

Opening story – 3 days of worry

When I returned home I was exhausted...YES Because I didn't get good sleep, yes because I spent hours in a car and on planes...but mostly because I was worn down from the constant anxiety.

Whether it's situational or constant, worry is a disturbing depleting condition in our lives. One that needs a remedy. Over the next month we are going to explore a remedy that comes from the heart and mind of God – The sabbath rest.

Consider this message a prequel...a set up for what will follow. Today I want to show you WHY Sabbath is essential and in the weeks that follow Barry and Tim will guide us in understanding what Sabbath means, how Sabbath works, and how we can begin to practice it.

Why this topic? The idea of Sabbath is at the heart of one of Grace Church's core values:

Breathe

We will not be ground into dust by this life.

We long to be continuously refreshed by Jesus, to pursue what makes us healthy, and to practice the spiritual disciplines of solitude, silence, and sabbath rest

So...you can look forward to next week and the weeks that follow as we explore the breath of fresh air which is Sabbath but today I've got the bad news of just why you need it!

Four reasons why you need sabbath:

1. Worry

Anxiety...emotional stress...uncertainty...fear...all of the above is a common affliction.

- 60% of Americans say they experience it daily – this from Gallup poll in 2020
- Anxiety disorders #1 mental illness in US

In a few minutes we'll do a deeper dive into worry as we see what Jesus had to say about it but before we do let me give you 3 other reasons we are desperate for sabbath.

Four reasons why you need sabbath:

1. Worry

2. Speed

- Everything is speeding up.
 - people talk significantly faster now than they did in the 1950s
 - Since the turn of the millennium 2000 people have started to walk 10% faster.

Side note: I recommend to you the book **Stolen focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention - and How to Think Deeply Again by Johann Hari**

- Volume of information is speeding up

Hari quotes Sune Lehmann, Professor of Complexity Science, Technical univ. of Denmark

“We are drinking from a firehose - there's too much coming at us. We are soaked in information.”
Sune Lehmann

- Episodes of switching are speeding up – some call multi-tasking
 - which is a joke and a fallacy...you are not multi-tasking you are juggling

“The cost of multitasking or switching is that our performance drops. We are slower and we are stupider. We make more mistakes, we're less creative and we experience diminished memory.”

Johann Hari

...and we're more freaked out

Four reasons why you need sabbath:

1. Worry
2. Speed
- 3. Lack of sleep**

40% of Americans are chronically sleep deprived getting less than the necessary minimum of seven hours a night. Since 1942, the average amount of time a person sleeps has been slashed by an hour at night. The amount of sleep we get has dropped by 20% in just 100 years.

Roxanne Pritchard, Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of Minneapolis

“If you stay awake for 18 hours - say if you woke up at 6:00 AM and went to sleep at midnight - your reactions are equivalent to if you had .05% blood alcohol. If you stay up another three hours, you'll be the equivalent of legally drunk.”

Roxanne Pritchard

Four reasons why you need sabbath:

1. Worry
2. Speed
3. Lack of sleep
- 4. Digital sabotage**

Quick Quiz: How many times per day/24 hours do we touch our phones?

617?

1617?

2617?

- we touch our phones 2617 times every 24 hours.

- US adults spend more than 8 hours a day on smartphones, computers and other devices.
- Social media is deliberately working to increase that – we are being sabotaged.

So...because of the speed of life, lack of sleep, and digital sabotage we desperately need sabbath, but along with all those factors maybe the biggest...maybe made worse by the others...

Worry.

Matthew 6:25-34 page _____

“Do not to worry about everyday life” Jesus

I’ll read verses 25-34 but I want you to count the number of times Jesus uses the word “worry”

²⁵ “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, ²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God^[a] above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

³⁴ “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Jesus was clearly addressing the same dilemma in his 1st century listeners that we 21st century people experience.

I would suggest that this whole section of the sermon on the mount is less about money and more about worry.

¹⁹ “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal.²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

- These were not rich people so don’t think precious metals and money...these folks were desperately setting aside stuff as a hedge against the future AND doing so in such frenzied ways that it was enslaving them.
- It’s not money that is bad...it is the anxiety generated by money or fear of not having it!

²⁵ “That is why (*because of this...*) I tell you not to worry about everyday life—

The word Matthew chooses to capture Jesus’ concerns – Greek word for worry is interesting in that it comes from a word that means to be divided or pulled apart – fractured in pieces. How accurate is that?

- This is why worry is exhausting – we’re switching between or juggling two lives at the same time...the present AND the future.
- During worry, in our brains...the limbic system... is disrupted (the hippocampus, amygdala, hypothalamus and thalamus)...our brains act as if we are under attack - again...this is why depletes us.

Jesus...who created your limbic system knows this full well.

What is Jesus solution or counter to worry:

- Settle down...look at these things...

²⁶ Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?

²⁸ "Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow.

³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you.

³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

And he ends with a flourish:

³⁴ "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

This is all very insightful and inspiring of Jesus...but not totally helpful. As a matter of fact you might say it was cruel optimism.

Cruel optimism – advice that is so difficult for people to apply that when they fail they feel worse off than before.

- I WANT to respond like birds and flowers. I WANT to live for Kingdom values...but wow...I fail at every attempt.

I'd say that Jesus optimism was indeed cruel if he had not been constantly reminding them of the method to make it reality.

We have a tool to divert us from the downhill course of worry.

We have a process to help us think like birds and lilies.

We have a method to guide us into the values of the Kingdom of God.

Sabbath

Sabbath gives us the opportunity to:

- Trust in the provision of God again
- Shift masters
- Change treasures
- Slow down
- Sleep better
- Set aside technology
- Overrides social media
- Stop multitasking
- Slow down the information flow
- Helps us focus on today
- Reconnect with the Kingdom values that are crucial

Jesus taught sabbath, Jesus demonstrated sabbath, and Jesus personified sabbath when he said...

“Come to me all of you who are worried and overwhelmed and I will give you rest.” Jesus in Matthew 11:28

So, you worried ones, you exhausted and overwhelmed ones, you speed freaks and digital warriors, you multi-taskers and to-do list troopers, you restless and agitated ones and you drunk from no sleep ones.

There is hope...there is Jesus...there is sabbath...there is rest awaiting.

Don't miss the next 4 weeks.

