

Breaking Free of Busyness

OT Perspective

9.16.07

Introduction

1. What prompted this message/emphasis? LT Retreat in 1/06. Major issue of busyness and it attacks the spiritual vitality of believers.
Matt.13.22 - The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth so no fruit is produced.
2. Gordon MacDonald quote: "I'm of the opinion that busyness is a deeper threat to the soul than pornography ever was."
3. Series is meant to look at a way to break free
4. Def - "God gifted mankind with the Sabbath day for the purpose of reflection, renewal and restoration by spending quality time with Him along with family and friends in simplicity."
5. All the "What about ?s" we'll keep for the last Sunday of the month.
6. Visual Break - video on peace

Gen.2.1-4

- 2.1 - Everything was completed by the end of the 6th day
- 2.2 - "**rested**" or "**sabbathed**". He desisted from activity.
 - Did he desist because he had made everything he could think of or he decided enough was enough? The latter, b/c He will create again.
 - The implication: We "Sabbath" not because we're done, but in spite of the fact of not being done.
 - What happens when we constantly work? Everything breaks down, because there's no time to recoup. The Sabbath is a recovery day. The mind and body catch up and the spirit is renewed. It's a day for restoration.
 - What happens when there's constant stimulus? In front of the computer, on the phone, listening to music, it strips us of something; you become deadened
- 2.3 - "God blessed the 7th day and declared it holy."

- He set this day apart from all the others. The 6 previous days were filled with ceaseless activity from the beginning to the end. On the 7th, he ceases from activity.
- It was on the 7th day that Adam & Eve could reflect solely upon God. They had been caught up in the newness of creation (2.18–22; go through that day of creation; Adam was awakened twice on this day) and though aware of Him they couldn't completely focus on Him, but the Sabbath afforded them that opportunity.
- Implication: We must have a break from normal activity, in order to refocus on the eternal.
- We know God is around us, but we must reorient our lives to Him weekly or we get everything out of alignment. We are recentering our lives by “sabbathing”.
 - Example of resetting a clock. If we don't reset our clocks to the correct time, we miss things (appointments, opportunities, events, etc.) & eventually our life is out of control.
 - Pope John Paul II said: “When Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a ‘weekend,’ people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see ‘the heavens.’”
- “blessed the 7th day and declared it holy”
 - Many Jews today reorient their life around the Sabbath; they call it the “queen of days” or “the desire of days.” It's consider the best day of the week.
 - Often look at the Sabbath as a throw back to another era, but God set it apart as special from the very beginning of time.
 - The blessing of the 7th day and the declaration of holy is a permanent covenant that God made with mankind.
 - Implication: God blesses those who observe the Sabbath.
 - I believe the blessing in part is rest; the body/soul/spirit are restored.

- Ex.31.17 – on the 7th day he stopped working and was refreshed
 - “drew breath”; “at his ease”
 - A deep breath – like climbing up a hill and overlooking the beauty of the valley.
- Illustr. - Have you been so busy that you felt like this lady?
- What would cause an innocent woman to welcome time behind bars? According to Maria Brunner, all it takes is her "lazy" husband and "demanding" children.

Brunner's husband is unemployed, so she supports their three young children by cleaning other people's houses. Even without a job, her husband managed to run up quite a number of unpaid parking tickets. The bill totals nearly \$5,000. Mr. Brunner kept the tickets a secret from his wife, but as the owner of the vehicle, she is responsible. Maria cannot pay the fine, and unless her husband can come up with the money, she will spend three months behind bars in her town of Poing, Germany.

Maria's reaction? "I've had enough of scraping a living for the family.... As long as I get food and a hot shower every day, I don't mind being sent to jail. I can finally get some rest and relaxation."

Police reported that when they went to arrest Maria, "she seemed really happy to see us. . .and repeatedly thanked us for arresting her." While most people taken into custody hide their heads in shame, Maria "smiled and waved as she was driven off to jail."

John Beukema, Western Springs, Illinois; sources: "Family of the Week," www.timesonline.co.uk (5-15-05); "I'm Ready; Let's Go,"

- The blessing is also the ability to get all the essentials done in six days rather than seven.
 - Observing the Sabbath is like tithing. You give up something (10%) to have the remaining (90%) blessed. You give up something and God makes it up.
 - When you give up your time for God, he blesses you with rest & gives you the ability to do in six days what others do in seven.
 - Truett Cathy & Chik-Fil-A. He does in 6 days what McDonalds tries to do in 7.
 - It's a part of the "E" in our ABLE Discipleship model.

