

The Busyness of the Soul

Pastor Jim Essian : April 19, 2015

THE PARADOX CHURCH

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the 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 that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 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.

(Genesis 1:31-2:3)

Time is not something that can be subdued by man. In Genesis 1 we're commissioned to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. But we cannot subdue time. We can participate in space and place. Within it we can fill and build and cultivate, but we can't restrain, constrain, or reel in time. As much as I love Back to the Future (and love quoting it, by the way), we can't do it. Time is fleeting. We can't hold on to it. We can't subdue it. We have zero control over time, and we know it. So we hurry ourselves, and busy ourselves, and move from task to task to task. Blaise Pascal, 16th century mathematician and philosopher, said, "Nothing is so insufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without study, because he then feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emotions. There will immediately, in his time of rest, arise from him, the depths of his heart, weariness and gloom, sadness, fretfulness, vexation, and despair. I have often said that the sole cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room."

Pascal is not so much saying that we can't or don't rest, but we won't rest. It's not so much that it's hard for us to find rest but that we don't want to rest. When we find ourselves in that place of rest or quiet, we realize that we're still unsatisfied, that all the work we've been doing isn't done, that we're not yet happy, and that there's still a restlessness in our soul even if our physical self is at rest. He says we don't actually want to rest, not in the real rest way, not in the Sabbath rest. In fact he's challenging us to try it. Just sit in a room and close the door for an hour, with no iPad, no music, no phone, no book... just you and your soul and see if you can do it. Can you rest? Can you be quiet? Pascal is saying you can't because you don't want to. We create all these diversions, all these distractions, and all this activity we'd rather be doing because we'd rather not sit in that place and hear nothing. We'd rather not sit in that place and hear "Oh, I'm still unsatisfied. I'm still not happy. I'm still not secure. I'm still not really at rest even though I'm at rest." Have you ever tried to pray for 15 minutes and not be distracted, to not have your mind wander? It's really difficult.

Sabbath rest is ultimately resting in God. Our inability to control time, to have any sort of constraint over time is, at the very least, a reminder to us that God can. So we should rest, because God has control over time. We can trust in Him, rest in Him, because He can even

though we can't. I want to talk about the Sabbath, what it means for us, what it means in Genesis 1, and what it means for the church now. I want to talk about resting from busyness and the busyness of our lives, but ultimately I want to talk about the busyness of the soul. Because ultimately the Sabbath rest is a rest from the busyness of the soul. Turn to Genesis 1 again, and we'll look at this. We'll start in verse 31. The chapter and verse divisions of the Bible are not divinely inspired. Some dude on a horse in the 15th century was doing the chapter and verse divisions. He was on a horse, bouncing around and looking at Genesis 1 and said let's put Genesis 2 here. He shouldn't have. Genesis 2 should start in verse 4 of Genesis 2, and that's okay. He was on a horse. Genesis 1, starting in verse 31. (That was for free. Here's the real sermon, starting now.)

Genesis 1:31-2:3

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the 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 that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 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.

If you remember back to Genesis 1:1, this is basically how it started. How it ends is how it began. In Genesis 1: 1 it says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," and this section ends with, "Thus the heavens and the earth were created." God's done. He did his work. This is a literary device used to bookend a section of scripture to emphasize its importance. Genesis 1:1 is not about creation and how it went down, whether we should believe in a literal 6th day or not, the day-age framework... It was meant to communicate that there is a great, grand, and glorious Creator God who made everything. He's beautiful, holy, perfect, and He's a loving Father to a beloved Son. Out of the overflow of His love, He created. He's the Creator. That's how it ends; that's how it began. The creation narrative is trying to communicate to us, primarily, who God is. God is the focus of the first chapter of the Bible. God is the focus of the story of the Bible. God is the story. It's communicating to us very clearly: here's the God who creates, and this God from whom all things come, through whom all things come, and for whom all things are rests. He rests. He finishes His work, and He ceases from working.

