

Hey, so once again, let me welcome you to Valley Creek at whatever campus you're at today. We are so glad that you are here with us. And we are in this series called A Different Way: Do What Jesus Did. And we've just been talking about doing the things that Jesus did so we can do the things that Jesus did. Living the life that Jesus lived so we can live the life that Jesus lived. And we're looking at Jesus's practices, His disciplines, His habits, and we're allowing Him to teach us and show us what it looks like to be human, how to be fully alive. We're allowing Jesus to teach us how He would live our life if He lived our life. And I know over these past seven, eight weeks, it's been a lot. We've covered a lot of ground together. There's been a lot of content. And I know a lot of you, you're up to here. You're like, "Oh, my gosh." It's been a lot of thinking, a lot of contemplating, a lot of reflecting, a lot of content that we've been going through.

And I see that and I acknowledge that. And so, what I want to do today is come up a little bit and change the tone for these next few weeks. And it's perfect timing for it because the next three practices we're going to talk about are sabbath, silence and solitude, and simplicity. So, breathe in, breathe out, and receive a little bit of the rest of Jesus in your life. You see, what I love about the life of Jesus is, when you look at it, when you read it in scriptures, and you look at the gospels, the thing that's amazing is you will discover that Jesus was never in a hurry. He was never busy. He was never stressed out and anxious and overwhelmed and frantic. He had this incredible life of rest, which in and of itself is paradoxical if you think about it. I mean, if you had three years to change the world and only three years to save the world, don't you think you'd be a little busy?

Like, if you only had three years to destroy the works of the devil, three years to reveal who the Father was, three years to demonstrate and declare that a kingdom, three years to develop those 12 disciples, I think you'd be a little busy. He'd be running around, "I've got to get to this town. I've got to go here. I've got to heal this person. I've got to go preach this. I've got to film all these videos so no one forgets that which I've been trying to say and do." I mean, you would think He would be busy everywhere He went, but He was never in a hurry. In fact, this is why He says to us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." He says, "Hey, I offer you rest. Come to me if you're weary and burdened. Come learn from me. Come follow me. Come be my disciple. Let me teach you how to live your life because my life is easy and light and you're weary and burdened and I want to give you rest."

And the reason Jesus can offer us rest is because He had rest to give. You can't give something to someone that you don't have. So, the fact that He offers us rest declares that He had rest. And we see He had this deep internal rest, not just this external rest. He had a deep internal peace, not just an external peace. And He offers it to us. In fact, the Old Testament version of this scripture, "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.' You said, 'No, we will flee on horses.' Therefore, you will flee! You said, 'We will ride off on swift horses.' Therefore, your pursuers will be swift."

God offers us repentance, rest, salvation, quietness, trust, and strength. The only question is, will we have it? Will we have what He offers us? The challenge is for many of us, we say, "No, we're good. We're going to do our life like everybody else in this world. And we're going to run." And He says, "That's fine. If you want to run, you can run. But just understand the faster you run, the faster the world will chase you. The faster you run, the faster the world will take that dial on your treadmill of life, and we'll keep turning it up and you will go faster and faster, never getting anywhere." You see, if we're honest and we look at our lives, it's radically different than Jesus because we are often always busy, always in a hurry, always in a rush. We're stressed, we're anxious, we're frantic, we're overwhelmed. There's so much going on in our lives, and we live in a world that wears busyness as a badge of honor. It's like, the busier I am, the more important and successful and significant I am. And so, we hustle for our identity and we hurry for our significance.

The only problem is it's impossible to be a disciple of Jesus if you're always in a hurry. It's impossible to live deeply in the kingdom if you're always in a rush. It's impossible to bear the fruit of the Spirit if you're always frantic. It's impossible to become a person of love if you're always busy. See, we think busyness is a sign of success, but busyness is really an indicator that you're failing at that which really matters. Busyness is not a sign of success. It's an indicator in your life that you're failing at that which really matters. Why? Because the kingdom and the world operate at different speeds. And if I'm always in a hurry, then I'm probably failing at abiding in Christ.

