

## Exodus 16

### I. A case for the importance of Sabbath

#### A. Biblical case from Exodus

1. Exodus 1: recapitulates the creation narrative in Genesis: the result of the Fall
  - a. Genesis
    - 1) Creation: “be fruitful and increase,” “tend the garden”
    - 2) Fall: fruitfulness is cursed (childbearing), work is now toil
  - b. Exodus
    - 1) Creation: They are fruitful, Egypt filled with them
    - 2) Fall: work is toil (slavery) and childbearing cursed (murder of sons)
2. Exodus 3: God’s deliverance

God calls them to come out and serve/work for him in the wilderness

  - 1) work that is attached to God
  - 2) good work: not fruitless toil
  - 3) bounded work: not endless/unceasing
3. Exodus 16: God’s provision of manna

God teaches them the importance of Sabbath

  - 1) only gather for one day, except the day before Sabbath. The food spoils on the second day except for on the Sabbath.
  - 2) God teaches them rest, teaches them not to be greedy
4. Exodus 20: Observing Sabbath as God’s 4<sup>th</sup> commandment
5. Matthew 11:28-30: Jesus promises rest when we work for him

#### B. A theological case

1. It’s a way of demonstrating that we are “set apart” from the surrounding culture
2. It’s a way of demonstrating our faith in God (we can rest knowing he controls the universe)
3. It’s a way of demonstrating our obedience to God
4. It’s a way of celebrating God’s deliverance
5. It’s a way of being sanctified into the image of God who himself rested on the Sabbath.

### II. Why don’t we keep the Sabbath?

- A. Because we’re not finished, and we don’t like to quit until things are done.

Sabbath needs to be a rhythm issue, not a retirement issue. Rest needs to be part of the regular rhythm of our lives (just like a rest in music)
- B. Because we lack faith

We doubt that his grace and provision are sufficient, so we think we need to keep working to provide for ourselves
- C. Because we live in a culture that trains us not to keep Sabbath
- D. Because we love the wrong things
  1. We love money, success, and praise, and we get more of those if we work harder
  2. But do we love our own souls enough to care for and protect them?
- E. Because we’ve never cultivated the discipline of “no”

III. What might we do moving forward?

- A. Disclaimer: just because someone misuses Sabbath and legalizes it, doesn't mean we shouldn't properly pursue rest.
  - B. Take little Sabbaths (e.g. take a Sabbath afternoon, stop working through every lunch, etc.)
  - C. Do something regular (roughly weekly)
  - D. Come up with specific boundaries to protect it
  - E. Do it joyfully
- Find things you enjoy that refresh your soul, and do those regularly

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Given that we are New Covenant Christians, what is the relevance of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment (observe the Sabbath) for us today? Is it a binding command, a wise suggestion, etc? How should we think about the Sabbath today?
3. As you consider the following three principles of redeemed work mentioned on Sunday, how would you assess your current working life? Redeemed work is 1) work that is attached to God (we consider ourselves to be working for God), 2) good, productive work (not fruitless toil), and 3) bounded work (not unceasing).
4. As you consider the reasons mentioned for why we tend not to keep Sabbath, which one resonates with you the most? Try to be as specific as possible.
5. What is one practical step you'd like to take in the coming months as a result of this conversation about Sabbath?