God is not tired here, just to be clear. He wasn't like, "Man, donkey... That was hard. Jesus, I need some rest. I need a nap. Can you take over?" No. He's weaving into the fabric of creation different rhythms, seasons, and times. Look back at verse 31. "And there was evening and morning the sixth day." All throughout the days we've seen that: evening and morning. We've talked about this before. He's saying "I'm giving you evenings, 7th days, seasons, and times when you're to rest, celebrate or feast. I'm weaving that into creation so you can rest from your work or celebrate what I've done." He's saying I want you to rest, not because I'm tired but because I want you to image me, follow my example, do what I do, and I want you to rest. I'm going to rest.

Have you ever finished a big project, worked really hard on it, taken a step back, looked at it, and said, "Yeah, I did that and it was great." You put your whole heart into it. You were passionate about it, excited about it, worked really hard, and you take a step back to enjoy it? That's what God is doing. He's resting from His work.

Then it says He blesses the 7th day, and He makes it holy. In Genesis 1, anytime God's blessing something -- birds, fish, mankind, etc. -- it's so that they would multiply. They were blessed to give life, blessed to be a blessing. We're blessed to multiply. Similarly, rest is meant to be a blessing to give life. Resting is renewal, revival, restoration, redemption... It's all those "re-" things where you get a new start and new life. That's what rest is; it's blessed. So day 7, the Sabbath, is blessed in order to give you life.

There are three reasons God called it holy:

1. God finished his work. It's a consummation that God is done. He accomplished exactly what He set out to do. None of God's purposes ever fail. Everything he does or seeks to do happens. And in His creative work He was finished. It was good; it was perfect, He says. This perfect, holy, loving God wants to share His glory, so he creates and He does so perfectly. Then He's done. There's a consummation to day 7.
2. God made creation His temple where He will dwell with His people. Day 7 is an enthronement. It's the picture of a King sitting on His throne, ruling and reigning over His beautiful kingdom. "I'm here to rule and reign. This is mine, and I'm going to do a good work here."
3. All of creation is now consecrated to God, dedicated to God. Everything He created on each of the previous days is meant to be bent towards the throne, toward the King and Creator in dedication to, glory of, and worship of Him. Day 7 is holy because all things are consecrated to Him, to this great and beautiful God who has created all things. That's why the days are important in the progression of day 1 through day 6. We talked about this a few weeks back. Everything in the creation narrative is building up to the apex of creation, which is men and women, created in God's image. Each day was made for man. All those things were consecrated to man. This is why last week we could talk about all work being sacred. Nothing is ordinary or mundane, because God has given all of creation to man, consecrated it, and made it sacred to man. We're co-rulers with God. We're meant to subdue and have dominion over our work. Work doesn't own us; we own work. And God makes all of it holy to us. Then day 7 comes after Day 6, meaning ultimately God is king. Ultimately all things, including you and I, are consecrated, made holy, and dedicated to God and His glory. Day 7 is holy.

Finally, in verse 31, again, it says, "God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good." God takes pleasure and enjoys His creation. Holiness is always finalized, met with, and seen in the joy of the person that's holy. Here's what I mean: If you think, God, in His holiness, is a grim-faced, unhappy God who's just trying to withhold goodness from you, you don't know the God of the Bible, and you don't know holiness in the Bible. Holiness means He's set apart, perfect, and lacking nothing. So He's infinitely happy. There's nothing that He needs. He's infinitely satisfied; there's nothing that He wants for. God never needs to be entertained; He's never bored. He's always infinitely happy because He's holy and He's perfect. It's unholy things that rob us of joy. That's why God commands us against those things, not to keep us from joy but to keep us from things that rob us of joy. Holiness is about enjoyment. Day 7 is holy because God has finished His work, because He's a King sitting on His throne, and because all things are dedicated to Him.