And if I'm always in a hurry, then I'm probably failing at becoming a person of love. And if I'm always busy, then I'm probably failing at living deeply in the kingdom. If I'm always in a hurry, I'm probably failing at walking in the spirit and bearing His fruit. It is not a sign of significance; it's an indicator that you're actually failing at that which your life is supposed to be about. And the paradox is, is our flesh loves to be busy. Our flesh loves to shout and scream about how important we are and how significant we are and how successful we are because we're so busy. And all the while your soul is in there whispering, saying, "I'm tattered and worn out and broken. Can we please have some rest?" And so, when we look at Jesus's life and we see Him live a life of rest and never at a hurry, then we know it's possible. We just have to do the things that Jesus did so we can do the things that Jesus did, and arrange our life differently.

And the way Jesus arranged His life was, Jesus practiced the sabbath. Now, let's talk about this a little bit together. Jesus literally, every week for 33 years, took a literal 24-hour sabbath. Once a week for 33 years, He took a literal 24-hour sabbath. An entire day, once a week, where He would stop to just enjoy God. Stop to enjoy His friends. Stop to spend time with the Father. Stop all of His work, all of the things, all of the demands that everybody else had on Him. And He would reflect and feast and contemplate and go to the sabbath with the other people of God and enjoy the life that He has been given. And if Jesus could stop for once a week for 33 years, that means that he sabbathed one-seventh of His life. I want you to think about that. Jesus literally sabbathed one-seventh of His entire life while He was on earth.

Jesus, the most important, the most successful, the most significant, the most needed man that has ever lived spent one-seventh of His life sabbathing. What are you doing that's so important that you can't sabbath? You see, one day Jesus was walking through the grain fields on a

sabbath with His disciples, and His disciples were picking some grain and they were rubbing it together and they were eating it. And the Pharisees saw this and they got really upset about it because they thought they were violating the sabbath. And so, Jesus said to them, "The sabbath was made to meet the needs of the people and not people to meet the requirements of the sabbath. So, the son of man is Lord, even over the sabbath." Now, this is fascinating. What we don't understand is the entire Jewish culture was built around the sabbath. The entire community once a week shut down everything they did. There was no commerce. There was no buying. There was no selling. There was no trading.

There was no cooking. There was no cleaning. There was no working. There was no traveling. It was a day of rest with God. The problem was, over time, the Jewish people, especially the religious leaders, started to become very religious about what you can and can't do, what you should and shouldn't do, what you're allowed and not allowed to do. And so, when they're getting on the disciples for picking some grain and popping it in their mouth, Jesus is saying, "Hey, guys, let's remember that the sabbath is not a rule to follow. It is a gift to receive." People weren't created to fulfill the sabbath. No, the sabbath was made to bless the people. The problem is, for us, we're on the total opposite cycle. The Israelites, they spent so much time trying to hit the rules and regulations of the sabbath. We forget that the sabbath was even created and that there's even value in it in and of itself. And so, what I want to tell you about the practice of the sabbath right out of the gate is the sabbath is not a rule to keep; it is a gift to receive.

And of all the practices that we're going to talk about, I told you last week, fasting is the one that probably seems the most archaic. Sabbath is the one that you probably, the moment I say it, feels the most impossible. It's like, "I can't do that. I can't take a day every single week and rest and enjoy time with God." It's not that it's impossible. It's just that your life is not arranged in such a way that currently allows it. And the sabbath isn't about adding something in. It's about taking things away to create space in order to rest with God. Are you with me on this? You see, the question you then have to ask is, what is the sabbath and where did it come from? Well, the sabbath is a literal 24-hour day, once a week where you rest, where you stop all your work and you enjoy God and you enjoy your life and you enjoy the people around you. Where you worship God and turn the attention and affection and the focus of your heart towards Him.

It's a gift to help us enjoy the life we've been given. We rest from our work so God can do His work deeply inside of us. And the sabbath isn't an Old Testament thing or a New Testament thing. It's not a law thing or a grace thing. The sabbath comes all the way from creation. See, for six days, we watch God create the sun, the moon, the stars, the plants, the animals, us. And then, on the seventh day, "By the seventh day, God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day, He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because He rested from all the work of creating that which He had done." God worked for six days. He rested on the seventh, and He called the seventh day the sabbath, and He blessed it and made it holy. He said, "it's holy." It's different than all the other days of the week. And there is a blessing upon it. There is a supernatural source of life that flows into the sabbath.

