling His disciples away from the crowds, to get them away to rest. And what we need to remember is if rest was important to Jesus, and if rest is what God did after creation, then rest is something that we need to do as well. Put some boundaries in your life. Pick that one day that you are

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not going to answer the phone or the emails. You are not going to get involved in your work but you are going to set it aside for the day. That is number one.

Number two, remember. Remember how it says to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. So the idea in Psalm 92 is it was a song for the Sabbath which meant to rest. And then we have this whole picture of remembering. ***“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love.”*** So there is this idea of I need to remember and I need to reflect on a couple of things. I am to remember and to reflect on everything that God has done. I am to remember who God is and what He has done.

Look what it says in verse 4: ***“For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord!*** Three times he says ‘God’s works.’ The point of Sabbath is to stop, sit down and think about what God has done for us. And what He is doing for us right now. Because what God is doing is greater than what we are doing. We need our minds to understand that God is doing something; He is working around us right now. And if we don’t pause and take a step back, if we don’t rest and take time to reflect and remember all that He has done we will miss out on praising Him by not having a spirit of worship in our hearts and lives.

We need time to sit, reflect and remember what God is doing in our lives. One of the practices I started doing, and sometimes I get away from it and have to come back to it on a regular basis is this: on Fridays one of the things I love to do is get out my journal and a practice of mine is to write down three to five things that I have seen God do that week. That is so important for me. And that is because it reminds me that God is working. Sometimes I feel like, ‘*God, where are you?*’ And then I can remember what I wrote down that He had done. Some weeks there are more things than others, and there have been weeks where I hadn’t seen God do anything. But something I always can do is remember the work that He did for me on the cross. I can always go back to the gospel. I can always go back to the redemption that He gave to me through the work of salvation that He has done for me.

So what we need to remember is the God works that are around us. And we also need to reflect on what the outcome of the evil one is. In this Psalm we have all these things about wicked and evil in verses 6 and 7 and then in verses 9, 10 and 11. There is this idea that the evil and the wickedness of the people around us can really bother us. Does it bother you? I am bothered. There are some days I start listening to the news and I have to turn it off because I am bothered by it. I can just get so angry at what is going on around me. And what I have to remember is they may have won the battle today, but I know who wins the war.

Remember last week when Carole was up here and one of the things that she said was we need to remember our victory. We have to remember that even though evil may

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be flourishing for a day, we know it is only for a day and it is not forever. God is calling us to remember and to reflect on what He has done and the outcome for the wicked. I would encourage you to buy a nice little journal. Get out your phones again, go on Amazon and purchase a journal. And use that as a journal to write in on your Sabbath days. To reflect on the goodness of what God is doing. It just really helps me. It helps put my mind at peace because if there are things that are really burdening my heart, if I stop and reflect I will remember that God is doing work, and I can take that project or thing that is burdening me and I can ask God to take care of it because I know He is working in my family, in my job and inside of me. I know He is working in this situation and in this relationship and I can trust Him. I can come to Him as someone who is weary and heavy laden and He will give me rest for my soul.

So we need to rest and we need to remember and then next we need to refresh. Now this is something that might sound contradictory here but it is doing things that are refreshing to you. These are things that you don't have to do. This is not the time to get caught up on this or that project; it is doing something that is refreshing to your soul. Now one of the things that you see about this idea of refreshing is in verse 10 where the Psalmist says this: ***"But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil."*** Now that might not sound like refreshing, like that of the wild ox. What does that mean? But the idea of oil being anointed on you was a symbol of refreshment, a symbol of renewal.

And that is what the Sabbath is to do. It is to renew our heart. I have used this illustration before with you but I want to use it again. If you are old enough you will remember VCRs. It was a cassette you put in to play on a VCR player. I remember 1985 was about the first time we bought our first VCR player and my dad chose Beta instead of VHS. Remember we had these tapes and they little spools of black tape inside. And you would put these in your VCR player and press play and you would be able to see the tape going from one spool to the other spool. And the one full spool would continue to wind around the other empty spool until it was full up and then it would stop playing.

And what we do when we work is the tape is full on one side. And as we are pouring ourselves out in our work and our labor that tape just keeps going and going to the other spool until you are feeling like your strength is waning and you need a break. None of us were created to work indefinitely; we all need a time to cease. So when it is your day off you can either press pause, or you can rewind on your day off. When you press pause that tape doesn't go in the opposite direction; it just stays there.

Listen there is a difference between relaxing and resting. When you relax it is purely physical. I have done days off where I have relaxed and I did what I wanted to do. I do activities that are fun for me, but I don't invite God into it. And what we need to understand is when we have our days off and we just do what we want to do, we are just pressing pause. But when you have a day off and you invite God into it that is when you

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start hitting rewind and the tape starts filling back up again on the other spool. And that is when you do get energized.