We, as image bearers, are meant to then rest as God has rested. So let me ask you: How are you doing at the godly, holy act of resting from your work? How are we doing at that? How's that been going for you? Your rest from your work, you being like God, you being holy? Do you work hard and rest from your work like God did? God finishes His work. Do we ever finish our work? When we leave the office are we done with work, like work's over? Is there a consummation ever to our work, at the end of the day or the end of the week? For most of us, if we're honest, even though we leave the office at 6 o'clock or whenever, we don't actually leave work. There's never actually a consummation of our work. There's never actually a finishing of our work because we still have an iPhone, an email, and we're still thinking through the project or the tasks we didn't accomplish despite all the tasks that we did. We never actually leave work even though we have left work. In order for us to image God, who finishes His work, we need to finish our work even though the work may not be finished. We're finished with our work even though there might still be things to do, so that our evenings might be intentional. The Jewish

day began in the evening. Our evenings are intentional; they're like a mini-Sabbath. We're finished with our work in the evenings. And our weekends are times of rest when we're not actually working or thinking about work, but we're finished with our work. We image God by observing Sabbath rest, where our work is done even if our work isn't actually done.

Secondly, God rules over His creation. He sits on His throne. He has dominion over His work. We also should sit on our little mini-throne and say, "I rule over my work. My work doesn't own me; I own my work. I'm going to rest from work. Why? Because I own my busyness my busyness doesn't own me. I have dominion over this. God's given me dominion over creation, over my work. I'm going to rest from this because God is ultimate King. He's made me a vice-ruler with Him. I can sit on my throne, I can chill and take a nap, because work doesn't own me. I own my work." Instead, we're enslaved to our work, constantly connected to email, constantly thinking about work, constantly talking about work. No! Rest! Have dominion over your work. Sit on your throne.

Finally, we should Sabbath rest like God because everything is consecrated to God. When we rest we say, "God, I did all of this, whether I ate or drank, I did it all to your glory." When we rest we say, "God, in your ultimate sovereignty and control over all things, I'm going to rest. I don't have control over all things and You do, so I'm going to rest." We're going to consecrate our work to God when we rest. We dedicate it to Him in worship of Him as a way to bring Him glory. Notice that all of this happens before Genesis 3. You know what happens in Genesis 3? Sin! Crabbiness, tiredness, stress, fretting, anxiety, brokenness... happen in Genesis 3. None of this has happened yet, and God is still saying, "Take a nap." There's no reason for it. There's no tiredness or crabbiness, none of that, but God's saying, "Adam I want you to stop gardening for a second."

"Why, because I'm crabby?"

"No you're not crabby; there's no sin yet."

"Why? Because I'm stressed?"

"No, there's no stress."

"I don't feel stressed."

"Yeah, but I still want you to take a nap."

"Why?"

"Because I want you to take a nap."

Before sin comes into the world, there's still a command to rest, to cease from our work. How much more so do we need to cease from our work now? It's God saying, "Listen, I've given you lots of power, dominion, and control. I've called you to subdue all the earth and fill it with My glory, but you need to chill every once in a while. Ultimately this thing is on me. Rest in My glory, control, and power. Rest in my work."

"There's no sin yet, but I still want you to take a nap." That's a good God, right?

So then, how should we Sabbath now? Depending on what denomination you grew up in, which church, what theologian you read, this is highly debated: what does the Sabbath look like now for the church? (We've preached on this before at more length, so you can look that up later if you'd like.) What does this look like for us now as a church, as God's people in the new covenant with Jesus? How do we Sabbath rest? This is obviously a big deal. It made the top 10 list. It's number 4. "Observe the Sabbath. Keep the Sabbath."

So what do we do with this? Jesus, in the New Testament, tells us that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. We're not to be enslaved to the Sabbath. The Sabbath doesn't rule over us; we rule over the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a tool, a gift, given to us by God. It's a command, yes, but a gift to us for our good. All of God's commands are for our good. So to

observe the Sabbath, to keep the Sabbath, is a command for our good. “I need you to rest. I want you to rest. I wove this into the fabric of creation.”