So, right from the very order of creation, God created the rhythm of this... created universe to have a sabbath built within it. It's in the very created order of our DNA, of humanity, of creation. Just like there are days and weeks and months and years and seasons, there is sabbath. So, to fight the sabbath is to fight creation itself. To not sabbath is to go against the grain of grace. To say, "I'm too busy to do that," is saying that you're too busy to go in alignment with how God actually created all of creation to work. It goes all the way back to creation. And I think what's fascinating to me is that there are two things in particular that God has given His people. Two external things that are designed to be declarations of trust to show the world around us that we are radically different than them. And those two things are the sabbath and the tithe. There are two things God has asked His people to do that make them radically different than the world around them.

It's the sabbath and the tithe. The sabbath is giving God one day a week where you actually rest and you cease from your work. And when you're sabbathing, you're declaring that God can do more in six days than you can do in seven. And then, the tithe. The tithe is giving God the first, best 10% portion of your income. It's literally a declaration to say that God can do more with 90% of your income than you can do with 100% of your income. And they are these external declarations to the world around us that we are radically different than them. We live trusting God as the provider and the source and the sustainer of our life. And I think it's fascinating that those two external things He asks us to do go right at the heart of time and money. The two things that deeply grip our hearts. The two things that we probably worship more than anything else. The two things that are deeply embedded into our soul as idols.

We don't want to give up our time and we don't want to give up our money. "I don't want to give You my time." Why? Because time represents freedom. I want to own my own time so I can do what I want when I want, and how I want. And I don't want to give you my money because money represents security. And I want to be able to get what I want when I want, and how I want it. So, isn't it interesting that God has given His people the practice of the sabbath and the tithe to set us free from time and money controlling our hearts? And what is that? It's trust. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight." Like, even if you don't understand it and you don't get it, can you trust Him enough to believe that God doesn't need your time or your money? He just wants to keep you free. In fact, think about this with me for a second on the sabbath. When you give God time, you are giving Him the most limited resource of your life.

Time is the only thing you can't get more of. When I give God time, I'm giving Him an offering that actually costs me something. I can get more money. I can get more possessions. I can get new relationships. I can get new things. I can get a new job. I can never get more time. So, when I show up on a Sunday and come to church, I'm giving God time, an offering that costs me something. When I join a serve team and make a commitment to be on that, I'm giving God an offering, something that actually costs me something because I'm giving Him time. When I go to a circle and I go even on the weeks that I don't want to be there, I'm giving God an offering, a time that actually costs me something. When I sabbath once a week and rest, I'm literally giving God an offering that costs me dearly because it's time that I can never get back. Are you with me on this?

I think we talk a lot about giving God great things and we sing all these songs about how much we want Him. But the question is, "Will I give Him the one thing that I can never get back?" That's what the sabbath is. It's an offering that I will never get back. And it's a paradoxical trade because we give God time and He gives us eternity. We give God a sabbath once a week, and He gives us back a healthy soul. Maybe it's actually a great trade. And when you read through scripture, sabbath is all over the place and you find all these amazing things that God says the sabbath will do in our lives. And there's two things that I just want you to see that it says the sabbath is a sign of. "I gave them my sabbath as a sign between us so they would know that I, the Lord, made them holy." In other words, the sabbath is a sign that reminds us of who we are. When we sabbath, it's a sign declaring that we have been made by God and no one else.

It's a reminder that I don't work to become; I work because I am. That I am not what I do; I am what Jesus has done. When I sabbath, it's actually tangible faith, tangible trust saying, "I am not my performance, my achievements, my success, my failures, my efforts. I am not what I do. I am what Jesus has done. So, I don't have to hustle for identity. I don't have to hurry for significance. I already am all of those things in Jesus' name." And when He says, "I, the Lord, made them holy," it's language of creation that not only did God create us, but He made us a new creation in Christ that we are holy and righteous and forgiven and set free – beloved sons and daughters. So, once a week when we practice the sabbath, there is a sign declaring who we are in Christ. Reminding us that we don't have to live like everybody else because we already are who God wants us to become.

And the second thing is, He says, "Keep my sabbath holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God." In other words, sabbath reminds us that He is God and we are not. That He is in control and I am not. sabbathing reminds me that He holds it together and I do not. Do you know why a lot of us say we can't take a day off of sabbath, of rest with God? Because what we're saying is we hold it all together and we're in control and we're in the center. And if we don't hold this marriage together, nobody else is. And if we don't keep this business going, no one else is going to make it happen. And if we don't keep this team together, it's going to fly apart. And all of a sudden, we place ourselves in the position of God. We're in control. We're in the center. We're the one that makes it happen. We're the one that holds it all together. So, when we sabbath, what we're doing is we're humbling ourselves and saying, "I am not God."

