



discover rest

*Uncover God's weekly gift
that brings us rest and rejuvenation*

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Albert Einstein was known for his absent-mindedness. One time on a train, when the conductor approached, Einstein started looking for his ticket. After a minute of watching Einstein groping and digging, the conductor said, *Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it.*

Einstein nodded appreciatively and the conductor moved on. After checking a few more tickets, he looked back and saw Einstein on his knees looking under the seat for his ticket. The conductor returned and said, *Dr. Einstein, it's OK. I know who you are. You don't need to find the ticket.*

Einstein looked up and said, *I know who I am too. But I need the ticket because I don't know where I am going.*

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

That could be a metaphor, a symbol, for a lot of people. You're born, and next thing you know you're living a life defined by a lot of factors that you didn't choose, and filled with a lot of questions that you need answered. And, among them is, *Where am I going?*

So far in this series of booklets, we have seen that those who put their faith and trust in Jesus know *where* they are going. They know because they have claimed God's promises. Promises like this:



For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1Thessalonians 4:16-17



Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Revelation 21:1

These are just a few of many wonderful promises that point us to our final destination. And it's certainly a better, more hopeful end than what many secular people believe awaits us. Here's a famous quote by atheist Bertrand Russell:

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving, that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system.

How grateful, and thankful we can be, that not only do we have the hope of a much better future, but we have good, logical and sensible reasons for holding that hope too.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

As we have been studying, however, we are in the midst of a battle, a battle that most of us sense, see, and feel - a literal battle for our hearts and minds. And part of the struggle itself is to not forget where we are ultimately going. That is, it's so easy to get caught up in the daily struggle

for existence that we lose sight of what really matters, and we push to the background of our lives the God who created us, who redeemed us, and who offers us something that this world never can. Regardless of how many endless ways the great controversy scenario is played out, both in us and around us, Satan ultimately triumphs when he can get us to live more for this world than for the one coming.

And we can be such easy targets, too, because we are so busy. No matter how fast our computers, no matter how fast our internet connections, no matter how fast and quick we can communicate, and send and receive information - who feels that they have enough time? Who doesn't get stressed out?

It could be turned into a formula. Let s be the speed at which we move and get things done, and let q be the time we have after we move at the speed s .

The formula is this: The greater s , the less q .

Which can be translated as: The faster we move, the quicker we can get things done, the less time we have. And the sad thing is, the faster we move, the more we need to rest. But unless we force ourselves, unless we make a concerted effort, we will push and push and push. That's just the nature of the kind of society that most of us live in.

THE SEVENTH-DAY SOLUTION

God, however, has given us a powerful antidote. Even before sin came, God gave the Sabbath. See Genesis 2:1-3. It's also found right in His law, which, as we saw in the last booklet, still defines sin, still shows us what is right and wrong, and is still given *for your good*. Deuteronomy 10:13

What is this commandment?

It's called the Sabbath, and, as with the other nine commandments, we are commanded to keep it. And who, amid the rat race, can't see just how much good a weekly rest could be for us?

It reads:



Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Exodus 20:8-11

Yes, right along with the other nine - which include commandments about theft, idolatry, murder, adultery and so forth - is the commandment to rest on the Sabbath day.

SAVED BY GRACE, RIGHT?

But isn't this legalistic? Aren't we saved by grace, without the deeds of the law?

Of course. We have dedicated booklets to this point: Salvation is by faith alone, not by keeping the commandments. But salvation by faith alone

doesn't mean that we are saved to continue in sin, and as we have seen, the law - the Ten Commandments - defines sin.

And what does the Bible say about sin?



What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Romans 6:1-2

In other words, do we continue in adultery, theft, murder - put in any of the commandments here - that grace may abound? Paul's answer is, *Certainly not!*

Imagine, as a believer in Jesus, you are tempted to violate a commandment - theft, adultery, whatever. But in the name of Jesus, you resist that temptation. Someone then challenges you by saying: *You legalist. Don't you know that you are saved by grace, not by working your way to heaven by being honest and pure?*

Pretty ridiculous, isn't it? In most cases, no Christians would say that in reference to any of the commandments, with the exception of the fourth - Sabbath-keeping.

