

## Lord of the Sabbath

Matthew 11:27-12:21

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In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says:

*“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.”*

Sabbath is the Hebrew word “sabbāt,” which most likely comes from the Hebrew verb “sābat,” which means *stop*. On the sixth day, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” So when people ask you what day it is, don’t look at a clock, look at yourself and ask, “Have I been made in the image of God, and is He finished?”

I think for most of us then, we’d say it feels like the sixth day. I *feel* incomplete. I feel half-baked; I feel restless. More than that, it *looks* like the sixth day, because God is still in the business of making babies and remaking babies: that is, folks are being born again. Jesus said, “My Father is working still, and I am working.” But Genesis 1 says:

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.

“Done,” “finished,” “perfected” . . . yet it feels like the sixth day. I long for the seventh day.

In the book of Exodus, at the start of Israel’s journey, Moses climbs Mt. Sinai, and God gives him the ten commandments. This is commandment number four:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Keep *a* sabbath to remember *the* sabbath. In six days the Lord made everything, and on the seventh day He stopped. The seventh day is holy, that is, different—gloriously, mysteriously different from other days.

In Deuteronomy as the Israelites prepare to cross the Jordan, Moses recounts the law but gives a new reason for the sabbath:

“You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.”

They are to observe the sabbath to have these truths nailed into their hearts: 1) *God* made you; 2) *God* delivered you.

The tenth day of the seventh month was also referred to as a sabbath. It was the day of atonement. Israel was to “afflict themselves” with rest, for on that day atonement was made for all their sins. So they were commanded to do absolutely nothing (afflict themselves with rest).

The seventh year was to be a sabbath *year*.

On the seventh sabbath year—the forty-ninth year—the day of atonement, the Year of Jubilee was to be proclaimed, when captives were liberated and all debts forgiven and all sojourners returned home. In Luke 4, Jesus teaches that He proclaims the Year of Jubilee.

So the sabbath appears to be terribly important to God.

In Exodus 31, He tells the people that sabbath keeping is a sign. The two essential signs of God’s covenant people were these: 1) circumcision (baptism corresponds to this, says Paul), and 2) sabbath keeping (corresponding to something else, I would suppose). Circumcision and sabbath tell me this is not some religion some guys just made up in a field somewhere to get people to do their will . . . “OK, in order to be part of our religion, first you must all cut the foreskin off your John Thomas, and number two, you must be very, very diligent about doing *nothing*.”

What kind of God would make a requirement of doing nothing? He obviously isn’t simply a boss or slave driver or tyrant: “First and foremost, you must do nothing very well” . . . “My people will be known for resting.”

Every Hebrew day began with rest. The day began at sundown (like Genesis says, “It was evening and it was morning”). Soon after the resurrection, the New Testament Church began celebrating the sabbath on Sunday rather than Saturday, thus the week begins with rest. The days flow out of rest.

If you think the sabbath was just for Jews, remember: The sabbath is part of the ten commandments. We can’t just *blow those off*. And Jesus just told us in the Sermon on the Mount: “Think not that I have come to abolish the law . . . but to fulfil [it]. . . . till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.”

We modern day American Christians are absolutely terrible at sabbath keeping. Listen to Exodus 31:15-16: “Whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant.”

Well, the Church is now the Israel of God. We are His covenant people. We’re expected to rest and be still. So the most spiritual among us are the very best at *doing nothing* . . . at resting . . . at sleeping. Pastors should be best at sleep. Let’s see who’s most spiritual: Aram and Gary, it’s a competition. Let’s see who can rest better and fall asleep first. Ready? Go!

[Peter is yelling while shaking a baseball bat over Aram and Gary trying to rest:]

- “Be still and know that I am God,” says the Lord in Psalm 46!
- “It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep” (Psalm 127)!
- Jesus fell asleep on a boat in a storm (Matthew 8)! *Sabat! Stop! Rest!* Don’t move or I’ll have to *kill* you (Exodus 31)!

See, look! Neither one of them is asleep . . . and here it was a race . . . and to think they’re pastors . . . like faithless heathens . . .

When you think about it, sabbath is a very difficult commandment. How do you make yourself stop, rest, or sleep? Richard Foster writes, “Communion with [God] isn’t something you institute. It’s like sleep. You can’t make yourself sleep.” That’s right. The harder I try to sleep, the less it happens. Foster writes: “You can’t make yourself sleep, but you can create the conditions that allow sleep to happen.” Well, the worst condition for sleep to happen is when it *has* to happen. As soon as I think, “Oh man, I’ve got to get to sleep! If I don’t sleep, I’ll be dead tomorrow!”—as soon as it’s a law, I’m wide awake and dead.