I am reminded that you are the Lord, my God, Yahweh, the Great I Am, the Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love. When I stop to sabbath, what I'm saying is, "God, you are compassionate and gracious. And you are the one that is in control, holding it all together. So, I stop by faith and trust in You and give You back the rightful authority over my life that I may have taken back over these last six days." Come on, how different would your life be if once a week you had a reminder of your identity and the fact that God is in control and you are not? Your life would be so different because we forget who we are and we forget that God is in control. And what I think is so interesting is that out of all the practices that we're going to talk about in the series, the sabbath is the only one that's actually a command. Out of all the practices we're going to look at, the sabbath is actually a command. Like, do you realize that the sabbath is one of the 10 commandments?

Are you with me today? Let's ask that question again. Do you realize that the sabbath is actually one of the 10 commandments? Sandwiched right in there between, "You shall have no other gods" and "Do not commit murder." Sandwiched right in there between, "You shall not make any idols" and "Do not commit adultery." Sandwiched right there in between, "You shall not misuse the Lord's name" and "Do not steal." Sandwiched right there in between, "Honor your father and mother" and "Do not lie," is the commandment of sabbath. Now, isn't it interesting how that's the one that we excuse and explain away and just completely remove from our conscious thought process? Like, none of us would ever say, "Hey, if you're really, really angry, it's okay to kill somebody." None of us would ever say, "Hey, if you really like her, it's okay to commit adultery with her."

None of us would ever say, "If you really, really need it, it's okay if you just go and take it." None of us would say, "If you're really in trouble, it's okay to lie to get yourself out of the trouble. It's really... only if you're really in trouble." And yet, for some reason, we say, "If you're really, really busy, it's okay to dishonor the sabbath." Isn't that interesting? Maybe because time is a greater God in our heart than we have any idea of. I mean, look with me when God gives the 10 Commandments. This is fascinating. Out of all the 10 Commandments, the sabbath is the one that has the most language around it. The other ones are actually very short. I mean, there's the most language around this. And here's what God says in the 10 Commandments. "Remember the sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 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."

One of the 10 Commandments, keep the sabbath. And He gives us these things. He says the sabbath is a day of rest and it's a day of worship. It's a sabbath to the Lord your God. So, it's a day when we rest from our work and we worship God. You say, "Does that mean it has to be 24 hours a day of music and singing in a building? Because I want nothing to do with that." No, it means it's a day where your heart and your attention and your focus has turned towards the Lord and you rest to be with Him and to enjoy the life that He has given you. And it says that the sabbath is holy and blessed. It's holy, it's set apart, it's different than all the other days of the week, and it's blessed. There is a supernatural life available to anyone who will align themselves with the created order of creation. And the logic He gives is because six days God worked and on the seventh day He rested.

So, He's saying that's who God is, that's what God is like, that's what God did. And so, if we want to train ourselves to be godly, then we got to do the things that God did. And God worked for six days, and He rested on the seventh. It's an invitation to align ourselves with the very created order of creation to bring ourselves into the current of grace and to how God designed things to function. Now, 40 years later, He gives the 10 Commandments again to a different generation of Israelites going into the promised land. And it's still the same commandment, but there's a slightly different adjustment He makes into helping us understand the why. So, look at this now with me. It's about 40 years later, same thing in the 10

Commandments, second time it's given. And it says, "Observe the sabbath." Pause. Observe the sabbath would be like saying observe holidays. Observe the vacation days.

And isn't it interesting how so much of our life is arranged around observing government calendars? Like, we observe the government vacation days, yes? Labor Day, Memorial Day, Columbus Day, Martin Luther King Day, Fourth of July Day. Like, we observe the government's calendar and we observe the school's calendar of the days off. Why is it then that we don't observe God's calendar? Most of you in this room, you get so angry when someone asks you to do something on one of your government days off. "You can't possibly expect me to come into work on Labor Day. You can't possibly expect me to go to practice on Columbus – I mean, it's Columbus Day." I mean, fair? And yet, for some reason, we think God's calendar is completely subjective. And maybe completely irrelevant.