So this idea of refreshment in verse 12 says: ***“The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.”*** There is this idea of a tree which is a picture that the Psalmist describes as the spiritual maturity inside people. It is also used in Psalm 1 where it says: ***“He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.”***

There is this idea that these trees are flourishing and where are these trees flourishing? They are flourishing in the house of the Lord and in the courts of our God. To flourish means that we are doing something with God and not for God, that we learn how to do every day ordinary things, things that are fun to us but we are doing it with Him and not for Him. That is one of the things that I have had to learn and I am still learning that.

I shared with you before that during quarantine I built my wife a greenhouse. Have you ever found yourself thinking we need a good quarantine again? (*Laughter.*) I need a break sometimes, so I think another quarantine would be amazing right now. Now I am not what you would call handy at all, but I needed something to do. So I took the knowledge that I had about framing that my dad had taught me and I just slowly put things together for this greenhouse. And one of the things I did was build that greenhouse with God because I am not handy. I bought new tools and every time I would hammer something I would say, *‘Lord, help me to hammer this right, help me to screw this correctly, help me to do this correctly.’* The entire time I was just talking to God while I was building that thing.

Why? It was because I needed Him. And it was something that was fun for me, something that I enjoyed doing. No one made me do it; it was a gift that I wanted to give to my wife. And what I learned was that I needed to learn how to do things that were enjoyable to me and I needed to do them with God. When it is my day off and I want to go for a walk or a hike I want to do it with God. I don’t want to just invite God into crisis moments, but I want to learn what refreshment looks like as I do the everyday ordinary things, the things that I enjoy with God and not for God. And when we do that we find our hearts are refreshed.

Lastly, I want to point out verse 12 where it says: ***“The righteous flourish.”*** Listen, one of the things so true to our lives, and this is the whole idea of Sabbath, is that we can experience rejuvenation in our soul. God is building us up, He is refreshing our hearts and we need that. You and I need that on a regular basis. And here is what I know, the thing that will sap our strength, the thing that will crush our energy, and that will suck the life out of us more than anything else is our own personal sin.

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And what Sabbath should be is a time for us to reflect, not just on the work that God has done that is greater than our work, but we need to remember that when we are doing things that are unrighteous it is hard to be refreshed in God. There might be times where we need to take a step back, ceasing from our work, and remembering what God is doing, but we can also be reflecting in our hearts. It is a time for us to realign our desires to God's desires and ask Him to search us and know our hearts to see if there anything grievous or wicked in us. Sometimes Sabbath is a time of repentance; it is a time to reflect and realize we didn't do something well. We should want to flourish, we should want to be refreshed, but we may have this thing in our lives that we need to give to Him.

Again remember what Sabbath is for, it is to remember what God has done, to remember what Jesus has done. One of the things that can refresh our hearts more than anything is when we can look at our sin and repent because we have a Savior who has said, "*It is finished.*" That sin is now covered by His blood. It is good to our souls to remember the gospel of Jesus Christ, to remember the power of the blood, to remember the power of His forgiveness, to remember how He makes all things new.

So when we do Sabbath we bring all of these things and we lay them down before God and say, '*God, I need to cease, I need to remember, I need to reflect and I need you to refresh my heart. Refresh me, God. I want to start doing things with you and not for you. I want to rid my life of things that are pulling me down, that are sucking the life out of me.*' There is something that only God can do in you only when you rest. You will miss something if you don't rest.

Remember this whole series is called 'Meet With Me,' and what I love about this is that every single spiritual discipline, whether it is prayer, fasting, Sabbath, simplicity or Bible reading, is another way in which we meet God in a personal way. We get to know God in a way that is unique to Him in this moment. And when we Sabbath and we rest we get to know God in a way that refreshes our soul.

Maybe you have missed that. Maybe you haven't experienced that. My hope is that we as the people of God learn how to rest, that we learn how to Sabbath, and we remember the goodness and the works of our God. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes. Before I pray I just want us to ask yourselves what God is asking us to do today. Which of those three things – rest, remember, refresh is the one that the Spirit of God is saying, '*This is your first step that I want you to do.*' Which one is that? And how are you going to be obedient to Him today? How are you going to be obedient this week in observing a Sabbath rest? No one is going to make you rest, no one can make us rest; it is an act of worship that we do before God.

Father I pray right now as we come before you, as we reflect on your goodness to remember that there is nothing that we do that is greater than what you have done. So God I pray right now that as a people that are called by your name we would learn how to rest again. God let us put aside the idols, put aside the praise of people or the praise

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of accomplishment, and realize there is something greater that you want to do in us when we cease from our work. Remind us of your goodness. God, remind us of the work that you are doing so that we can worship you. God, I pray that we would learn how to Sabbath rest in your glory and to have you refresh our hearts. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.