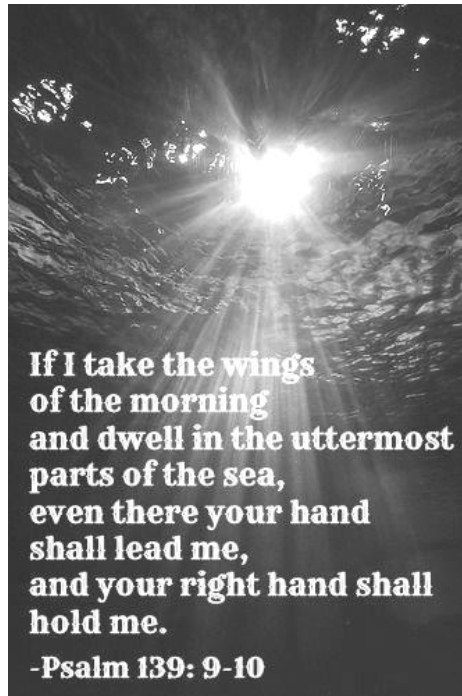


## SABBATH DNA



### *Scripture:*

### **Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18**

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, you have searched me and known me. <sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. <sup>3</sup>You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. <sup>4</sup>Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. <sup>5</sup>You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

<sup>13</sup>For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup>I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. <sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. <sup>16</sup>Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed. <sup>17</sup>How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup>I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you.

### **Mark 2:23-Mark 3:6**

<sup>23</sup>One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. <sup>24</sup>The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? <sup>26</sup>He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; <sup>28</sup>so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

<sup>1</sup>Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. <sup>2</sup>They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. <sup>3</sup>And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." <sup>4</sup>Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. <sup>5</sup>He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. <sup>6</sup>The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

## **This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!**



### **SABBATH DNA**

There are three aspects of Sabbath rest to talk about today.

1. You were created with a need for taking a Sabbath in your DNA.
2. Sabbath rest is important for all ages, not just for the religious and the retiring.
3. Sabbath rest is meant for all not just for the elite.

### **SLEEP**

Have you heard the sports commentators talk about how much LeBron James sleeps? I have heard at least three comments about how much he sleeps in the sports news lately and I rarely listen to sports, except about the Warriors.

LeBron gets between ten and twelve hours a night! So does tennis champ Roger Federer. However, forty per cent of Americans get less than seven hours a night, me included. Rest is more and more important for not just athletic performance but also for your brain's performance, too.

Science is consistently showing that sleep is very valuable and must be cherished. Isn't it interesting how science is proving what the Bible has been guiding for thousands of years?

### **THE BIBLE'S GOOD ADVICE**

The Bible is full of advice to keep your body, mind, and spirit healthy, and modern science is agreeing with that advice more and more. For instance, faithful prayer practice is now found to help boost your immune system and some doctors prescribe prayer or meditation to help with various maladies, not just for mental health.

Have you ever wondered why you have to rest? Why did God create a day of rest after six days of creating the earth?

Wouldn't it be so much more productive if we never had to sleep, or eat, or rest from our labors? Think how much more work could be done.

God's creation was not made only for work. We are also made for taking time to be holy, spiritual, and other focused. But in this passage in Mark, Jesus is making a statement against those who are looking for him to slip up so they can arrest him. So they accuse him of disrespecting and breaking the law of Sabbath keeping. Jesus responds by not only allowing his disciples to glean leftover wheat in the field after the harvest on the Sabbath, but he heals a person with a withered hand to show his critics that there are more important things than abiding literally by the law.

**What is more important than abiding by the Jewish law? Compassion, empathy, restoration to community, and remembering that God's love is a higher priority than God's demand to rest on the Sabbath.**

### **RESTORING SABBATH TO ITS TRUE PURPOSES**

Reverend Tom Long says that Jesus had something deeper in mind when he rebelled against the Pharisees and the Herodians when they complained that he was breaking the religious laws by healing on the Sabbath. His goal wasn't to annihilate the Sabbath law but to restore it to its true purposes, that Sabbath is about participating in God's rest and God's justice for all. The Sabbath was created to help make life abundant and full.

Wendell Berry believes the Sabbath gives us a vein of light in the darkness of suffering in this world. He says, "Sabbath reminds us of the inherent sanctity of the world and of our life." It also sets aside a time to focus admiration and gratitude towards God. I like the idea of Sabbath being a time to "rest in God."

Others see the observance of a Sabbath each week as a measure of the extent and depth of our faith and progress in discipleship. Keeping Sabbath holy shows our priorities and habits are in line with the ways of God. When we skip a Sabbath we forfeit the opportunity to live our days in delight of God. Many Sabbath observers believe that everything else you do during the week is inspired and nourished by taking a rest from the frenetic pace of life one day a week. The author of the book, *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight*, says to think of Sabbath as living in Godly delight. In contrast, many people in the US try to deal with daily life chaos by turning to pharmaceutical sedatives or alcohol.