In fact, if you look at how the American structure, how we've built our calendaring system, we say... This is basically what we do. Five days you do a job and then you get two days off. Okay? Five days you do a job and then you get two days off. God's calendar is we work for six days, and then we get a day of sabbath. Those are very different things. Job and work are not the same things. A job is something you do for your own benefit in order to get paid. And then, I want two days off to do whatever I want to do. God says, "No, I created you to work with me and for me in your divine purpose. And then, we take one day where we rest together." That would be worth thinking about. To your five days, is it a job or is it work? I don't know if you need more. I can't get any more restful than this, guys. I mean, I'm trying. You have no idea how bad I want to stand up.

"Observe the sabbath day by keeping it holy as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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, nor your daughter." So, not just you, but your whole family. "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt." Here's what's different. "You were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the sabbath day." Can you see the difference? He still says the sabbath is a day of rest, a day of worship. It's holy and it's blessed. But then, He says, "It's not just about the created order." It's, "you were slaves in Egypt and I set you free." So, a sabbath is a day to remind myself that I am no longer a slave to this world. I am a son of God. Slaves don't get rest. They work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, making bricks for a taskmaster named Pharaoh.

God says, "That's not who you are anymore. You are now a son. In six days, we work together, ruling and reigning over creation. And on the seventh day, we sabbath, and we rest together. And I want you to sabbath so you remember that you are not a slave anymore." It is for freedom that Christ has set you free. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. If you hold to my teachings, you are my disciple. And then, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. See, the sabbath reminds me that I am not hustling for my identity or hurrying for my significance because I've already been set free in Jesus' name. So, I need to stop long enough to remember that. Because probably just about most of us sitting in this room live our life exhausted, longing for a day off.

You don't need a day off, you need a sabbath – a day of rest with the Lord. And they're two very different things. See, what I love about Jesus is, when you look at the gospels, one of the things that you will discover is how often He's doing amazing things on the sabbath. It's like He's validating its significance for our life in the kingdom. You watch Jesus all through the gospels. You watch Him rest. You watch Him teach and you watch Him heal. Do you know how many of Jesus' healing miracles happened on the sabbath day? The man with the shriveled hand, the guy with dropsy, the paralyzed man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, the blind man, the woman who had been bent over for 18 years from Satan. He healed all those people on the sabbath as a declaration to say the sabbath day is a day that heals you and keeps you free in Jesus' name.

In fact, when He healed that woman who had been bent over for 18 years, they got all upset at Jesus. They were always upset when He healed people on the sabbath. It says, "Indignant because Jesus had healed them on the sabbath. The synagogue ruler said to the people, 'There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the sabbath.'" I'm just saying, I don't think you want to be a part of that synagogue. Jesus said, "Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, who Satan has kept bound for 18 long years, be set free on the sabbath day from what bound her?" Jesus says the sabbath is a day of healing. "Should not this woman," should not you, "be set free on the sabbath day from what is bound you?" The reason so many of us never experience mental, physical, emotional, relational, spiritual healing and freedom is because we don't sabbath.

And on that day of rest with God, He heals things inside of us that we don't even know need to be healed. It's a six, every six days, He builds in a day of healing and restoration to bring you back life and vitality and freedom and restoration, in Jesus' name. And I love that it's not just for the Old Testament. "There remains, then, a sabbath rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rest from his own work, just as God did from His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest." Paradox, make every effort to enter that rest. In other words, you have to work so you can rest. You have to work so you can rest. And if you never work so you can rest, eventually you'll start to hate your work. And when you hate your work, you'll hate your purpose. And when you hate your purpose, you'll hate your life. And there's a lot of us that hate our life because we hate our purpose. And we hate our purpose because we hate our work. And we hate our work because we never work to rest.

You say, "What does that mean?" Well, that means if you're actually going to take a sabbath day, a day of enjoying God, a day where you're not working once a week, you can't go 100 miles an hour all six days and then just hit the brakes going into the seventh day. It's too disorienting. It's too jarring. And you have to think about what you're going to do on that seventh day, which means I actually have to think about how I spend the time on those other six days. I can't let work projects and mowing the yard and the side hustle and the house renovation all come into the sabbath day. No, that means I have to think differently about how I use the six days. It means I probably can't spend three hours doom-scrolling at night or watching that Netflix series or just wasting time. Why? Because I won't be able to sabbath because it will carry work into the sabbath day. So, I have to think differently about organizing,



arranging the other six days, which is, "teach us to number our days," all right, "that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

