

## CALL TO WORSHIP | Sabbath

I really hope you've had a good week and, even if not, I'm so glad you found your way here with us today. Before we get started, I want to invite you to reflect back on your week. If I were to ask you how it was, what would you say? Good? Challenging? I wonder how many of us would use the word "busy" to describe life these days.

Before we go any further, let's take a moment to just take a breath, and do nothing. Maybe you want to close your eyes, and just be present to yourself in this moment.

If you're at all like me, life has a way of taking over, and often it feels like there just aren't enough hours in the day, or week, to get to everything that needs to be done, done. If that feels like you, I want to remind us both today that life was never meant to feel like that – at least not from God's perspective. You know, we often pay very little attention to the condition of our soul, but God sees you deeply, and cares about the pressures of your life. And more than that, God is inviting you to press pause on all that hurry and hustle, to experience genuine rest and recovery. Listen to these words of invitation from Jesus:

***“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” - Matthew 11:28-20 (MSG)***

I want to read those words again, but before I do, I just want to invite you to consider your posture right now. I want to invite you to put down anything you're holding (phones included!) and sit comfortably upright in your chair, with your hands on your lap and your feet on the ground. Take a few deep breaths. Now, relax the muscles in your face. Now, relax your shoulders. Finally, relax your chest and stomach.

Holding this relaxed posture, listen to these words again, as I read them more slowly.

***“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” - Matthew 11:28-20 (MSG)***

Now let's enter into worship from this posture.

## PRACTICING REST | *Blessing In The Chaos*

I want to read a poem to you called Blessing In The Chaos by Jan Richardson. And then following that, we're actually just going to sit for a few minutes and gaze at some gorgeous nature; we're just going to drink it in.

We often fill this space with a lot of words and a lot of thoughts, and in that, sometimes we can miss the presence and beauty of God so often found more deeply in silence, in stillness, in the quiet spaces. We don't want to miss that, today.

To be clear – there's nothing for you to do here, nothing to accomplish, in these moments. There's no specific goal, you don't need to "achieve" some special union experience. Just let your body, your soul, and your spirit take some deep breaths. Knowing that they probably need them.

### **POEM | Blessing In The Chaos**

To all that is chaotic  
in you,  
let there come silence.

Let there be  
a calming  
of the clamoring,  
a stilling  
of the voices that  
have laid their claim  
on you,  
that have made their  
home in you,

that go with you  
even to the  
holy places  
but will not  
let you rest,  
will not let you  
hear your life  
with wholeness  
or feel the grace  
that fashioned you.

Let what distracts you  
cease.  
Let what divides you  
cease.

Let there come an end  
to what diminishes  
and demeans,  
and let depart  
all that keeps you  
in its cage.

Let there be  
an opening  
into the quiet  
that lies beneath  
the chaos,  
where you find  
the peace  
you did not think  
possible  
and see what shimmers  
within the storm.

## RESPONSE | *Sabbath Planning*

Well, as Jeff said, preparing to rest for an entire day each week actually requires advanced planning “work”. So lest these all just become great thoughts that don’t get implemented in our real lives – we want to give you a chance to start that intentional planning right now.

If you have a smart phone you can scan the QR code on the screen right now, or open up the SR app and click the Sabbath Planning button at the top to get to a fillable form, if that’s helpful. Otherwise you can just follow along with the questions I’m going to ask you, think your answers, and maybe go back to the form later today.

So first up: **what is a consistent day every week that you really could designate as a Sabbath?** What works in the rhythm of your life, most often? Take a minute to figure that out, now.

Next question: Jeff talked about both the need to *reassign other responsibilities* (yard work, errands – “home”-type “work”) as well as the need to truly *value* rest and refreshment. So let’s combine both of those thoughts into this one question: Being very honest with yourself... **What is most likely going to get in the way of you practicing Sabbath?** What are your personal obstacles (or resistances) going to be?

Last but definitely not least: **What kind of Sabbath activities are most likely to fill you?** What brings you joy, what leads you to life, what feels like good rest? How do you most enjoy connecting with God and people around you? Start to make a quick list of what some of those soul-filling Sabbath activities might be for you.

Ok so this is a really good start, but it’s only a start, in terms of truly practicing Sabbath! This week, like every other week, we have a daily spiritual practice resource available to help you take everything we’ve talked about this morning and help it become more of a lived reality in your daily existence. This week every practice is designed to build on the concept of Sabbath resting, so don’t miss that if you – like me – could use a lot more practice with this one. You can download that from our Online Service page, the Spiritual Practices tab on our website, or if you subscribe to the Spiritual Practice notifications in the app you’ll get them delivered straight to your device every morning.

So now once again let’s offer our wholehearted worship to the God who loves us so much, he commands us to “REST, ALREADY!” So, Rest.