Paul wrote, “Law came in to increase the trespass.” Exodus 31 tells us to “keep the sabbath or die” . . . almost like, “Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength or *die!*” Well, it’s kind of hard to feel all loving when you put it *that* way—a law.

Well, naturally a person would ask the question, “What constitutes work?” Scripture doesn’t give many specifics; only three that I could find:

1. The exiles were to “remain in their place” and not gather manna bread on the sabbath (Exodus 16:29).
2. They weren’t to “kindle a fire” (Exodus 35:3).
3. They were not to carry a burden outside their home (Jeremiah 17:22).

So not working is *at least* that . . . but what’s *that*? What constitutes a burden? What constitutes work? Since the penalty is death, one would want to know. If my heart pumps blood, it lifts blood. Is that a burden? In physics, I learned that work is force applied over distance. If my heart beats, if my lungs move, I’m working. And if I work, then I die.

Now, you may be thinking, “Oh, come on, Peter, get real. Be practical. Tell us what it means for us today. Apply this to our everyday lives. That’s what pastors *do*.” It’s interesting that we feel this way, for scholars agree that’s exactly what the Pharisees were doing.

In the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Dr. J. C. McCann of Eden Theological Seminary writes:

Contrary to a widespread modern opinion, the Pharisees were not the strictest of the Jewish parties. Their intent was to interpret the law so that it could be obeyed by ordinary persons under the conditions of daily existence.

In other words, the Pharisees wanted to make the law *practical* and apply it to everyday life. So they went about defining God’s law. They called this practical guide the Halakah, which

was later preserved as the Mishnah around 200 A.D. When they say that Jesus' disciples did what was unlawful—"exesti"—not permitted, they are referring to the Halakah or Mishnah.

The Mishnah sets forward thirty-nine main tasks not permitted on the sabbath. For instance, you could write *one* letter but not *two*. From there, it seeks to define every aspect of life. So a burden was: ink enough for *two* letters but not *one* letter; the weight of a dried fig; a swallow of milk.

A journey was defined as a certain distance from home. A home was where you ate. So if you had to take a trip on the sabbath, on the Friday before you'd hide food all along the route at intervals equaling a sabbath day's journey. Then on the sabbath, you'd stop at each stash of food, eat the food, and declare it home. Then you'd go on to the next stash, eat the food, and declare it home . . . and on and on until you got to where you were going.

- They diligently sought to apply the law to all their daily lives, so they ended up working *extremely hard* at resting, feeling proud of their efforts.
- Making the law practically applicable, they missed its meaning.
- They made the law practical so it wouldn't kill them; perhaps the meaning would kill them.
- They made it applicable to their "everyday lives," but maybe God didn't want them to have "everyday lives." Maybe He didn't want them to have *their* lives.

Well, folks will often say stuff like this to the preacher: "Could you just make it simple? Could you just be less vague? Could you just tell me what to do? Would you just give me my three practical application points and tell me what this means for my everyday life?" You see, I think that may just be another way of saying, "Could you be more of a Pharisee? We'd like some Mishnah."

I must say, it's really tempting to preach Mishnah. It's just that preaching Mishnah is not the same as preaching the Word of God, which is "living and active and sharp." (Mishnah tries to apply the Word so as not to be cut by the Word.) To preach Mishnah is to say something like this:

What this sabbath commandment really means is that we're to have a rhythm of rest, because studies show that companies that honor the sabbath are more productive (like Chick-Fil-A). And "if you sleep on it, well, things happen," and "when you *push*, they don't." So we all need to make a new commitment to church attendance, and we should all have a morning quiet time of Bible study and prayer. Who doesn't have *fifteen minutes* a morning for God? If you will commit to fifteen minutes, raise your hand. Join a group and hold each other accountable. That's what sabbath means for us today.

Now, much of that may be very good in and of itself, but it's Mishnah: good advice for daily living, not the Word of God for other-day living.

The American Church is full of Mishnah. We judge each other with it and therefore judge Jesus with it. The Pharisees judged Jesus with their Mishnah and ended up crucifying the Word of God—the meaning of the law.

Exodus 31:15: "Whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death." *Any work* . . . which makes it sound like everybody needs to die. Yet to "do nothing," to not work at all, is to die.

Well, Jesus fulfills the law, and He is the meaning of the law. Matthew 12:1-4:

*At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?"*

Now, that's a rather bizarre reference to a rather bizarre tradition. In Leviticus, the priests were commanded to put twelve loaves of bread on a table in the tabernacle or temple. They were replaced every sabbath. They were to be placed in two piles of six. The number *six* symbolizes man, made on the sixth day; two piles, like a man torn in two.