In other words, the sabbath helps you live the other six days better because you have to work so you can rest and do those things so you don't bring it into the sabbath day. In fact, the Israelites, they would get manna from heaven. Right. For 40 years, manna from heaven. Every single day, they'd go out, they'd gather it, except on the sabbath day. On the sixth day, there would be twice as much. They'd have to go in and bring – to prepare for the day to come. "Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the sabbath." Like, pay attention. You've got to think about this. You've got to work so you can rest. "'That is why on the sixth day, He gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day. No one is to go out.' So, the people rested on the seventh day." It says, you've got to think ahead. You've got to live your other days differently. You've got to go out and make courageous, faith-filled decisions and go get twice as much on the six days. And then, He says, "Bake it, boil it, however you want to cook it." In other words, there is so much freedom of what you can do on the sabbath. It is not a rule to keep; it's a gift to receive. But you've got to think ahead so your projects don't carry over into the day of rest with God.

See, I got to stand up. I'm still going to try to keep it at rest. But because I want you to get this. A sabbath is not the same thing as a day off. A day off without God will make you more exhausted than you already are. A day of rest without God will make you more exhausted than you already are because there is no rest without Him. He is rest. And so, I can't rest without Him. So, if I want a day off so I won't be exhausted, I actually become more exhausted than I already am if I don't do it with God. And we've had to help our staff figure this out, because sometimes when you work at a church or you're in a faith-based environment, you can be like, "I just need a day off from God. Like, I do this. Oh, I just don't need any, God." It's like, no, there is no rest without God. You become more exhausted than you already are.

And what happens to a lot of us is we live our lives with such exhaustion that we start saying things like this. Like, "I can't wait for Columbus Day. When is Thanksgiving? Is it here yet? Has the summer come? I can't do this anymore." What a sad way to live your life. What a sad way to live your life. God gives us a built-in sabbath once every six days to rest, to enjoy Him, to be refreshed and refilled so we can go back and live our life. And here's what you have to understand. Meaningful work comes from meaningful rest. And the reason a lot of us don't have meaningful work is because we don't have meaningful rest. So, we hate our job. We hate our week. We hate school. We hate our life because we don't have meaningful rest. But when I have meaningful rest, a day of sabbath with God, I'm actually looking forward to my week of work, not a job, a week of work, because I'm created to do this with God.

And there's these two extremes. There's over here. I work seven days a week, everything all the time. And then, there's some of you sitting here. You're like, "Sweet. If sabbath is for me, then let's sell everything, buy a camper, travel around the country, and take pictures, and post them on social media." Okay, no, neither of those are healthy. Do you realize, before God made the sabbath, He gave us our commission to work? In Genesis 1, He says, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." And then, in Genesis 2, He talks about the sabbath. In other words, He gives us meaningful work and meaningful rest that are meant to go together. But

you can't have one without the other. They flow together in this way that allows us to be free. And a lot of us, we want to work all the time or we don't want to work at all. But you've been given a garden to tend, in Jesus' name. You just can't tend it seven days a week. Listen, maybe this will help you. When I first started in this role, like 14 years ago, I'd preached maybe a handful of messages in my entire life. I didn't know how to preach.

And we had Saturday night service then. So, like Monday through Thursday, I'd work on a message. I work in the office, all the leadership administration stuff. And then, Friday was supposed to be our day off. But on that day, I would always come up to the building and I would practice preaching the message probably five, six, seven times. And then, Saturday was the day I would do it all again. And then, we'd have service. We had service on Sunday, and then we'd start it over. And for years, I lived like that, the seven-day cycle. And it was interesting because, in that season, the church was growing like crazy. We were reaching so many people. And on the external, it looked awesome. But internally, I was dying. I damaged my vocal cords. My soul was getting tattered. I was exhausted. I was worn out. I started resenting you. Like, I got so tired of just getting up here and giving another message that I felt like nobody was going to do anything with anyways. It damaged the relationships around me. And so, eventually, I had to get to this point of taking heed, God's counsel, the invitation, the actual command of sabbathing in my life.

