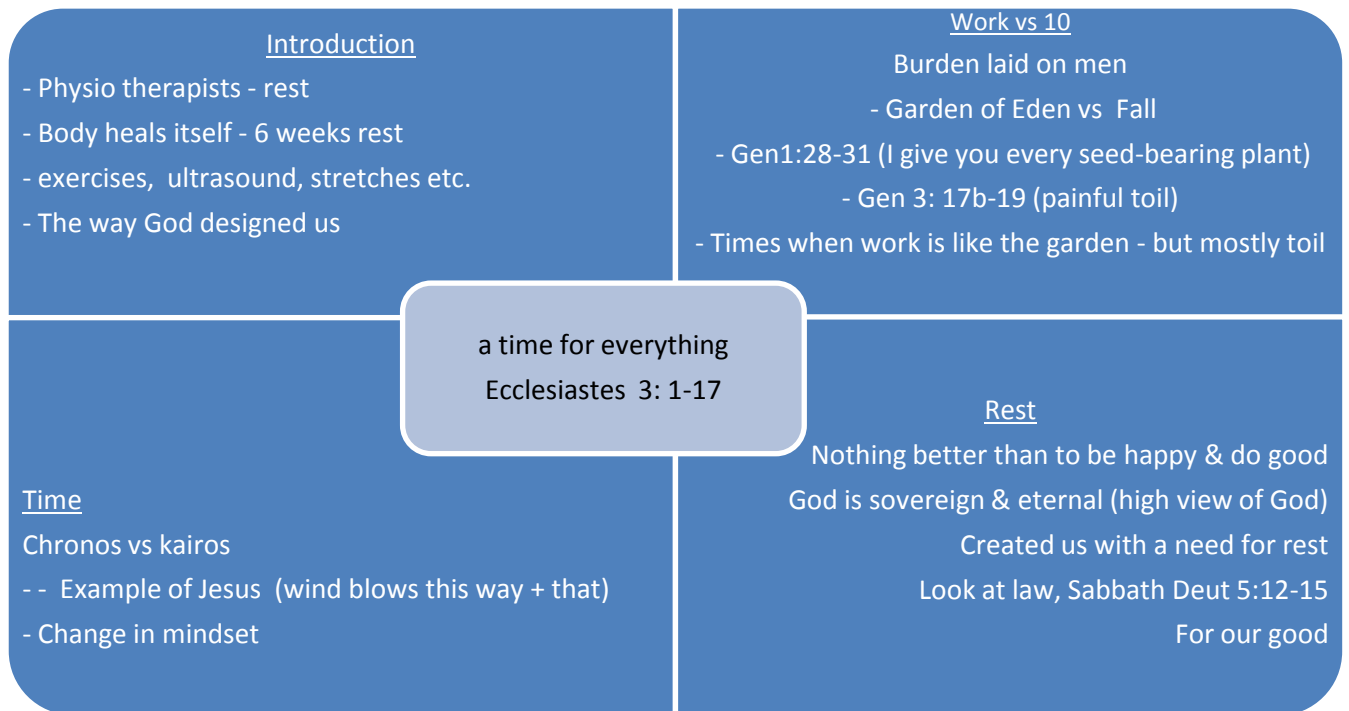


The art of Sabbath Rest

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Overview



- How many of you have decided at some point to get fit, start running, cycling or swimming more seriously?
- At some point, (especially this old decrepit body) we get injured, we ignore it for a while but it does not go away.
- We go to the physio for a quick fix; they work on us; stretching, massaging, ultra sounding etc.
- It's all very good, sometimes (often) painful but good. It is what we are paying for.
- But what is the one thing that they announce as you are getting ready to leave... "So you need to rest it for 6 weeks". I am sorry, did you not hear me say that I was getting ready to cycle the Argus or swim the Midmar... How is 6 weeks rest going to help me.
- So what do we do, we carry on running or exercising only to discover that the injury gets worse and we end up not being able to run or swim the race anyway, the physio was right.
- Sabbath rest is a little bit like that.
- We do all sorts of things to try and avoid the need to rest in life, but the truth is that we have been designed in a way that requires rest and we will always function sub-optimally as a result.
- In the first set of the 10 commandments, God says we should rest because that's how he created us. **(Exodus 20:11)**
- But like the runner, we have got ourselves in a position where rest in our day to day lives is not possible.
- Would we take the physio's advice to rest if the physio had actually created us, if they knew every hair on our heads or cells in our body?

- Let's look at **Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 (It has nothing to do with Sabbath)**
- I want to look at 2 things from this passage that prevents us from resting, then I want us to look at what it means to rest.

1. The way we understand **time**.

- **Chronos vs kairos** (Greek concepts of time)
- **Chronos** (chronology, chronicle, Chronic) - Greek nasty minor deity, a glutton and a cannibal who gorged himself on his own children.
- Always trying to beat time, never satisfied.
- Chronos is the god of the driven.
- You ask "what time is it"
- (Ecc 3:9-11)

⁹ What does the worker gain from his toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the burden God has laid on men. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

- Have you noticed how obsessed Christians can be with the end times, always chasing it but not living as though it is real?
- God has made everything beautiful in its time but we are so busy trying to beat time that we miss the beauty.

Kairos – time is a gift, it is an opportunity or a season...A time to plant and a time to uproot. A time for everything.

- Time has a purpose
- You ask "what is this time for"
- Time is sacred. (**Ecc 3:12-13**)

¹² I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. ¹³ That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God.

