

A lone tree with pink blossoms stands in a field of dry grass. A wooden bench is positioned in front of the tree. The sky is a deep blue with wispy white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

# *Sabbath, Silence & Solitude*

Pastor David Flowers

“Hurry is not just a disordered schedule.  
Hurry is a disordered heart.”

John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted*

“Hurry is a form of violence practiced on time.  
But time is sacred.”

Eugene Peterson, *Answering God*

# Why Are We So Crazy Busy?

- Our culture values speed and quickness (technology, productivity, instant-gratification, etc.)
- Market ideology wants us exhausted; we make good shoppers and spectators; rested people are dangerous
- Hurried and task-oriented living is identity-forming; not getting things done threatens our identity
- In our culture, busyness implies importance; we assume others will admire our “successful” lives
- We are trying to block out bad memories, ignore our present pain, and silence our doubt and insecurities

“By continually distracting ourselves with TV, music, email and the Internet, we divert our attention away from what we’d rather not know. We drown out our pain with a great deal of sensory noise. The mindset for change means cultivating a space of quiet within than noise and tuning into your emotions.”

Joseph Burgo, *Why Do I Do That?* (pgs. 184-185)

"Our task is to help people concentrate on the real but often hidden event of God's active presence in their lives. Hence, the question that must guide all organizing activity in a church is not how to keep people busy, but how to keep them from being so busy that they can no longer hear the voice of God who speaks in silence."

Henri Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart* (pg. 63)

“The fact that our works are done in the service of God is not enough, by itself, to prevent us from losing our interior life if we let them devour all our time and all our strength. Work is good and necessary, but too much of it renders the soul insensitive to spiritual values, hardens the heart against prayer and divine things. It requires serious effort and courageous sacrifice to resist the hardening of heart.”

Thomas Merton, *The Last of the Fathers* (pg. 60)

## Deuteronomy 5:12-15 NIV

<sup>12</sup> “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work...

<sup>15</sup> Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.”



# The Purpose of Sabbath

- God rested from his work; he was “re-souled” after being depleted from creating (Exodus 31:12-18)
- Sabbath is cessation from production and consumption in order to get depleted life back
- It is an act of resistance to the scarcity narrative
- It is an alternative way of living and doing community that is reflective of covenant with God
- Jesus showed us that its true purpose was for resisting, replenishing, and reconciling all things

## **Mark 2:23-26 NIV**

<sup>23</sup> One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

<sup>25</sup> He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? <sup>26</sup> In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”

## **Mark 2:27-28 NIV**

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

# Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath

- Worshipped on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16)
- Taught on the Sabbath (Mark 6:2)
- Healed people on the Sabbath (Matt 12:9-11)
- Ate and drank on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1)

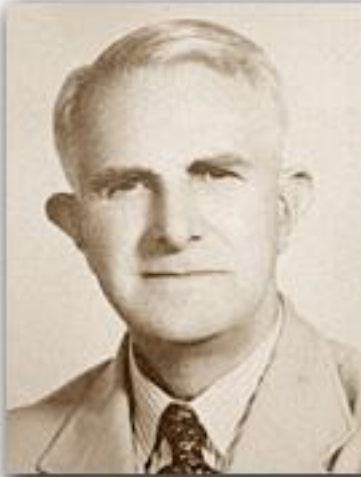
While Jesus worshipped at the designated time, his “Sabbath-rest” was not fixed to a day or time of the week. He instead created a rhythm of rest and work.

## **Luke 10:38-40 NIV**

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

## **Luke 10:41-42 NIV**

<sup>41</sup> “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”



T. Austin Sparks

# **The Centrality & Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ (pgs. 24-25)**





<sup>9</sup> There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest..."

Hebrews 4:9-11 NIV

# Entering Sabbath-Rest

- Recognize the scarcity narrative and acknowledge the need to “not be conformed to the pattern” of culture
- Repent of the identity-forming, “work-centered” faith of the world, leaving you exhausted and unfulfilled
- Look to Christ’s example of retreating to places of silence and solitude as a form of Sabbath-rest
- Be intentional in creating personal boundaries that allow you and your family to move at the pace of grace
- Join with others (accountability) in staying rested and connected to the source of all LIFE

“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.”

Jesus, Gospel of Matthew 11:28-30 MSG



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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:  
[www.christiansburgmennonite.org](http://www.christiansburgmennonite.org)