You need to rest, but it’s not something that rules over us. The Sabbath was made for man, Jesus says. And because of Jesus, all the legalistic requirements of the Sabbath are no more. You had the Old Testament requirements of the Sabbath that God had given. Those fall away in Christ. Then you had the hyper-religious people in Jesus’ day who created more interpretations of those requirements and just added more rules and laws to the Sabbath. There were a lot of rules on how you could take a nap in the New Testament when Jesus came along. Jesus’ work on the cross nullifies all the legalistic requirements of the Sabbath now. The New Testament is really clear that there’s not a particular day the Sabbath has to be observed on, and there aren’t specific things you can’t do on the Sabbath either. Those things have passed away. Those legalistic requirements and commands regarding the Sabbath have passed away with Jesus. Now some would disagree with us. We just think we’re right. You’ll just have to look that up and decide for yourself, but we’re right. (I humbly say that.)

So regarding that, we see that the Sabbath is still rooted in creation. This isn’t going anywhere. This is how God created the world to be so we can’t ignore it, nor should we. What does it look like then for God’s people? Two thoughts on this as we think about what it looks like to observe the Sabbath.

First, what is restful for you? Some things that are restful for you may not be restful for me. In particular you may want to stay away from things you’re responsible for. That’s really what work is. Some things may be restful for you but they’re not restful for me. So for me to say, “You can’t do that” is not what I’m called to do. But you need to decide between you and the Lord and maybe some close friends what’s restful for you. Sometimes, for me, doing yard work is restful. It’s very therapeutic. I love doing it. However, there’s the occasional time it doesn’t feel restful, so I’m not going to do it. On that day I’m just not going to do it, but most days I want to mow the yard. It’s restful. It’s good for me. I feel like it’s a Sabbath rest for me to do that.

For some of you cooking is like that. You like to cook. Some of you are like, “No. Cooking makes me completely stressed and anxious. I’m stressed right now thinking about it because you said it.” So don’t cook. You wouldn’t cook. The person that’s restful/therapeutic for/a way to commune with God and just chill from the week should cook then. Even go so far as thinking through whether you’re an introvert or an extrovert. If you’re an introvert, you may not want to be around people on your Sabbath day, on the day you want to chill with the Lord. So maybe you don’t want to have a bunch of people around. My wife and I are both introverts in different ways and so for us it’s typically not having a bunch of people around on those days off. Sometimes we’re just not even around each other on the days we need to just chill. The kids are like, “Where do we go? Mom? Dad?” We’re like, “We don’t know. We’ll tell you later. Go take a nap.”

But if you’re an extrovert, being around a bunch of people is life giving. It’s renewal, reviving, restful. It’s good for you. That’s a good Sabbath. That’s what you want. You want a bunch of people over. You want to grill out. You want to talk. You want to enjoy one another or play a game. That’s restful for you. So what’s restful for you? I don’t think we can place particular duties and requirements on one another. I don’t think the New Testament allows for that, but I will say this: We should, as a loving community, point out when we’re not resting. “Hey, man. It just seems like you’re working a lot.” Wives and husbands, say to your spouse, “You’re home, but you’re not really home. You’re here, but you’re not really here.” I think we need to be able to do that, speaking the truth in love, saying, “You need to Sabbath; you need to chill; you need to rest.”

Secondly, try to find, carve out and be intentional about getting a 24-hour period of time of rest. Maybe this isn't 24 hours straight. Maybe it's not an all-day Saturday. Maybe this is 12 hours on a Saturday, 12 hours on a Sunday. I don't know. I think we need to be creative. I think we need to be intentional. I think we probably need to put it on our calendar.