The "showbread"—"bread of the presence"—some translate "bread of the face" (like staring God in the face). The bread was to be a covenant forever. No one knew what it meant at the time.

Well, Jesus took bread, broke it, and said, "This is my body broken for you." The broken body of the Son of man is the testimony to the eternal covenant. See Jesus and you see the Father, you see the heart of God broken for you.

When David's men were hungry and restless, they ate this bread of the presence in the temple of God and found rest. Next verse:

*"Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here."*

Every sabbath the law commanded that in the temple two male lambs would be sacrificed and bread offered. That meant the priest had to 1) gather bread from outside his home, 2) kindle a fire, and 3) lift a burden—two lambs. That would mean the High Priest should *die*, but Jesus says he's guiltless. Jesus is our High Priest. Jesus is the bread offered and the lamb slain. And the disciples picking grain were soon to be His temple. Next verse:

*"And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy [khesed], and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath."*

Jesus quotes the prophet Hosea who prophesied, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice . . . but at Adam they transgressed the covenant." Like we preached last week:

- Jesus is the ultimate eschatos or Last Adam.
- Jesus is the Perfect Adam, Son of Man, from the other side of the curse.
- Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial system.
- Jesus became our sacrifice that we might have His mercy.

To have mercy is to have a heart at rest, a heart so full and so at peace it can endure injustice and extend grace. You can't love if your soul is not at rest. Jesus says, "The Son of man is lord of the sabbath." Does that mean He tells you how far you can walk your donkey on Sunday? or more like He gives rest to your soul.

Next verse:

*And he went on from there, and entered their synagogue. And behold, there was a man with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. He said to them, "What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, whole like the other. But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him.*

Well, if Jesus healed, it was pretty clear that God healed through Him. So if Jesus worked, it was God working through Him. It was work that was like rest: like dancing to His Father's music, like playing in His Father's field. "To do good is lawful on the sabbath." Perhaps to do good is to do work that is really rest: to be moved by the good, and only God is good. Perhaps mercy, love, and compassion can only come from a heart at rest in God.

The Pharisees hate what Jesus does. Perhaps their hearts aren't at rest. They plot to kill the Lord of the Sabbath on the sabbath. (Now, *that's work*.) They secretly hate the sabbath. Sabbath is doing nothing, and doing nothing is to be dead, trusting that *God* makes us, *God* heals us, *God* delivers us. But, you see, Pharisees want to make, heal, and deliver themselves. They're full of themselves and can't stop themselves. Because they make the law practical and applicable to themselves, they don't see that they're "heavy laden" and need to die. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. And remember what He just said?

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

His yoke is a cross. Crosses kill people. Jesus came to help us *die* to ourselves.

- At the cross, I die with Him that I might live with Him.
- At the cross, I stop—sabat, and He begins living in me.
- At the cross, the body is broken and the covenant is made. God is shown and present.
- At the cross, the lamb is slain, the sacrifice is made, God's mercy is revealed.
- At the cross, God delivers me from bondage (Deuteronomy 5). That's the meaning of sabbath.
- At the cross, God atones for my sins (Leviticus 16). That's the sabbath.
- At the cross, God makes me in His image (Exodus 20). That's the sabbath. It's remembering God made me, and He rested. *It is finished*.

On the sixth day, God made man and woman and saw that it was good. And because it was all good—finished—perfected—done, He rested. But Jesus said His Father and He were “working still.” They must have been working until Jesus cried from the cross, “It is finished.” The cross is the doorway to the seventh day, the doorway to eternity—the seventh day when everything is good and all is at rest.

Scripture says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” But the sabbath day is more than some twenty-four-hour period on the calendar. I think that’s why Paul could write that: because of what Jesus did on the cross, “Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”

The day on a calendar is but a shadow of God’s sabbath in eternity. So Paul writes in Romans, “One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. . . . He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord.”

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath; it’s all about *Him*. Yet Jesus said the sabbath was made for man. It’s all about Him, and He’s all about us. Sabbath is a communion of rest. His cross is the doorway to the seventh day.

In Hebrews 4, scripture talks about “entering God’s rest now by faith.” It tells us the Jews of the exodus didn’t enter God’s rest because of unbelief, even though God’s works were finished from the foundation of the world, for God rested on the seventh day. (You see, the seventh day must exist outside of this world—space and time as we know it.)

But then Hebrews says, “Today [now] we can enter God’s rest.” Hebrews 4:9: “So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God; for whoever enters God’s rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his.” So sabbath is not living by my labor but by God’s finished labor, God’s grace, God’s rest. Jesus said, “Come to me, and I will give you rest.”

