

ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES
TOOLS FOR LIFE
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THE SABBATH REST

The gospel is taught in the Creation story. In Genesis we read:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Gen. 2:1, 2).

Here we discover that God worked, then rested. The situation for Adam was just the opposite. First, he entered into God’s rest since the seventh-day Sabbath was his first full day of life. After entering God’s rest on the seventh day, he then worked.

The same sequence is true concerning man’s redemption. In Christ, God completed the work of redemption through His sinless life, death, and resurrection. Man begins experiencing God’s redemptive work in his life by resting in what God has already done for him. He rests in the fact that Jesus died for his sins and has given him eternal life as a free gift. He rests in the fact that he has Christ’s righteousness covering him. He also rests in the fact that at the cross the power of his sinful nature was broken, and he is now free to serve God. Daily, he rests in the fact that Christ lives in him and will live out His life in and through him if he simply chooses to let Him.

Once the believer rests in these truths, he is able to then “work,” or faithfully serve and obey God in life and ministry. This rest is necessary for him to faithfully serve God. By rest I mean that he accepts by faith what God has done for his redemption, and trusts implicitly in Christ.

In Hebrews 4 we find a similar description of the concept of rest in the story of Israel’s failure to enter into God’s rest during their wilderness sojourn:

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall

after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:9-11).

God’s Word is very clear about the concept of rest. When we enter into God’s rest we cease our own efforts. We are told that it is important for us to seek to enter into this rest. Otherwise, we will fail in our obedience to God because of unbelief.

The only way to gain victory over temptation and sin is to rest in the fact that Jesus abides in us and to allow Him to live out His life in and through us. We must rest in that truth through belief and not hinder God’s work of redemption in our life by trying to work or exert our own effort to obey. Our part is to believe and choose to let Christ live out His life in us. We are to rest in His completed work. This resting in Christ is the true meaning of the Sabbath rest God calls us to experience:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Ex. 20:8-11).

Our part is to choose and to believe. This requires 100 percent surrender to Christ 100 percent of the time.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

How is the gospel taught in the creation account?

What truths about Jesus are Christians to rest in?

How is resting in Jesus connected with an obedient Christian life?

What is the true meaning of Sabbath rest?

How do you plan to apply the lesson of this devotional study to your life this week?

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