For most of us, Sundays should be that time. We should be able to say, "The Lord's day, (When Jesus was resurrected from the dead Christians began to worship on Sundays, where the Jews would observe the Sabbath on a Saturday.) Sunday, should be that time." For most of us that should work. It doesn't for me because I'm working right now. We have to be creative. I mean, if you're a stay at home mom that's really difficult. Right? Your work is always there. It's always around. And so we've got to figure out what that looks like. Maybe it's a husband saying, "Friday evening I want you to rest. I've got the kids. We can be around. You can be around, but I'm going to take responsibility for the kids. And then Saturday morning I'm going to as well. Maybe I'll take them on a daddy date, and I'll get them out of your hair for a little bit. You can just kind of rest for a little bit." Maybe an evening and a morning so a mom can have a Sabbath. Let's be creative. Let's think through what does that look like to try to carve out a significant period of time in our weekends to rest as we dedicate our lives to the Lord, rest in His finished work, and sit on our little mini-throne as well, where work doesn't own us? What does that look like?

Now, the Sabbath isn't just a religious thing. It's not just something that we do on a Sunday. It's not just why we don't work on a Sunday (and really a Saturday, too, because we observe the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sabbath in America. That's why we get two days off on Saturday and Sunday). It's not just that. We would also recognize and admit that this isn't always just rest, right? We might physically be resting, but we're not actually resting. Have you ever been resting, watching TV, but your soul is busy? Or laying down in bed resting, but your heart is restless? Have you ever had that? It's not just physical rest we're talking about or rest from work. I want to look at the busyness of the soul. I want us to look at Deuteronomy 5 real quick, where God commands the Sabbath again, but it's coming out of a different reason and motivation now. It says in Deuteronomy 5:15:

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

I want us to talk about this for a second. God's saying to Israel, "Remember when you were in slavery to Egypt for 400 years? Remember when you were in bondage for 400 years? Remember when you were in oppression for 400 years? Remember when you had to work for Pharaoh for 400 years? Do you remember that? And do you remember when I delivered you out of that? Remember the 10 plagues? Alright, it was awesome: frogs and locusts and crazy things happened. I delivered you out of the hand of the nation of Egypt, out of Pharaoh's hand, and I set you free. Do you remember that? Okay, because of that I want you to take a nap."

God is saying here that resting, a Sabbath rest, is a declaration of freedom! That it's not just rooted in creation, it's rooted in re-creation. It's rooted in salvation and redemption. It's rooted in Jesus' work on the cross to deliver you from slavery to sin, from your pursuits of all things that make you tired in the busyness of the soul. Rest is a declaration of freedom!

Listen to this:

40% of adults suffer from adverse effects of stress

40% say their job is very stressful

75% say that our work now, in this culture, is much more stressful than previous generation

34% say they have difficulty or cannot sleep because they have work stress

Over 50% skip lunch frequently because of work demands

We are in the most overworked, over-stressed, society the history of the world has ever seen. We are unbelievably entertained. We work longer hours. We're not quite as efficient, and we have all these things that we can do and yet we are the most medicated culture in all of the world. Most of that medication is related to stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, and those different disorders. All of this is because we continually work. Remember when technology was supposed to simplify our lives? Remember when that was supposed to make work easier and make it more efficient with less paperwork and less things to do? Yet all it's made us do is be able to work wherever we are, even when we're not at work. And so we work and we work and we work, and we're stressed and we're stressed and we're stressed, and we medicate and we medicate and we medicate. And God is saying, "Rest is a declaration of freedom. I've set you free from those pursuits. I've set you free from work underneath the work." It's work underneath the work that's causing this. And so rest isn't just rest. We need a rest underneath the rest. It's not just the busyness of life; it's the busyness of the soul that's causing our problems. God's saying, "I've delivered you from this. Worship me. Don't worship those things. Don't worship the god of performance or the god of people-pleasing. I'm a better God. I've given you rest. I've called you to rest. Those things continue to call for more and more and more of you." If your god is other people, people will keep asking for more and more and more. If your god is performance, your god is never satisfied. The one true God, the loving Father to a beloved Son, the God of the universe... He's really good. And

He gives you rest. In fact, He commands you to rest. Isaiah 57:21 says this: "The wicked have no peace." They have no rest. But Psalm 127 says that He gives to his beloved sleep. So rest is a declaration of freedom, which means that the busyness of the souls means that we somehow, then, walked back into slavery. Let me say that again. Rest is a declaration of freedom, which means, then, that the busyness of the soul means we somehow walked back into slavery.