We don’t rest by works of the law but by His grace through faith. He gives us rest for our souls. Although our body exists in the sixth day in labor, our souls can live in the seventh day in rest by grace through faith. We don’t work in order to rest. We *receive rest* in order to do His work; that is, “we love because He first loved us.”

Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee.” Maybe sin is living out of our restless hearts. Maybe sin is living out of the sixth day trying to create ourselves, make ourselves, complete ourselves. People with restless hearts can’t love. They’re too needy. They try to take from other people only what God can give: rest. They’re too busy; they can’t be still; they can’t be good.

One night when my daughter was two, she split her head open on the fireplace. I raced her to the emergency room. She was so frightened she struggled to be still, to be good for the doctors. They told her she had to sit still. Finally, they tied her down to a papoose board. Her body was restrained from the outside (like the law restrains us), but she was not restrained on the inside. As men with masks began sticking needles in her head, she began to shake and scream. I couldn’t touch her, but I put my face down right in front of hers and said, “Elizabeth, you’ll be all right. Trust me.” She looked at my face—my presence, her eyes locked on mine, and held onto my heart. And she was still from the inside out.

A short time later, I had to take her for stitches again. (It seemed to happen every few weeks at our house.) At the hospital I said, “Honey, can you be still?” She locked her eyes on my presence. She was still on the inside and therefore still on the outside. So they didn’t need the papoose board. She fulfilled their law by resting in me, and she was very good.

When we live out of the sixth day, we try to save ourselves, so we can't be still, can't be good, and can't love, for we're too needy and desperate. Sin is living out of the sixth day. Goodness and love is living out of the seventh day. It's believing the cross, believing that I'm forgiven, believing that God has delivered me, believing He has made me in His image, believing *it is finished*. It's being at peace, totally secure in my Father's love.

One week several years ago, when Elizabeth was in kindergarten, she was being really ornery and mean. We took the kids to On the Border one night. Elizabeth was just tough on everyone in the van: sassing Susan, picking fights with the other kids . . . When we got to the restaurant, I made everybody get out except for her. I was exhausted with time outs, arguing, laying down the law—tying her to the proverbial papoose board. I said, “Honey, what's gotten into you? What's bothering you? For the last week you've been so nasty, and you're usually so nice.” I didn't expect an answer, but she looked at me with big tears in her eyes and said, “I know what it is, but I'm not gonna tell you.”

I had her come sit on my lap, and finally she said, “Kelly told me something the other day.” (I knew who Kelly was, her little friend that glommed onto me whenever I was around.) Finally Elizabeth told me. She cried, “Kelly told me the other day that when you visited our class, you told her you didn't really love me . . . you loved *her*.” I said, “Oh honey, does Kelly have a daddy?” She said, “Yes . . . but he just moved away from Kelly and her mommy.”

At that I held her face, looked into her eyes (like that night in the emergency room), and said, “Elizabeth, listen to me. I will always love you. That doesn't change with time. When you doubt my love, come to me and tell me so I can tell you how much I love you.” It breaks my heart when my children doubt my love.

Adam and Eve doubted God's love and so ate from the tree. Jesus is the heart of God broken on that tree. My daughter saw my heart and became still on the inside and on the outside. So she enjoyed her tacos, and everyone else did too.

Jesus says, “Come to me, and I will give you rest.” Seeing Him I see the Father and His heart. I still need to sit on my Father's lap, look in His face, and hear His word: “Peter, I love you, and that doesn't change with time. See my heart. See how I love you. It's an eternal covenant.” It stops me—*He* stops me; I die, I rest, and I live. I cease from my labor and live in His labor of love.

Jesus said, “Come to me, and I will give you rest.” I don't know exactly what coming to Him looks like for you.

1. Maybe it's reading scripture. But remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees: “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.” Your scripture reading can't be Mishnah. It must be Word. The Word is a sword, and He cuts you with His love.
2. Or maybe it looks like prayer. But remember, you won't be heard for your “many words,” but you will be heard for who you're talking to. Come to Him.
3. Or maybe it's observing a sabbath. But sabbath is much more than still hearts and still feet. It's a still soul.
4. I hope “coming to Him” is all those things and more. But it's always *faith*, trusting God's love for you in Christ Jesus every moment that you're forgiven, delivered, and made in God's image; finished and secure in Jesus.



5. Perhaps it's picturing yourself on your Father's lap or Jesus' lap as He looks you in the face and says, "I will always love you. That doesn't change."

Perhaps it's seeing yourself as the Bride dancing in your Lord's strong arms on Valentine's Day (a communion of rest).