How is it, though, that the one commandment devoted to rest, the one commandment that specifically expresses rest, the one commandment that gives people a special opportunity to rest, has been turned by some into the universal symbol of works?

TRUE REST IN CHRIST

Rather than being a symbol of works, the Sabbath is the Bible's oldest symbol of the rest that God's people have always had in Him. From the pre-fall world of Adam and Eve in Eden, to the New Covenant rest that God's followers have in Christ's work of redemption for them, the Sabbath is a real-time manifestation of the rest that Christ offers to all.



There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Hebrews 4:9-11

Anyone can say that they are resting in Christ, and anyone can say that they are saved by grace. But the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is a visible expression of that rest, a living parable of what it means to be covered by His grace. Weekly rest from secular, worldly works, stands as an expression of the rest Christ's followers truly enjoy through the complete work that Christ has accomplished for them.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

But didn't Jesus abolish the Sabbath, or change it to Sunday? (See the next booklet on the topic of change.) No, the Bible makes it clear that Jesus' concern was how the Sabbath was kept. The issue of abolishing it, or changing the day, never came up.

For example:



So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

Luke 4:16

As Jesus' custom was ... If Jesus wanted to abolish, or change, the Sabbath, He certainly gave no hint here. And if He planned to abolish or change it, he had to do it before His death. It's criminal to change a person's last will and testament after their death. See Hebrews 9:16-17. That helps to explain why all of the apostles, and the church, from Jesus death to the end of the New Testament, kept only the Sabbath. Changes did come later, but for political reasons - not spiritual.

Some argue that, as a Jew, Jesus would have kept the Jewish Sabbath. The problem with that, however, is that the seventh-day Sabbath isn't Jewish. Indeed, Jesus, as our Creator (John 1:1-3), had established - and kept - the seventh-day Sabbath way back in Eden.



Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Genesis 2:1-3

And this:



And He said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Mark 2:27

These verses prove:

Firstly, the Sabbath existed before sin did, which is an important point against the idea that the Sabbath was abolished after the cross.

Secondly, the seventh-day Sabbath isn't Jewish, but was created long before the Jews existed. The Jews have been keeping it, that's true. But this doesn't make it exclusively Jewish any more than the fact that Australians have been celebrating Christmas makes Christmas exclusively Australian. Christmas pre-dates Australians, wasn't invented by Australians, and is kept by others besides Australians. It's the same with the Jews and the Sabbath. The Sabbath pre-dated the Jews, wasn't started by the Jews, and is kept by others besides the Jews. Hence, Sabbath is not exclusively Jewish any more than Christmas is exclusively Australian.

JESUS, THE SABBATH KEEPER

Here's another example of Jesus and the Sabbath:



Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him, Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

But He said to them, Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him? And He said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark 2:23-28

Though a lot of issues are revealed in these passages, the keeping of the Sabbath is not among them. On the contrary. Why would Jesus emphasise that the *Sabbath was made for man*, if the Sabbath were to be phased out? In fact, Jesus' final words in the passage - *Therefore the Son of man is also Lord of the Sabbath* - are rather strange if His intention were to end the seventh-day Sabbath.

The fact is that Jesus spent more time teaching people how to keep the fourth commandment than He did any other one. Why do that if the Sabbath were to be abolished?

Another example is in Luke 13. One of the leaders was angry that Jesus healed a sick woman on the Sabbath, even though nothing in the Bible taught that helping the sick was wrong on the Sabbath. This point powerfully reveals that Jesus was fighting against man-made ideas about Sabbath-keeping, ideas based on human tradition, and not against Sabbath-keeping itself. How did Jesus respond?



The Lord then answered him and said, Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey

from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound -think of it - for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?

Luke 13:15-16

Again, the issue was how to keep the day, not whether one should keep it.

THE SABBATH REST

Note also that Jesus, when talking about the destruction of Jerusalem - which would come decades after His death - said to His followers:



And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Matthew 24:20

Why tell them that if Jesus intended to abolish the Sabbath?