- Think about all the times you were too busy to appreciate the things around you, time with your family, nature, simple pleasures, laughing, loving etc.
- Think about what it is you missed out on, that time to love, time to play, time to enjoy, time to find satisfaction in your work.
- I can remember the things I missed out on.
- Now think about what it is you were so busy doing at the time, can we even remember those things.
- Is there any fruit that you can still remember?
- We are so busy chasing after the wind that we miss out on the gift.
- Are you devouring the beauty or are we using this gift from God.
- Example of the car journey – takes roughly 3 ½ hrs so I have 2 options. Either I can drive to beat that time, stressed, impatient and live for the end of the journey or I can see it as 3 ½ hrs with my family. I can enjoy the scenery, laugh and sing and probably get home at the same time anyway.

2. The way we understand **work**.

- Our attitude towards work is the largest obstacle towards us resting.
- ... and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God.
- Who here really enjoys their work?
- Work is central to everything we do, we spend on average 33% of our day at work and probably the same amount of time thinking about it. I suppose some of us even lie awake at night thinking about work.
- In the beginning, when God created the world, people lived in harmony with each other and God created work, something that was good and purposeful. God created us then gave us a purpose. (Gen 1:28-31)
- After sin entered the Garden, God cursed the ground and turned work into toil... (Gen 3:17-19)
- "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it...By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.
- The truth is that work is going to be difficult; it is going to be toil, this is the way it is.
- However finding satisfaction in your work vs work being difficult are not opposed to each other.
- Think about hiking in the mountains or running a race, it is hard work, difficult, toil but when you have completed it we have a sense of...satisfaction or accomplishment.
- How do we achieve that in our work?
 - whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)
 - look at some of the most mundane or frustrating tasks at work... How would they look if you treated it as worship?
 - Like the songs you have just sung.
 - What difference would it bring into the office, how much more satisfaction could you get out of your job...knowing that work is toil but it is also something that existed in Gods perfect plan.
 - I would say that we would start to see more of the kingdom here and now if we could learn to do that.
 - No longer a slave in Egypt (Deut 5:12-15)
 - The second set of the 10 commandments differ slightly here, focus on rest because we are no longer slaves.
 - Why do we insist on living like slaves?
 - We have become our own slave masters, even though God has called us out of that.

3. Rest of God

- So what does this have to do with Sabbath rest.
- If we don't learn that time is a gift, the only real concept of time is the now (kairos) we are going to go on devouring it and not achieving much in **Gods eternal plan** for us.
- Even when we try to rest, our rest looks like Chronos...(living 2 plans ahead)
- If we don't understand work, we are going to spend up to 2/3 of our time resisting what we are doing, treating it as a means to an end **rather than the end in itself.**
- If we don't understand that the way we work is worship to God, it is something that may be difficult and frustrating at times but we can look back on it with satisfaction if it has been done for the glory of God.
- I think a lot of us are **confused about Sabbath**, is it necessary any more, if it is necessary what do we need to do or not do?
- If we look at the 10 commandments again, we see that God has commanded us to keep one day for rest (intermission) – because God rested and because we are no longer slaves in Egypt.
- If we look at the law and the commandments we see that they were actually very beneficial, for our well being.
- Somehow though, the command to keep a day of rest became about a **list of rules** to follow on this day as a duty to God as **opposed to a day of rest** because we need rest.
- If we look at Jesus' response to Sabbath as with all legalistic practice, he goes about showing us what God means by keeping a day of rest.
- The Lord of the Sabbath (**Matt 12:1-13**)
 - Pharisees pull disciples up for doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.
 - Story of David and his men.
 - One greater than the temple is here... one who desires mercy not sacrifice.
 - The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.
 - Jesus demonstrates this by healing a man on the Sabbath...
 - In the paragraph before this Jesus says: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...
 - What do the legalists do? They break the 6th commandment to try and uphold the 4th commandment... they plot murder.
 - In this same account told in Mark 2:27, Jesus says: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."
- So what do we know about Sabbath?
- We need to take a day of rest, because we have been created that way.
- We have been given a day of rest as a gift because we are no longer slaves.

- The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath...so it's not some religious practice that God somehow needs us to do to stroke his ego. (its for our benefit)
- It's about mercy, not sacrifice...(expand)
- Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, we find our rest in him...we can try to rest on holiday etc but we are never really going to find true rest unless we are in the rest that Jesus provides.
- Jesus does not come to abolish Sabbath, it is still very necessary.
- He has just come to show us what it means to take Sabbath rest
- How often have you come back from holiday only to feel like you need a holiday from your holiday?
- I remember coming back from outreach trips to Rwanda, India and Zimbabwe. Time spent working but coming back and feeling so rested.
- Why is that? All the time we are on that trip was for Jesus doing his will, taking on his yoke which is light.
- Not being driven but being full of purpose, **a time to help the poor and reach out to the lost.**
- So how do we do this practically?
- It starts from Sunday evening – Saturday afternoon.
- Start by changing the way we view time (What is this time for)
- It's time for work which is difficult but is done for the glory of God (**should find rest in your work like doing outreach because it is the same thing**)
- Saturday evening – Sunday evening – a time to rest.
- Not a time to be holier than thou. (No change in holiness Sunday – Sunday)
- Stop doing anything that you consider work, don't talk about it or think about it.
- If Sunday lunch with family is work, don't do it – move it to Saturday.
- Switch the slave master off in your head – God has freed you from those.
- Understand that God knows our needs better than we do.
- God understands that we are more effective in our work when we take time to rest.
- One man challenged another man to an all-day wood chopping contest. The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man, however, had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. Guess what happened! At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other guy had chopped substantially more wood than he had. "I don't get it," he said. "Every time I checked, you were just taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did." The winning woodsman smiled and said, "My friend, you didn't notice one thing. When I sat down to rest, I was actually sharpening my axe."
- The rest of God is making us more effective in our labour, it will ensure that we are able **to run this race to the end.**
- **Pray...**