- “declared it holy” – “set this day apart”

Exod.20.8–11

- One of the 10 Commandments. God’s Top 10.
 - This isn’t to be quietly dismissed. It was a part of the created order of the world; it’s a part of God’s moral code for humanity
 - All the other commandments are still critical, so therefore this one is too.
- The commandment was for every person and every animal that was used by people to sustain life.
- They were an agrarian culture and they needed every hour of every day to sustain their daily life. God said stop and rest. By not working on the Sabbath, they were stating that they trusted in God’s ability to take care of them.
 - Ex.16.21–30 – What precipitated the commandment was gathering of manna.
 - 16.29 – the 2 day supply was a marker that God would take care of their needs.
 - “They must realize the Sabbath is God’s gift to you.” It’s not a restriction, but a gift – just like your body, salvation, talents, friends, etc are gifts from God.
 - It’s not a restriction, but a gift. We must understand the purpose of the gift to fully enjoy it
- Also, they were constantly working towards something – planting, winter, harvest, summer, etc. They had to be constantly prepared and thinking ahead. The Sabbath meant they had to trust God for their future needs.
- Finally, as an agrarian society, they were removed from each other. Though they may have worked the fields and pastures together, it centered around a task and not for enjoyment. The Sabbath afforded them the opportunity to enjoy their relationships.
 - Lev.23.3 – an official day of holy assembly.
 - The Sabbath was meant to restore relationships, so that we don’t simply look upon each other as tools of industry (we

are known by what we produce or do) or our functional purposes. We enjoy one another's company and give/receive love to/from one another.

Isaiah 58.13-14

- “Don’t pursue your own interest on that day” and “don’t follow your own desires or talk idly” – context: the people had a form of outward religion but there wasn’t much spiritual depth. They agreed with the Word, but didn’t follow it.
 - watch your step; the Sabbath is for thoughtful living.
 - It isn’t meant to be a day to simply do whatever you want, but a day to put things back in their proper order. It’s like a house cleaning day. 6 days you live in a house and you try to keep it in order, but things are still all over the place. The 7th day you put it back together.
 - If you do what you want, the house eventually becomes unmanageable. Our lives get filled with clutter and the Sabbath is a way of doing house cleaning. If we don’t, then it becomes more and more neglected and cluttered with stuff that drains us.
 - Which is better cleaning your house once every 7 days or once every month?
 - Weekly maintenance is better than month
 - The Sabbath is a gift and as a gift it has a particular function. If someone gives you the gift of a painting and you use it like it’s a towel you destroy its purpose.
 - We must use the Sabbath the way God intended or it will not fulfill the purpose for which it was designed. In the end, we won’t be rested and recentered upon the Lord.
- “Enjoy the Sabbath; speak of it with delight as the Lord’s holy day”
 - Take pleasure in the day; let there be satisfaction in your soul towards the things of God.
 - It is an exquisite day
 - See the day as a time to rebuild relationships with God and others

- The promise: 58.14 – Where are you in your walk with the Lord? What do you do on the Sabbath? As you right the Sabbath, your relationship with God will be enjoyable. The reason some of us have dry or distant relationships with God is b/c we've turned the Sabbath into a day to do whatever we want rather than a day to remember the Lord.
 - God's promise is that we can experience renewal in our relationship with Him by honoring him with the Sabbath.
 - He also promises us that we will surmount obstacles and conquer and ride forth over obstacles.

Conclusion:

By keeping the Sabbath we are breaking the cycle of busyness. We are intentionally halting daily activities to fixate upon the Lord and encourage one another..

Implications for keeping the Sabbath:

1. It's day for restoration – body/mind/spirit. Ceasing leads to restoration.
2. It's a day for reorientation – everything is put back in order. God, family, self
3. It's a day for relationships – mending & tending with those in our life; enjoying the company of others, etc.
4. It's a day of remembering that God will take care of our needs. We cease our work as a reminder that God is our provider.
5. It's a day for reflection & rejoicing in God's goodness; it's a day for us to concentrate on God and hear from Him. In order to hear from God, we have to break free from our normal routine and dedicate time to Him. When we hear from him it changes us.

Video – Highway video on Prayer & hearing God's voice.

Conclusion