Is your soul busy because of people-pleasing? Are you enslaved to what other people think of you? Are you constantly trying to please them? Really everything that you do revolves around the desire you have for people to think that you're awesome, to love you, and to accept you. Literally what you wear, what you say, what you do, how hard you work, how much money you try to make, and even the job that you're in is so that people might accept you. "Oh, look at that guy. Oh, he's great. Oh, look what he's wearing. I like him." Our motivation is that people would love us, so there's this busyness of the soul. Do you have that?

Or is your busyness of the soul the motivation for pats on the back? You want people to think that you're awesome, to say that you're awesome. You want that well-done, man. Well done, good and faithful servant. You just want people to say, "Hey, great job there." You want the applause of men. If everything in you is motivated by that, then there's a busyness of the soul because you need more applause.

Or is there a busyness of the soul because you're trying to prove yourself? Do you have a huge chip on your shoulder? Maybe you have some daddy issues. You never could please dad, so now you're out to prove yourself. You love the rags to riches story. Nobody ever thought you could make it. Nobody ever thought you could be successful. Nobody ever thought you could do it or be somebody. So you're just out to prove yourself and you're just going to keep working and keep working and keep working and keep going... and even when you're at rest you're not at rest because the soul is busy trying to prove yourself. Is that you? Is your soul busy because of power? You have to be in control? You have to do everything because nobody can do it like you can. You're in control of it. You're going to be in control of it. You can't let anybody else do it... so there's this busyness of the soul because of your power.

Is there a busyness of the soul because of your perfectionism? You're never at rest because everything needs to be perfect. The work's done, but the work's not done because the work's not perfect. Because, well, you're perfect and so the work should be perfect and you think you need to be perfect because you're perfect, but you're actually not perfect. So when the work's done, it's not really done because it's not perfect, even though you can't ever make it perfect and never will because you aren't either. So you're busy in your soul because of your perfectionism. You think everything has to be perfect instead of resting in God's perfect work, in His perfection, in God's holiness, and in Jesus' perfect work on your behalf. You think that you're going to be perfect. Is your soul busy because of those things?

See, you might not need a day off; you might need to repent. It might not be that you need a vacation; it might be that you need grace for sin. Or maybe it's not rest that you need, it's soul rest, it's the deep rest that can only be found in repentance from sin and grace to sinners. Because it's not just the busyness of our lives, it's the busyness of our souls. It's not just the work we need to rest from, but we need to rest from the work beneath the work. God is saying, "Rest." It's a declaration of freedom!

This is why the antidote to busyness is not laziness. Laziness is a fear of failure, while soul rest is the fear of God. That's different, right?! Laziness is self-comfort. It's me with the TV and a movie and some -itos. You know, Fritos, Cheetos, whatever ends in -eetos. It's self-comfort. It's me not doing anything except for hitting the remote control with my finger and taking the chip to my mouth, which Proverbs says, (last week we talked about it) sometimes is really difficult for some people.

That's laziness. That's self-comfort. But soul rest... that's the comfort of God, the God of all comfort that 2 Corinthians 1 talks about. Laziness is inactivity. It's mindlessness. Rest, soul rest, is enjoying God and enjoying our work. Laziness is not the antidote to busyness; rest in God is. So we can rest, but if it's not a rest of worship, it's not a rest of the soul. We can take a day off, but if it's not trusting in a sovereign God of the universe who upholds the universe by the word of His power, then there's still going to be a busyness of the soul.