More evidence for the seventh-day Sabbath occurs with the death of Jesus and what immediately followed. The Bible is clear that when He died, *it was the Preparation day, and the Sabbath was soon to begin.* Luke 23:54, NIV The Bible goes on to say that after the women prepared His body for burial, *they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.* Luke 23:56 Which commandment would that be, other than the fourth? If Jesus had indicated that this commandment was to be abolished or changed, even after His death, these women knew nothing about it. Luke even went out of his way to stress that they kept the Sabbath, *according to the commandment.*

Now, notice these texts:



Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 24:1-3

Thus, Jesus died on Friday, the preparation day for the Sabbath, rested in the tomb on Sabbath, and then was resurrected on the first day of the week - a work day.

When Jesus finished His work of redemption, He cried out on the cross, *It is finished* (John 19:30), a phrase that echoes the language used when He finished His work of creation - *Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished*. And, again, what did He do after finishing that first work? *And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done*. Millennia later, after finishing the work of redemption, Jesus also rested on the seventh-day Sabbath as well, this time in the tomb.

The point? When finishing both His work of creation and redemption, our Lord rested on the seventh day - the Sabbath day. And, according to the commandment, we are to do the same. Thus the New Testament says:



For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 5:3

BURNOUT?

Burdensome? On the contrary. They are anything but. Especially the Sabbath, which is there to help free us from the burdensomeness of our busy lives!

In the 1880's, the famous Russian author, Leo Tolstoy, wrote a short story called, *How Much Land Does A Man Need?* In it, a struggling farmer named Pahom thinks, *If I had plenty of land, I shouldn't fear the Devil himself.*

The Devil himself, listening in, silently replies, *We will have a tussle. I will give you land enough, and by means of that land I will get you into my power.*

Anyway, Pahom then hears about Bashkirs, people who sell land cheaply. Pahom goes to the Bashkirs, and they offer him land for a thousand rubles. As far as he can walk in one day, that's what he can buy for his thousand rubles, but on one condition: *If you don't return on the same day to the spot whence you started, they said, your money is lost.*

Thrilled, Pahom takes off, walking and walking and walking, marking off the edges of this rich, virgin soil that will soon be his. He keeps going and going, as far as he possibly can before making a turn. Though covering a lot of land, he soon realises that he must get back or he'll have none. Drained, exhausted - he had walked so far - he sees that he has no time to lose, that the sun is almost setting, and if he's not back right away all will be lost. He runs as fast as he can, in a panic that it will be too late. Then, just as he gets close to reaching the point where he started, Pahom collapses - dead.

Tolstoy ended his story like this: *His servant picked up the spade and dug a grave long enough for Pahom to lie in, and buried him in it. Six feet from his head to his heels was all the land he needed.*

What a powerful symbol for how we can get so caught up in the things of this world - and for what? Six feet of ground? Is that where we, ultimately, are going?

That's another reason why we have been given the fourth commandment. So we can live and experience the spiritual rest that we have in Jesus, so we can take time to stop and recharge, and so we can remember not only where we came from but where we are going to.

By keeping the Sabbath, we reveal that we are not slaves to work, we are not slaves to making money, we are not slaves to the things of this world. And if we are working so hard that we are burning out, then whether we admit it or not - we are slaves.

In contrast, keeping the Sabbath is our declaration - a declaration of freedom, of the freedom we have in Christ, who promised us:



Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

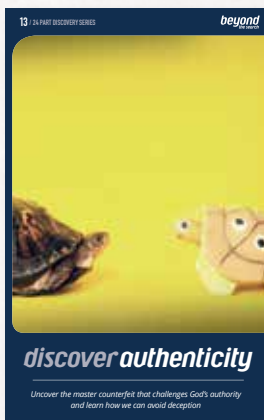
Matthew 11:28

And nothing reveals that rest better, in a more concrete and real way, than the time off from the world we get each week by keeping the fourth commandment.

In a later booklet we will discover the role that the seventh-day Sabbath will play in the final scenes of the epic drama on Planet Earth.



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