



Sermon Title: Psalm 23 – He Makes Me Lie Down

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. How busy is your day? How long your 'to-do' list?
2. What would you like to eliminate, or change about your daily routine?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. David uses the metaphor of the 'Good Shepherd' for God's role in our lives. What attributes of God does David illustrate in the work of a shepherd?
2. God intended both work and rest to be a blessing for us. What examples does He give us of His work to model our behaviour on?
3. David declares that he lacks nothing. How do God's three gifts to us illustrate the value of both work and rest in our lives? Consider the quotations from Augustine (in summary) and C.S Lewis: "He who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only." with Mark 8:36?
4. As we learn God's intent for us, what habits can encourage us to remember and remind us of His love and gifts to us?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Tell about a time when '...He ma[d]e me lie down' ... in the middle of busy time? How did that change your perspective?
2. How can the group pray for you as you evaluate the 'work, rest and refresh' balance that is now in your busy life?
3. Consider writing a "Credo" that reflects God's intent for your life.

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

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THE WORD (NIV)

Genesis 2:1-3

So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ² On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested^{la} from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

Psalm 46:10

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."

Psalm 62:1

I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Matthew 11:28

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Mark 2:27

²⁷ Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.

Mark 8:36

³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

John 6:35

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Colossians 1:17; 2:13-17

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together... ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Hebrews 4:9

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God...



Finding rest and restoration in our Lord is important. Today's culture celebrates 'busy.' It is a badge of honor to most. It says that we are not a 'slacker' but the end result is that we are sleep-deprived, stressed out and exhausted. Statistics show we get two hours less sleep each night than people did 50 years ago. Many only slow down when they are sick. Their to-do lists are ever expanding, and they are always in a hurry – we act like supersonic jets when we were designed for camel travel (Archibald Hart) and we are left physically, emotionally and spiritually depleted. God never intended for us to live this way. Work is part of God's original design for us and we do something very God-like when we exercise the gifts He's given to us to meet the needs of others and to make our world a better place. God never designed work to take the place of our time with Him or with those we love, or to rob us of sleep and leave us exhausted.

God gave us the gift of work. He also gave us the gift of rest. Both are equally important. In Psalm 23, David says that God 'makes' him lie down. This rest was not optional. It also says He leads us beside still waters – an image of being refreshed, recalibrated and restored. In a culture where many of us cheat when it comes to making time to rest and over-commit our schedules, God challenges us to stop and rest. He intentionally provides for us three gifts that if received will give us the rest He longs for us to have.

1. **God gives us the gift of Himself.** Sheep do not lie down and rest easily. They are edgy and easily startled. But when a shepherd provides green pasture to eat and pure water to drink, deals with the predators and insects and any tension in the flock, and is consistently present, the sheep learn to trust the shepherd and can lie down and relax and rest. God is like this. He loves us unconditionally. Yes, it grieves Him when we stray, but the Good Shepherd will always continue to pursue us. David said he was able to rest and lack nothing because he had learned to trust His Lord. How? Because ...
 - a. He is all powerful and when we humble ourselves and ask for His help He will strengthen and empower us to do what we could never do in our own strength.
 - b. He is all-knowing. God knows everything about us and what we are going through. Nothing escapes His attention.
 - c. He is everywhere present. The more we live with this truth in mind the more we will sense His guiding presence.
 - d. He is sovereign. God is in control. Nothing happens to us without His awareness and permission.
 - e. He is good. He has our best interests at heart in all things. He will work all things for our ultimate good and for His ultimate glory for those who trust Him (Rom 8:28).

We too lack nothing because God gave the gift of Himself. We can be refreshed and restored because He provides nutritious food and pure water through His Word, through which we receive wisdom, direction and true satisfaction. (John 6:35) If you have trouble relaxing and letting go, perhaps your identity is based on something other than trusting in the Lord. You are valuable because you are created by God. It is who you belong to that gives you your identity and worth. Augustine said, 'You have made us for yourself and our souls are restless until they find their rest in You.' (Psalm 62:1, Isaiah 26:3)

2. **God gives us the gift of Sabbath rest.** (Gen 2:1-3). God rested not because He was tired but because He was done creating and wanted to enjoy His creation. The Sabbath means to cease – to stop! The Sabbath law (Exodus 20) was given to teach them the importance of resting one day in seven and to point toward the true Sabbath rest – rest in God through faith in Jesus Christ. That law ended at Christ. It was a shadow of something better to come: The New Covenant in Christ (Col 2:13-17, Heb 4:9). God is holding the universe together (Col 1:17). It won't fall apart while you're resting or sleeping. Take that time to lean on Him, trust Him and rest, reflecting on what really matters in life. Let go of the routines and the regular and do something 'different' on your day off (Mark 2:27). Revitalize your soul with recreation or a hobby. Do what makes you feel fully alive and gives you delight. Refocus spiritually (Psalm 46:10). Use the Sabbath as a time to remind yourself that God is God and you are not. Refocus on the eternal matters of life. Examine your priorities. Is what you are doing in life reflecting what you say is most important to you and to God?
3. **God gives us the gift of Jesus' rest.** Jesus lived every day in dependence on His heavenly Father. That is the key to true soul rest (Matt 11:28). Practically, this means coming to Jesus at any time. He used to go off to a solitary place to spend time with His Father. So too He invites us to daily go off and give Him our burdens, ask for direction and hear from Him. As well, take breaks in your day to consciously focus on Him and lay your burdens down and receive wisdom and power from Him. Consciously include Him in everything. When we do this, He promises we will find rest for our soul.