There was a Sabbath day when Jesus and His disciples were on their way, and the Pharisees didn't like something that Jesus did on the Sabbath. Pharisees were the hyper-religious of Jesus' day. They were making rest work. Only hyper-religious people can make naps not fun. It was like somebody telling you to take a nap, but then they didn't like how you laid or where the blanket was or where the pillow was or your snoring. They just made a nap no fun. So they told Jesus, "You can't do that on the Sabbath. That's unlawful to do on the Sabbath." And Jesus' response was awesome. His response was: "I'm Lord of the Sabbath." He's saying, "Hey, did you read Genesis 1 where I sat down and rested on the 7th day? That's me. I'm Lord of the Sabbath."

But what does that mean exactly? Paul talks about this in Colossians 2. He says the Sabbath is just a shadow. It's important but not ultimate. It's just a shadow. It's a rest that's pointing to a greater rest. The Sabbath is great and good and holy, but it's pointing to a greater rest. It's a preview of coming attractions. And Paul says, "But the substance to the shadow, the real rest that Sabbath rest is pointing to, is Jesus." The substance is Christ. When Jesus says, "I'm the Lord of the Sabbath", He's saying, "I AM the Sabbath. I'm rest. I give you rest. Come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest." Jesus is rest. Jesus is the answer to the busyness of the soul! It was Jesus' perfect work that frees us from having to do the work beneath the work. We don't need to be awesome, to be perfect, to please people... We don't need to do those things. We can fear God and no longer other people. Why? Because Jesus perfected all of that and offers Himself as rest. He. Is. Rest. "I am the Sabbath,"

He's saying. Jesus is the answer to the busyness of the soul. Here's the thing about stress and life and busyness and sleeplessness and all of that: We haven't properly diagnosed the problem, so the remedy does nothing. We use the language of our remedies. We talk about, "Man, I really need a drink. I need to take a nap. I need a vacation. I need a day off." We speak a language that's actually the remedy to the problem. The problem is I'm busy, I'm tired, I'm stressed and anxious, so what's the answer? I need a drink, I need a day off, I need a vacation, I need whatever, I need rest, I need a nap. We use that language thinking that's the answer. That's not the answer. That's a Band-aid on a broken bone. That's not going to do anything.

We know, like Pascal, that if we were to sit quietly and we were to rest, actual deep, soul rest, what we would find is that all of our pursuits, all of our work, all of our striving, all of our toil, all of our sweating, all of our movement, and all of our passions for people to love us and for us to be perfect and for pats on the back and for our pride and all of that, that if we sat still we would find that we're still not satisfied. That we didn't do it. That the work's not done. That if we actually got down to the soul level of the busyness of our lives, where our heart is restless, not just our physical self, we would find that we are empty, weak, broken, dependent, wearisome, and not satisfied. The real problem is the busyness of the soul, so a nap is not going to take care of that. Only Jesus is.

Augustine, in the fourth century, famously said, "Our hearts are restless, God, until they find their rest in you." In Hebrews 4, it's basically saying that there's a rest that still awaits us, that we haven't entered into that final rest yet. That God's people haven't fully rested. There's always going to be an element, a degree of the restlessness of the heart, a busyness of the soul. What that means to us is that the invitation Jesus gave to come to Him all who are weary and heavy laden, He will give you rest. That invitation is still there. He's still inviting. There hasn't been a final rest yet that we've entered into. So for the Christian and the non-Christian, we can accept and receive the invitation again. As He calls us to Himself and invites us to enter into His rest, the Christian and the non-Christian can turn from their sin, their work underneath the work, the busyness of the soul, and turn to God in whom is found rest. The Christian does it again and again and again. For some this may be the first time, but it's a turning from the pursuit of those really bad gods of performance, people pleasing, pats on the back, and pride and a turning to a really, really good God who says, "Rest in my work. I give you rest." Jesus' invitation still goes out, and it goes out this morning. Run to Him all who are weary and heavy-laden and He will give you rest.