

A Sabbath-Crowned Life

First Fridays: Christian Spirituality

Why does God rest?

Genesis 2:1-3

[2:1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Point 1. The Sabbath is a demonstration of God's kingship.

By creating all things God has shown himself to be king over creation. Now his resting is exercising dominion.

Day 1: Realm of Day and Night, Day 4: Ruled by Sun and Moon

Day 2: Realm of Sky and Sea, Day 5: Ruled by Birds and Fish

Day 3: Realm of Earth, Day 6: Ruled by Man

Day 7 All Creation Ruled by God

Think about the other nations and all that they called gods, or all that we idolize. God creating and resting shows his reign over all things which the peoples of the nations worshiped as gods and triumphing over the chaos and emptiness.

A. Humanity's job is to represent God, imitate him, and expand his dominion.

Genesis 1:26

[26] 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 heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

B. This includes weekly Sabbath observance. Humans are to obey the Sabbath.

Exodus 20:8-11

[8] "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

What effect does working 6 days out of 7 have on your work?

1. Restraining from giving all of yourself to work. Why do you rest on Sunday? If it is just to recover from or recharge your batteries for the workweek, then you are resting for your work.
2. Calling: You Don't have as many resources as the next guy.
3. Expanding God's reign in your life. Rightly frames the reason why you work: You are working for God, not for identity, prosperity, worldly success, etc. It is a weekly exercise in trusting that he is king and your life is for him. Is success wrong?
4. Contented to work with resources given. Our call is to be faithful rather than successful.
5. Fruit is clearly God: When we labor incessantly without reference to God as Lord of time, we can only look at the fruit – which may be greater or lesser – and only be able to say with sadness that we cannot distinguish God's faithfulness from our own self-reliance.
6. Act of Faith:
"Cessation from work is an act of faith by which we recognize that we are not, like the world, striving to build lasting homes in this present age. We don't have to pursue work the way the world does, investing all our energy and hopes in this life." Lee Irons

Second point: Sabbath is a day of promise in the gospel

Sabbath always pointed forward

"On the sixth day, God contemplated his finished creation in its vast splendor and saw that it was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). But he did not yet see the "very best." That was because even before he created, God had decreed that "the best of all possible worlds" was not to be at the beginning, but rather at the end of history. That, too, was why he made Adam and Eve to be his image bearers—to give them the privilege and responsibility, unique among his creatures, of working for their Creator-Lord and so to bring the creation to its intended consummation." Richard Gaffin

"Sabbath marks the completion of God's work of creation. It was a prophetic sign of creation's goal. The Glory is the Sabbath reality present beforehand; it is the earnest and archetype that guarantees the Sabbath's coming." Meredith Kline

Microcosm of history of world and our life

The pattern of six days of activity interrupted by one day of rest is a continuing reminder that human beings are not caught up in a meaningless flow of days, one after the other without end. History has a beginning and an ending. We are heading toward final judgment and the consummation of all things. Every time we remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, it encourages us to "think big."
Richard Gaffin

The Sabbath looked forward to the “Day of the Lord”

Joel 1:15

[15] Alas for the day!

*For the day of the LORD is near,
and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.*

Amos 5:20; Isaiah 13:6, 9; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Obadiah 1:15;
Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Malachi 4:5

Already

NT Day of the Lord has come! Worship is on Day 1

Revelation 1:10

*[10] I was in the Spirit **on the Lord's day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*

Acts 20:7

[7] On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

[16:1] Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Matthew 28:1

[28:1] Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

Luke 24:1

[24:1] But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.

John 20:1

[20:1] Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

Not yet

Hebrews 4:8-11

[8] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. [9] So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

[11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Pilgrim identity

“In the long passage Hebrews 3:7–4:13, he is intent on giving New Testament Christians a sense of their basic identity: they are sojourners; the church is a pilgrim people. He makes his point, in commenting on Psalm 95:7–11, by comparing the church to Israel in the wilderness. That analogy has two sides. On the one hand, just as Israel had been set free from slavery in Egypt, so believers have already been released from the guilt and power of sin. But, on the other hand, just as Israel in Sinai had not yet entered the land of Canaan, so we have not yet attained our salvation in its final fullness. An unthreatened, unchallenged (but not uncertain!) experience of salvation is still future for the church. This is why there are so many pronounced exhortations to persevere, not only in this passage, but throughout Hebrews” Gaffin

The Sabbath is about the gospel. It is a sign both to the church and to the world that we are living differently because Christ has redeemed us.

- It is a sign that we don't trust in our own efforts.
- It is a sign that we have already witnessed the beginning of Christ's kingdom and new creation.
- It is a sign that there is a future hope and we have a down payment.
- Ultimately this is why the church has recognized the primary duty of the Sabbath is worship.

Sabbath-Rhythms

“In contrast, the Sabbath holds promise because it promises so little—little, that is, in the contrived sentimentality of mountain-top moments. It is rest for the weary who are still engaged in warfare.” John Muether

Key Question: does it hinder or promote my spiritual resting on the day?

The Lord's Day also affords the **opportunity** to

- catechize our covenant children - not merely in the formal sense of memorizing the catechism, but informally as well, through discussions about the sermon,
- Bible reading
- Reading Christian books
- Godly engagement of music, art, culture
- invite other members and visitors over to their house for afternoon/evening fellowship.
- opportunities for good works of mercy (e.g., visiting shut-ins or people on skid row)

Articles to Read:

“A Sign of Hope” by Richard Gaffin

“The Sabbath as an eschatological sign of the covenant” by Lee Irons