And so, for a number of years now, I take a day of sabbath. You say, what does that mean? It's just the day where I enjoy God. I rest. Here's what I don't do on sabbath. I try not to think, I try not to read, and I don't work on messages. You're like, "You don't think or read?" Yes. I think so much during the week and I read so much that it's actually work for me. It's actually tending a garden. So, I have to lay that aside. And now, I watch God do more in my life in the six days than I was able to do in the seventh. But even if it was less productive, I'm healthier in my soul and I enjoy my life significantly more than I enjoyed it then. In fact, I love this verse that says, "Observe the sabbath because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death. Whoever does not work on that day must be cut off from his people. For six days, work is to be done. But the seventh is a sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord."

You're like, "What does that mean?" Here's the deal. We don't have to put anyone to death or cut anyone off. Because when you don't sabbath, you're killing yourself. And we don't have to cut you off because you're cutting yourself off from the people you love the most. You're killing your mind, your soul, your body, your spirit. And if you pay attention to it, you know it's true. And you're cutting yourself off from your people. This is why there's so much disconnection and detachment in our lives. We're disconnected in marriage. We're detached in parent-child relationships. We're disconnected as siblings. We're detached as friends. We just end up getting cut off from everyone and everything. Why? Because we don't take one day to align ourselves with the created order of creation, to remind ourselves of who we are, that we're not in control. And we remind ourselves that we are not slaves in Egypt, but it is a day that is holy and set apart to the Lord. I can tell we love this practice.

Last verse. "If we refrain from the trampling of sabbath... if you refrain from the trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and a holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own

interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights." In other words, if I will trust God and practice the sabbath, He says I will delight in Him. I will have a new level of my relationship with Him. And He will lift me up out of the chaos and the hustle and the franticness of which American culture lives day in and day out. So, here's your practice plan for the week. Take a sabbath day. Take a sabbath day this week. And if you can't do a day, take a half a day. And if you can't do a half a day, take an hour. And if you can't do an hour, take 30 minutes. And you say, "Well, what do I do?"

You don't work and you enjoy God. That's it. You enjoy God. You enjoy your family. You enjoy creation. You enjoy what God has designed this world to be. You turn your heart, your attention, your emotion – It's not a day off. It's a day of rest with God. And you say, "Well, what should I do?" Here's what you should do. This is what this... Like, some of you probably didn't listen to anything except now. All you want is the rule. It's not a rule to keep; it's a gift to receive. So, I'm not giving you a rule. Here's what I would encourage you, though. Whatever garden you are responsible to tend, don't work it on the sabbath. God put Adam and Eve in the garden and He gave them a garden to tend. Work to do, not a job. It wasn't for them to get paid. It was work, their created purpose of ruling and reigning with God. So, whatever garden God has given you to tend, on the seventh day, on the sabbath day, don't tend it. So, what does that mean?

It means, if you're a teacher, on the sabbath day, don't grade papers, don't create curriculum plans, don't work on studying. If you're a contractor, you build things with your hands, on the sabbath day, then don't build anything because building is part of the garden that God has given to you. If you're a business person and you do sales and e-mails all week, then on the seventh day, that's part of your garden. Don't do any sales calls. Don't do any e-mails. If you're a student, part of your garden is school right now. So, on the seventh day, don't do homework. "Well, I have to do it." No, you don't have to do it. What you have to do is manage your other six days better. That's what it forces you to do. So, the sabbath is actually God's gift to help us think differently about how we live our life. That's why I can't read or think or work on messages on my sabbath day because that's part of the garden God's given me to tend. And so, you have to actually spend time talking to God. You say, "Well, what do I do? I'm just going to like... it's an endless church service. I sit there, twiddle my thumbs?" Go for a walk. Take a nap. Read a book.

Go play pickleball. God loves pickleball. Do you know this? Go with Him, though. Go have a good cup of coffee. God loves good coffee. He made it. But go with God. Do you understand what I'm saying? This is a day where you enjoy the life that you've been given. Imagine how different you would be if, like Jesus, you took one day for every one-seventh of your existence on this earth was spent enjoying the life you've been given. How different of a person you would be. And we listen to a message like this. And I think here's the thought. I think it's one of two things. Actually, it's one of three things. One is we idolize time way more than we realize. I tried to go a different route. I don't think it worked for today. Maybe I'll do part two of this next week because we idolize time way more than we realize. That's why God has asked you to sabbath. You worship it. So, I don't want to give it. It's my time.