Perhaps it's seeing yourself as His little brother or a knight in His war band sitting at your King's table. He slaps you on the back and says, "That was a hell of a fight!" And it *was*. You battled Hell together.

Perhaps He lifts His cup to you, like Gary preached last month, saying, "Here's to you, single dad learning to braid your daughter's hair. Here's to you, drug addict turned into Pastor of Administration. Here's to you, my little love, with blessings from above."

I don't know how it looks for you, but I know that coming to this table in faith is coming to Him. Here we feast on the bread of His presence, and we drink the blood of the lamb. The fire of His Spirit is kindled in our hearts.

On the night He was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." He took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Remembering His body broken and blood shed is remembering the sabbath and keeping it holy. Come to Him and enter His rest. We enter through His body and blood. He is the doorway to the seventh day. Let that day begin in your soul here and now.

[Song] "Let the Day Begin" by The Call

Here's to the babies in a brand new world  
 Here's to the beauty of the stars  
 Here's to the travellers on the open road  
 Here's to the dreamers in the bars

Here's to the teachers in the crowded rooms  
 Here's to the workers in the fields  
 Here's to the preachers of the sacred words  
 Here's to the drivers at the wheel

Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Now let the day begin  
 Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Now let the day begin, let the day begin

Here's to the winners of the human race  
 Here's to the losers in the game  
 Here's to the soldiers of the bitter war  
 Here's to the wall that bears their names

Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Now let the day begin

Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Let the day begin, let the day begin, let the day start

Here's to the doctors and their healing work  
 Here's to the loved ones in their care  
 Here's to the strangers on the streets tonight  
 Here's to the lonely everywhere

Here's to the wisdom from the mouths of babes  
 Here's to the lions in the cage  
 Here's to the struggles of the silent war  
 Here's to the closing of the age

Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Now let the day begin  
 Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Let the day begin  
 Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Let the day begin  
 Here's to you my little loves with blessings from above  
 Now let the day begin, let the day begin, let the day start

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You heard the word of the Father sung over you: "Here's to you, my little loves, with blessings from above, now let the day begin"—the seventh day.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.

Genesis 1:26-27, 31-2:3

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Exodus 20:8-11

“Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.”

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

“And it shall be a statute to you for ever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves, and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you; for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute for ever. And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father’s place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments; he shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be an everlasting statute for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.” And Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

Leviticus 16:29-34

The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, “Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; but in the seventh year

there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. The sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and the sojourner who lives with you; for your cattle also and for the beasts that are in your land all its yield shall be for food. And you shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his family.”

Leviticus 25:1-10

And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; every one who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign for ever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.’”

Exodus 31:12-17

Their [Pharisees] intent was to interpret the law so that it could be obeyed by ordinary persons under the conditions of daily existence.

J. C. McCann, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.” He said to them, “Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?”

Matthew 12:1-4

“And you shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes of it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the table of pure gold. And you shall put pure frankincense with each row, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion to be offered by fire to the LORD. Every sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the LORD continually on behalf of the people of Israel as a covenant for ever. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the offerings by fire to the LORD, a perpetual due.”

Leviticus 24:5-9

“Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.”

Matthew 12:5-6

“On the sabbath day two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a cereal offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering: this is the burnt offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.”

Numbers 28:9-10

“And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy [khehsed], and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.”

Matthew 12:7-8

“For I desire steadfast love [khehsed] and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings. But at Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me.”

Hosea 6:6-7

But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him.

Matthew 12:14

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Colossians 2:13-17

One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Romans 14:5-6

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall never enter my rest,’” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way, “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” And again in this place he said, “They shall never enter my rest.” Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he sets a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later of another day. So then, there remains a

sabbath rest for the people of God; for whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 4:1-14

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

And I was still awake, and then our Lord opened my spiritual eyes and showed me my soul in the middle of my heart. I saw my soul as large as if it were a kingdom; and from the properties that I saw in it, it seemed to me to be a glorious city. In the centre of that city sits our Lord Jesu, true God and true man, glorious, highest Lord; and I saw him dressed imposingly in glory. He sits in the soul, in the very centre, in peace and rest, and he rules and protects heaven and earth and all that is. The Manhood and the Godhead sit at rest, and the Godhead rules and protects without any subordinate or any trouble; and my soul was blissfully filled with the Godhead, which is supreme power, supreme wisdom, supreme goodness. In all eternity Jesus will never leave the position which he takes in our soul; for in us is his most familiar home and his favourite dwelling. This was a ravishing and restful sight, for it is truly so everlastingly. And it is very pleasing to God and extremely helpful to us that we should see this while we are here.

Julian of Norwich, Revelation of Divine Love

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:30

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

Revelation 21:2-6a