

Practicing Sabbath.

Within the Ten Commandments God says, *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. ... 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.”* (Exodus 20:8-11)

And so, we find, that the principle, the practice, of Sabbath is old as Creation itself. However, as we have repeatedly seen in our journey through Luke’s gospel, the observance of the Sabbath had gone from being a Holy observance, a life-giving thing, and had become ritual enmeshed in endless, often inconsistent, legal minutiae.

This wasn’t a new problem. In Isaiah 1:13 God says, *“Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.”*

And so, Jesus brings a fresh perspective on Sabbath.

In Mark 2:27 he says, *“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”* It is given for our benefit.

In Luke 6:5 he declares, *“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”*

Later, the Apostle Paul takes us a step further, in Colossians 2:16-17 where he writes, *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

All of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus. Very specifically, the law given to Moses, and all of the religious feasts and festivals, not only point to Jesus; they are fulfilled IN Jesus. And so, not only is Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath; he has become our Sabbath.

Therefore, as we practice Sabbath today, I believe we need to be mindful of two things:

1. We are invited to find rest in Jesus. We don’t work for our salvation; it is offered as a free gift in him. We can, therefore, rest in him and in his completed work.
2. Physically, mentally and emotionally... we still need to rest!

In the month of July, as we focus on the Spiritual Discipline of Sabbath... make some time to stop and ask:

What does Sabbath look like in my life?

Then ask God, “What should Sabbath look like for me?”

Then resolve, set a plan in place, to make step by step changes to get from ‘What is’ to ‘What should be’.

Make notes on the other side of this sheet and keep it handy!