

3/28/20 - Jubilee

Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. - Lev. 25:10

"We need rest." These three little words mean so much, and mean different things in different contexts, yet are always true. For doctors, it means that our bodies are created to function with 7-9 hours of sleep each night. With less, we don't function as well and break down sooner. For athletes, this means that we need seasons where we rest our bodies from the rigor of training and competing. For families, it means we have way too many commitments, too many activities, too much to do. We need to carve out, with all the pain that word entails, time to be together as families, to just sit and find peace. And for Disciples, this means that we need to honor God's Sabbath not as a rule to follow but as a gift to receive.

From the time of creation, God set aside one day each week for rest. We call it Sabbath, and it's a day to do nothing. Imagine that: every week one whole day to do nothing; no sports, no work, no household chores, no cooking, nothing. It's what we long for and it's one of the oldest rules in God's book. In fact, it's so important to God that He spread it all over the place. We need a day of rest. Our fields need every seventh year to rest, so every year leave 1/7 of your land fallow as a Sabbath for the land. And even generations need a Sabbath, so every 50th year is a special year called a Year of Jubilee, a year where everything resets. All slaves are set free. All land is returned to its original owners. And everyone goes home to be with family.

Sadly, we don't do Sabbath, and we never have. Early on, we turned it into a law and punished people for breaking it. We codified it and structured it, to the point where if someone even picked up a stick on the Sabbath, they had not dismissed a good gift from God but had broken the law and must be punished for it. That's not Sabbath - that's legalism. But as we turned away from Legalism by following Jesus, we swung too far the other way. Today we ignore this command altogether. And we don't even think about it. It's actually one of Big 10 Commandments, yet we punish far lesser actions while ignoring this one.

In this season of self-quarantine and social distancing, we've suddenly found ourselves living a year of Jubilee quite by accident. All our kids have come home from college, so we are 6 in the house again. We are getting more sleep than we have in years. We are eating together, playing together, resting together. And we are finding the power of Sabbath. I know many families who are not as fortunate, who are still waiting for kids to come home, or who cannot be together with loved ones. And I grieve with them. I know families of medical professionals who are finding this time more draining than usual rather than less. Not everyone can have a year of Jubilee. But no matter who we are, we can all take a Sabbath.

What might a Sabbath practice look like for you? Which day of the week would be best to rest? Sunday, with church in the morning, family time in the afternoon, and good sleep that night? What if you completed all your tasks - from household chores to schoolwork to making 2 days worth of food - on Saturday, and then had Sunday free every week? What if you had a day to watch TV, worship, play games with friends or family, and just stop your brain from spinning for a day? It would take practice, possibly years of it. It would take giving up scheduled activities like sports (yes, you can actually give up sports for your family's health and your spiritual growth) or a class or meetings. It takes work to rest, but the benefits to your spirit, your body, your family, and this world would be astronomical.

[A little light entertainment here](#), but as you listen, think about it. God is calling you right now to begin a Sabbath practice. What might that look like for you?