

Lord of the Sabbath - Leaders' Guide

Luke 6:1-11

25 February 2024

Read Exodus 31:12-18 and Luke 6:1-11

1. What is the reason given in Exodus 31 and in the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20 for Israel's need to keep the Sabbath? What is the reason given in Deuteronomy 5?
 - a. Exodus 20: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."
 - b. Deuteronomy 5: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."
2. When we bring the two reasons together, what did Jame suggest the Sabbath could be likened to?
 - a. "The Sabbath can be seen as a critically important spiritual reset button."
3. In the parable of the Sower and the Seed in Mark 4, Jesus says of the seed sown among the thorns that "*They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*" How does this passage illuminate why we need a spiritual reset button from our weekly responsibilities and obligations?
 - a. First, life is hard, and our obligations and responsibilities - *the cares of the world* - can overwhelm us. They can take all our focus and energy and leave nothing left for living life intentionally and spiritually.
 - b. Second, as we work and are rewarded for our work we can make some mistaken assumptions. The *deceitfulness of riches* can convince us (1) that what we have is ours **only** by virtue of our hard work and (2) that our safety and security will be achieved and maintained by the wealth we accumulate. Neither of those is true. **Every** good and perfect gift comes from the hand of the Father, and

safety and security are found in God rather than our accumulated wealth.

- c. And finally, our unregulated appetites, *the desires for other things*, will draw us further and further away from our true orientation and purpose.
4. In Mark 2, Jesus said: *“The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath.”* How did James suggest that that helps our understanding of the nature of the Sabbath?
 - a. “This is a reminder that the Sabbath is a gift from God for our whole-person refreshment: body, mind & spirit. The Sabbath is not meant to be another crushing burden.”
5. In Luke 6, Jesus said: *“the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”* What does that teach us both about Jesus and the Sabbath?
 - a. This is a clear reference to Jesus’ Messianic identity and his divinity. As the divine source of the Sabbath rest, Jesus knew exactly what it was for and how it should be observed.
6. In the second story in Luke 6, Jesus asked the question: *“is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?”* How does that help us understand the nature and significance of the Sabbath?
 - a. The whole point of the entire law, including the law regarding Sabbath rest, is humanity’s full flourishing, the core of which is reconciliation with God and each other. It is toward rather than away from healing and wholeness. So we are all called to speak healing words and do healing deeds rather than the opposite.
7. What did James suggest would be a good question to ask ourselves at the end of every day and during confession at church?
 - a. “Did my words and deeds today contribute to or diminish the flourishing of those around me?”

“Rest - Sabbath rest - a rest where we learn to trust God for all our needs - a rest that declares that our safety and security are found in God alone - a rest that reorients us away from the burdens, diversions, distractions and deceits of this world and toward God and the people given us by God - this rest is a core gift and discipline of the abundant life Jesus promised.”