The Rest

Text: Hebrews 4:9-11

I. THE ORIGINAL SABBATH REST
Genesis 2:1-3

The word Sabbath comes to us from the Hebrew word*, Shabbat* which means to cease, to end, or to rest from labor. After God had completed the wondrous task of creation, He rested. He was finished. He saw that all He had made was very good. Psalm 119:68a: “Thou art good, and doest good….” All that God does is good. Our omnipotent Lord never gets tired or weary--so why does He rest? First of all, God rested because He was satisfied with His creation. Psalm 104:26 teaches us that even the mighty leviathan brings Him pleasure in a similar way that the fish in the aquarium brings pleasure to us. “There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein.” It should be noted that it wasn’t until the sixth day (when God made man and woman) that He declared everything to be very good. Genesis 1:31: “And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” Psalm 8:3-9 illustrates the special place that mankind holds in God’s heart, specifically verse 4: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?” God did not go back to work until Genesis 3:21: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” This was to properly cover Adam and Eve after their feigned attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves. This was a fore-view that man would not and cannot redeem himself by his own labor or works. So after creation the next work that God did was to illustrate that only the shedding of innocent blood through His work of lovingkindness could redeem fallen man. God reveals Himself as not only our Creator, but our Redeemer as well.

II. THE SABBATH REST OF THE LAW
Deuteronomy 5:12-15
A. The Sabbath was ordained as a day to be wholly and holy to the Creator.
Deuteronomy 5:12: “Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.” Exodus 20:8: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”
B. The Sabbath elevated the meaning of work.
Deuteronomy 5:13: “Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:” Before sin entered the world, God commissioned man to work the garden. Genesis

2:15: “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”
C. The Sabbath was a day to rest and create an atmosphere of rest for your family, your beasts and those within your employ. Deuteronomy 5:14: “But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.
D. The Sabbath served as a declaration of independence.
Deuteronomy 5:15: “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” While in slavery the Israeli could not take a day off. Only free people can take a day off.

III. THE SABBATH REST FOR MANKIND’S BENEFIT
Mark 2:23-28

Mark 2:27, 28: “And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath.”

This is so beautiful! Christ wants us to know that the sabbath concept was not intended to take joy from man and exchange it with boredom and non-productivity. On the contrary, creativity and greater productivity will increase if we learn to pull away from the busyness of our normal day-to-day activity. There will be a domino effect of learning to take a day to rest. Stress will potentially be reduced. Burn-out and wipe out could be prevented. And above this, relationship with the Lord would improve from learning to be quiet before the Lord with prayer, meditation in God’s Word and wholesome reading. Pulling away for a day is a great way to improve husband/wife and parent/child relationships.

IV. THE SABBATH REST FOR THE CHRISTIAN
Hebrews 4:9-11

Nine of the ten commandments are mentioned in the New Testament. The only one not mentioned in the New Testament is the fourth commandment, i.e., keeping the Sabbath. When a person becomes saved, so many wonderful things happen, one being that we have entered into a perpetual rest. Hebrews 4:9: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” There are no longer the ceremonial cleansings, sacrifices and rituals

needed. In *Holiness in Christ*, Andrew Murray wrote, “The seventh day is that in which we are still living. Of each creation day it is written up to the last, ‘The evening and the morning were the sixth day.’ Of the seventh the record has not yet been made; we are living in it now, God’s own day of rest and blessing.” The redemption provided by our Lord and Savior is a finished work. The redeemed enter into that rest. We are promised the rest of Heaven but also this rest provides for us the miraculous and continual rest in this present life. Place the Christian in prison and it becomes his prayer closet where he communes with the Lord he serves. Take his life from him and he can rejoice that soon all discomfort is over as he anticipates reunion face-to-face with the Savior he loves.

CONCLUSION:

Isaiah 58 is a wonderful chapter on the power of prayer and fasting. God talked to His people through Isaiah on the route back to Himself. He corrected their incorrect way to approach Him. Then God told His wayward people, “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath…” (Isaiah 58:13). God was saying that if they would stop their busy feet that had been taking them away from Him and return to the sabbath in sincerity, He will bless them again. Compare this to Deuteronomy 11:10-13, where God said that in Egypt the land received her water “…with thy foot…” (Deuteronomy 11:10c). In other words, God emphasized Egypt was a dry land that must receive her water by irrigating it from the Nile by the incredibly tortuous labor generated by the continual pumping of their ancient machinery. What a contrast! Deuteronomy 11:11: “But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.”

Israel was carried into captivity for 70 years. This represented the 70 Sabbath years neglected for 490 years (II Chronicles 36:21). Jeremiah and Daniel prophesied of these years. In Jeremiah 29:10 and 11, the prophet tells us of the great God who never took His eye off all of Israel, no matter what lands to which they had been carried away. And now God told His people, come back to My Sabbath; come back to My rest.

My challenge to us today is to allow the rest in which we entered at salvation to be appropriated and enjoyed today. Jean Sophia Pigott captured this concept in her hymn:

Jesus, I am resting, resting
in the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
of Thy loving heart.

Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
as Thy beauty fills my soul,
for by Thy transforming power,
Thou hast made me whole.

-Pastor Pope-