

Introduction: We live in a twentyfour-seven world of constant activity. We get wrapped up in work, entertainment, gatherings, running errands. We always have an appointment or a meeting we must attend. We are constantly quantifying, competing, striving, producing and consuming. A study has shown that people with smartphones check them up to eighty times a day on vacation! We are proud of being workaholics who never 'waste' time. Can we stop doing long enough to just BE? Can we find out who we are meant to BE in quietness and rest (Isaiah 30:15)? *** We need to learn that rest is more than a reward for finishing a task. We must rest periodically. Therefore, we must schedule rest, and take it, or we will fall apart. What happened after the French Revolution is often used to illustrate this fact. Rejecting the religious notion of one day of rest in every seven days as arbitrary, they chose to rest one day in every ten. (Since a lunar month is almost thirty days, they may have decided on three days of rest a month.) However, as time went by under this schedule, people got out of sorts and horses started collapsing in the streets. By waiting to the tenth day to rest, people and animals got worn out. *** This brings us to our Bible texts for this morning. We are told that after God created everything in six days He chose to rest on the seventh day. He did not need to rest; but, He did so to set an example for all creation, especially for people created in His image. He even made Sabbath-rest a key to His Ten Words of Instruction given to Moses. *** Later, Jesus commanded His disciples to remain IN Him. This involves both faith and love. We must believe that resting IN Him will result in the fruit of love in our lives and that we can take this fruit of love into the world every day. And, we must realize that remaining in His LOVE will produce His JOY in us. *** All of this is motivation for us to remain IN Him, to rest IN Him to discover who He made us to BE, and what He wants us to do, based on who we are IN Him. *** Let's now go to God's Word that He may give us the desire to rest IN Him one day in every seven days.

I. Sabbath from creation to the return of the remnant from Babylon. (*Genesis 2:1-3 and various*)

A. In the beginning. (*Genesis 2:1-3*)

1. Then were finished the heavens and the earth and all the host of them; on the seventh day God finished the work which He had done. (*Verses 1-2a*)

Creation done: All matter, vegetation, breathing and moving creatures in the sea and land were created by God. Finally, He created people, male and female, in His image. Then God saw all which He had made: Behold! Exceedingly good. (*Genesis 1:31*)

2. Then He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done; then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because in it He rested from all His work which God had created to make. (*Verses 2b-3*)

Seventh day rest: Imagine God resting! He has no need to rest. He will not become weary. He will not become tired, rather He gives strength to people (*Isaiah 40:28-31*). Jesus said, My Father until now is working (*John 5:17*). He rested on the seventh day for us.

God rested on the seventh day

Day blessed and made holy: In fact, God did two things on His day of rest: He blessed the seventh day AND He made the Sabbath holy, consecrated to Him.

Special creation: Not one atom of the physical universe was an accident. All that exists is the result of God custom designing and making it to suit His special purpose.

B. One thousand years of Sabbaths from Moses to Nehemiah. (*various*)

1. The Israelites were told to gather twice as much manna on the sixth day. (*Exodus 16:1, 22-30*)

Manna: Starting in the wilderness of Sin ('seen') after crossing the sea, God miraculously provided food every morning. But He also declared His people were not to gather or prepare food on the seventh day, the Sabbath of rest.

2. God's people are to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (*Exodus 20:8-11; Genesis 2: 2b-3*)

Yahweh rested: Yahweh told Moses on Mt. Sinai that His people are to rest, aware of His holiness, because He rested in the seventh day, blessed it and made it holy.

God rested on the seventh day

3. Israel is to keep Yahweh's Sabbaths throughout the generations. (*Exodus 33:13-17*)

Eternal Covenant: Sabbath is Yahweh's eternal covenant with His people, because on the seventh day He rested.

God rested on the seventh day

4. The penalty for anyone who breaks the Sabbath rest is death. (*Numbers 15:32-36*)

5. Moses restated the Sabbath is to be kept by all. (*Deuteronomy 5:12-15*)

Rest from bondage: Before crossing the Jordan River, Moses said again all animals and people must not work to remember their forced labor in Egypt, from which Yahweh took them to rest on Sabbath.

6. All who keep Yahweh's Sabbath will be joyful in His house; and whoever will call the Sabbath a delight will eat in Israel's inheritance (the land). (*Isaiah 56:1-8; 58:9-14*)

Delight in keeping Sabbath: When people keep Sabbath, the result is both joy and delight in God.

7. If God's people keep the Sabbath, Jerusalem will be inhabited forever. (*Jeremiah 17:21-25*)

Eternal presence: In Jeremiah's day God's people had so little regard for the Sabbath that they went right through the gates of the Temple courtyard; and, instead of worshipping God with sacrifices pleasing to Him, they conducted business in His courtyard as if the Sabbath were any other day.

8. Nehemiah observed the exiles returned from Babylon profaning the Sabbath. (*Nehemiah 13:15-22*)

Guard against profaning: They had not learned that those who conduct business inside the Temple gates of Yahweh will be severely disciplined by Him. They continued to disregard God's Sabbath as their fathers had before being exiled to Babylon. One thousand years from Moses to Nehemiah should have caused fear of their Covenant God. He will punish Sabbath desecration by either exile or death.