When we rest we rejuvenate. Our cells repair. Our hormones balance.

### **SABBATH REST IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL AGES, NOT JUST FOR THE RETIRING.**

Children must rest to grow because growth hormone is released during sleep. However, just resting and taking a Sabbath is different. Kids also need spiritual hope and sacred experiences of being in a place where God's love, grace and peace is practiced. It is a gift to young people to provide them with a sense of the spiritual part of life. When they are here, Kairo and Keyaun, Mia and Eligah feel that from you all and God.

In a blog about the importance of spiritual rest, Dr. Eric Zelinski says, "In our hectic lifestyles, we far too often neglect to take a moment to "be still." The Scripture tells us to do so. (Dr. Eric is a young chiropractor who includes the teaching of spiritual practice in his medical practice.)

Dr. Eric points out that Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

And Proverbs 19:23 says, "The fear (reverence) of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble."

### **BE STILL AND REST IN GOD**

Dr Eric says, "If we all made an effort and succeeded to be still and rest in God, our way of life would be positively transformed."

- 1 We would be more focused on helping others (instead of helping ourselves) because our outlook on life would be more God-focused, not "me" focused.
- 2 Our hopes and dreams would be rekindled because we would continually be reminded that our Creator is all-powerful and trust in God's goodness.
- 3 We wouldn't run ourselves ragged all the time but have that peace that surpasses all understanding.
- 4 We would develop an "ear to hear" that Christ referred to because we'd learn the sound of our Lord's voice. When you stop and listen for God's voice, you will hear an inner soul-full voice helping you rest and feel God's presence around you.

The internal healing that happens when you take time to rest in God by observing a Sabbath can lead to the healing of others as well.

### **REMEMBER: JESUS BOILED DOWN ALL THE COMMANDMENTS TO TWO.**

First, love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and

2nd, love your neighbor as yourself.

These directly connect to today's passage.

**The first commandment can be accomplished by observing a sacred Sabbath time weekly. The second: Well, you are loving yourself when you observe the Sabbath. By recharging your spiritual and physical batteries you are creating more energy to love your neighbor and help others.**

Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, not just physically, but also spiritually and emotionally, too. He restored him to community by healing his deformity. And the healing also

must have boosted his self-esteem! Just imagine how you would feel if the Son of God took the time to touch and heal you in the temple on the Sabbath!

What better way to keep the Sabbath holy than to follow Christ's lead and find others who need restoration and healing by helping them come to church! This is a place of healing and wholeness. You are helping to make it so. A yearning for a place to take a Sabbath rest is in all of us. Your invitation is an invitation to healing and wholeness.

But I understand when you can't be here every Sunday. Just remember, when you need to sleep in on a Sunday morning, you can get your Sabbath rest on a Saturday Sacred Space evening! Or a Thursday Noon Hour of prayer time can serve as a Sabbath rest time. (Problem solved.) You have no excuse for not taking a Sabbath of some kind each week and rest in God in some sacred way.

Volunteering to do recreation with the kids at Vacation Bible School can be a way of promoting the Sabbath because you will be serving Jesus for the benefit of the little ones who come to us for one week in the summer so their parents can rest and rejuvenate.

None of us can truly rest and be at peace until all of us have that opportunity. How can we establish Sabbath rest for all? There are so many who work two jobs and get no day of rest because they aren't paid a fair living wage.

There are many refugees and undocumented people who fled the terrible dangers in their home countries, yet they can find no place to rest and develop as God created them to be.

**SABBATH REST IS MEANT FOR ALL  
NOT JUST FOR THE ELITE.**

It is our job to help Sabbath rest be possible for everyone. Our DNA is crying out for Sabbath rest.

At creation, before the existence of cable, TV, computers and the industrial society, God earmarked one day out of seven. He knew humans would need reprieve, a time to stop and remember why we are living the lives we are living. It could be said that Sabbath was tucked into our DNA at the very beginning.

Sharon Ayala from the Point Loma University talks about losing Sabbath as society speeds up. She said, "Creation ended – even with all the glorious activity of all that God had fashioned – with the climax of rest. Why would God need to stop? After all, God is God. And if God stopped, it begs the question, why it is important that we also learn to stop?"

Rabbi Elijah of Vilna, one of the most significant rabbinic authorities since the middle ages, said it this way: "God stopped to show us that what we create becomes meaningful to us only once we stop creating it and start to think about why we did so."

There is grace built into the ability to pause. Judith Shulevitz once said in her book, *The Sabbath World*, "We have to remember to stop because we have to stop to remember." Amen

**Benediction:  
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, the love of God and the  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you  
now and forever more. Amen**



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