It's not your time. You were made by Him and you've been redeemed by Him. You actually belong to Him. You're a temple of the Lord. You don't get to set the hours of operation. And if you're... don't clap. If you're resisting... You had lots of chances to clap. You missed it. If you're resisting and you're irritated by it, it shows you how much you idolize it because idols scream the loudest when they're being challenged. So, I think I think there's an idolization of time, even more so than money, which I've watched flip since COVID. People used to be willing to give time to God and not money. Now, I think a lot of us would rather give money than time because we want to be free to do what we want when we want, how we want. I'm just saying I am a son, but I'm a slave to righteousness. So, I no longer... I've been bought and paid for the price and no longer get to decide how it goes. So, I think we idolize time more than we realize. The second thing I think that's happening in today is we think this is impossible.

We listen to it and we say, "That's great. I mean, there's no way I can do that. I mean, I have to mow the yard on my Sunday or whatever, sabbath day you have because I can't..." It's like, no, it's very possible. You've just arranged your life like the world. So, there's not a lot of space left because it's been ordered and so filled. This isn't added... sabbath isn't adding something in, it's taking something out. And it's not taking out a day. It's taking out other activities, duties, commitments back here so that when I get to the sabbath day, I can actually be free. So, I think some of you, listen to this, and it just... it feels absolutely impossible. God can't command you to do something that you can't do. It's not that it's not possible. It's just you haven't ordered your life in the way that actually would make it work. And then, third is I think some of you are sitting here and you just want to know the rules. Like, "How do I actually do it?" That's what I'm telling you. I can't tell you. It's not a rule to keep; it's a gift to receive. And for most of you, Sunday is your sabbath.

This is my last – this is my opposite of sabbath. For you, this is probably, most likely unless you work on Sundays, your sabbath. You say, "What does that mean?" That means don't go home and mow the yard today unless mowing the yard brings you great joy and you do it with God. Don't go home and cook and clean today if you're a stay-at-home parent. Why? Because that's the garden you tend. So, unless it brings you great joy, don't go home and do that. You got to do it in the other days. Don't go home and do homework. Now, some of you are panic. Like, "I didn't manage my time. I have homework." You can do it today. Hear me. "Mom, John said I can't do my homework. I'm not doing it. I'm sabbathing to the Lord." Let's work on the other six days of arrangement. Then, we'll get there. Do you understand what I'm saying? And here's why we don't like this third thing that I'm saying is because it requires you to talk to God about your life.

And you don't... Most of us don't want to talk to God about our life. We just want to make choices for our life, and then cry out to God when they don't work. As opposed to him saying, like you said, "God, do you want me to mow the yard today?" I think Jesus probably say things back to you like, "Would it give you great joy? And would we be connected in it? If the answer is no, then no. Let's not do that today." "I know, but the HOA is going to..." It probably means I can't watch as much college football on Saturday. See? See? See? So, try it. You probably... Most of our lives are arranged so like the world that we couldn't probably take a full sabbath day this week. That's okay. Try a half a day. If you still can't do a half a day, try an hour. If you

genuinely can't do an hour, do 30 minutes where you're not on tech and you're not doing work and you're just enjoying God.

Enjoy your family. Have a good meal. Go for a walk. Take a nap. Listen to me. If Jesus was the most significant, successful, influential, powerful, most needed person who ever walked on the face of the earth and He spent one-seventh of His life in sabbath, what are you doing that's so important that you can't do? So, maybe it's not that I can't. Maybe it's just that I don't want to. And that's okay. Then, say that and talk to God about that, because that helps you keep moving forward and starts confronting the idol of time in our heart. So, Jesus, thank You for the amazing, beautiful practice of sabbath that is so radically different than the world around us. Jesus, our souls crave rest and built into the created order.

You have given us a rhythm of rest. That's not a day off. It's a day where we stop working with You to just rest and delight in You. Holy Spirit, I just invite You to challenge the idol of time in my heart, wherever I worship time and don't want to give it to You, would You expose and heal, reveal, and replace that idol with trust that You want to give me a day every week to enjoy this beautiful life that I have been given. I pray for all my friends here today.

I pray that they would enjoy the beautiful life that You have given them. The beautiful family, the beautiful purpose, the beautiful creation, the beautiful church, the beautiful relationships, all the beauty of the gifts and passions and talents, the beauty of your spirit, the beauty of the air we breathe. May we be able to stop long enough to enjoy Your goodness and Your grace and have a healthy soul in Jesus' name. We want to do what Jesus did so we can do what Jesus did. In your name, we pray. Amen.