II. Remain in The LOVE of Jesus to be a friend of God. (John 15:9-15; Hebrews 4:1-11)

A. Jesus says those keeping His Father's commandments remain in His LOVE. (John 15:9-11)

1. [Jesus said A]s The Father has loved Me, I also, I have loved you all, you all must remain in My LOVE. (Verse 9)
God's double LOVE: First, Father God loves Jesus, and this LOVE flows through Jesus to His disciples.

Remain: Jesus follows the truth of God's LOVE by commanding His disciples to remain in His LOVE.

2. IF My commandments you all may be keeping, you all will remain in My LOVE; even as I, the commandments of My Father have kept and I am remaining in His LOVE. (Verse 10)

Condition: There is a pre-condition to remain, to live, in The LOVE of Jesus. It is to keep His commandments by faith. Very few promises in Scripture are totally unconditional.

3. These things I have spoken to you all that My JOY might be in you all, and your joy might be full. (Verse 11)

Jesus' JOY: Just as keeping Jesus' commandments results from remaining in His LOVE, His disciples having His full JOY results from remaining in His LOVE and keeping His commandments.

B. His commandment is to love one another by being willing to lay down their lives on behalf of friends. (John 15:12-13)

1. This is being My commandment: That you all love one another as I loved you all. (Verse 12)

NEW commandment: This is a (new) third commandment (John 13:34) in that loving each other as Jesus loved is a higher standard than loving others as myself.

2. Greater than this love no man is having: that someone may lay down his life on behalf of his friends. (Verse 13)

Greatest LOVE: The greatest love (which is the fruit of The Holy Spirit Jesus later sent: Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:26) is to be willing to die for a friend. This is to love as God loves.

C. Friends of Jesus do what He is commanding and know what He is doing. (John 15:14-15)

1. You all, friends of Me you all are being, IF you all may do whatever I am commanding to you all. (Verse 14)

Abraham: Abraham is the spiritual father of all people of his faith (Romans 4:16) who also showed his faith by his obedience.

Friend: Abraham's faithful obedience made him God's friend (James 2:20-24). Jesus gives the same conditional promise here: obedience from remaining IN His LOVE results in friendship with Him.

Friendship comes from remaining in The LOVE of Jesus

2. No longer I am calling you all servants, for a servant has not known what his lord is doing. (Verse 15a)

NOT servants: With this Jesus elevates the disciples above the status of servant.

3. You all I have called friends, because all things I heard from My Father I have made known to you all. (Verse 15b)

Friends: They are His friends because He took them out of ignorance by making known to them all He heard from His Father – God. The resulting friendship with Jesus is a taste of heaven on earth.

Title: *Friendship comes from remaining in The LOVE of Jesus.* (#2)

D. Sabbath rest for God's people IN Christ. (Hebrews 4:1-11)

1. Let us fear we may come short of the promise of His rest because the gospel was preached to us as to them, but the word they heard did not profit them because they did not unite it with faith. (Verses 1-2)

Fear of missing promise of rest: Israel did not receive God's promised rest because they were faithless in the land He gave them. So Christians must fear their faith in God's promise of rest will not fall short.

2. Therefore we are entering into the rest, those who have believed. (Verse 3a)

Enter by faith: All who have full faith in the completed work of Jesus are entering God's rest.

3. God declared an oath they would never enter His rest (Psalm 95:11); yet His work has been finished since creation when He spoke 'On the seventh day God rested' (Genesis 2:2); it has remained for some to enter it, but some failed due to unbelief and David later said: Today if you all hear His voice do not harden your hearts (Psalm 95:7-8). (Verses 3b-7)

Three Scripture illustrations: The author supports his exhortation to keep faith with three Scriptures.

4. Because if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day. (Verse 8)

NOT Joshua: Joshua conquered the land as general of God's human army, but he could not give God's people the faith to rest faithfully IN Him.

5. Therefore, there is remaining a Sabbath-rest for God's people; because, the one who has entered God's rest ceases from his own works, as God from His. (Verses 9-10)

Rest like God: There is a special Sabbath that all faithful disciples of Jesus may enter. This word for rest is used only here and nowhere else in all Scripture. It is a gracious gift from God to people who remain in The LOVE of Jesus. It is a rest like God at the completion of His creation.

Homiletical Idea: *God rested on the seventh day.* (#4)

6. So, let us make every effort to enter into that rest that not anyone may fall after the same example of (Israel's) fall. (Verse 11)

We may labor: The author exhorts all disciples of Jesus to exert their faith in every effort not to fall, as God's people have in the past, but to enter into His rest.

Conclusion: Because God rested on the seventh day after completing His creation in six days, He has given His people instruction to rest in Him one day out of every seven, doing no work in order to focus on Him and know Him better. Jesus reinforced this reality by commanding His disciples to keep His commandments, love each other sacrificially, and be His friends. This is how we enter God's Sabbath-rest.

Homiletical Idea: *God rested on the seventh day ... for us*