

The Gift of Sustainability

"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day, he rested from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." Genesis 2:2-3

"However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell." Exodus 16:20

We live by our own power to produce, not by God's power to provide.

He said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.' " ²⁴So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. ²⁵"Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. ²⁶Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any." Exodus 16:23-26

The Sabbath is not just a commandment, it's a gift of time.

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." Exodus 20:8

"One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Mark 2:23-24

"Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath." Mark 3:1-2

Legalists can rob the gift of the Sabbath and replace it with ridiculous laws of practice.

The Sabbath is time to delight in God.

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17

"Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27-28

The Sabbath must never become a burden that inhibits the free flow of God's grace to us.

We must welcome the Lord of the Sabbath and His Kingdom into our lives on a regular basis.

"Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." ⁴Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. ⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus." Mark 3:3-5

Reverse legalists can rob the gift of the Sabbath and replace it with a ridiculous lack of practice.

Small Group Questions

1. How is the pace of your life? Would you say you are rested, living in margin, and regularly delighting in God? When was the last time you feel like you experienced a Sabbath?
2. Read back through the Scriptures we discussed in the sermon, particularly Genesis, Exodus and Mark. What do you learn here about the Sabbath?
3. Talk about the tension between the Sabbath as a commandment but also a gift. What does that mean? How does it relate to the phrase: "we live by our own power to consume, not by God's power to provide"?
4. What does it mean to "delight in God"? How is that an accurate description of the Sabbath? Do you think it has to be done only on one day?
5. We talked about two ways to rob yourself or others of the Sabbath – by being a legalist or a reverse legalist. Which one are you most often?
 - A. Legalists can rob the gift of the Sabbath and replace it with ridiculous laws of practice.
 - B. Reverse legalists can rob the gift of the Sabbath and replace it with a ridiculous lack of practice.