

sermon study guide

June 5/6, 2021

(see next page for Sermon Summary)

“How Then Shall We Live?” Part 7: Pursue Simplicity II

Dr. Henry Schorr

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Remember a time of your life that was simpler than now. What made it simpler?
2. What activity do you find most restful during this period of isolation and lockdown? How comfortable, or not, are you with “stopping”?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Exodus 20:8-11

3. God commands His people to “remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy”. Holy means, “to be set apart for a special purpose”. What special purpose did God have in mind for His people in resting on the Sabbath?

Read Genesis 2:1-3; Psalm 46:10; Psalm 62:1; Matthew 16:26

4. Why did God rest on and bless the seventh day? From these Scriptures, what attitudes do we need to adopt to truly enter into God’s Sabbath rest?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. How has your Sabbath practice looked at different times in your life? What does Sabbath look like for you currently? What might prevent you from taking a Sabbath?
6. In what practical way can you change your life (or your mind) to live in total dependence on God like Jesus did?

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Psalm 46:10

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”

Psalm 62:1

Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.

Matthew 16:26

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Henry shared from his own experience a few things he does to experience God’s rest: Stop and acknowledge that He is God and that I’m not; First thing in my day, I’ve surrendered myself anew to Him, opened His Word, and received His wisdom, promises and assignments for the day; Cast my cares upon Him and invite Him to do my day with me; Through the day listen to His promptings and ask for His wisdom and strength; Stop one day a week for Sabbath rest. Which of these do you currently do well? Which of these are growth areas for you?

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We are challenged by Scripture to pursue a growing friendship with God, authentic relationships with others, joining in Christ’s mission, giving generously, while living a life of simplicity. Simplicity is not implying to do less or work less hard. While this may be part of it, simplicity is the will to do one thing well and with laser focus, thereby bringing clarity to what is most important in life.

Swimmer Michael Phelps won 8 gold Olympic medals. His life consisted of training, eating and sleeping. It was simple and focused on one thing, but held very hard work for long hours. People are often frazzled because they are devoted to a myriad of things, wanting what God has for them as well as what the world promises. But it is impossible to serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), and if we try, we become depleted physically and emotionally: irritable, critical, exhausted, hopeless & helpless. God does not intend for us to live like that, but we have to choose - what do I want to give my life to? Both Joshua, (Joshua 24:14-15) and Paul (Philippians 1:21) stopped and looked deeply into their lives to make a choice that changed the focus of their lives.

Because we are often too busy to stop and think about these issues, God gives us the gift of rest in 2 forms - the Sabbath Day of Rest (Genesis 2:1) and the Jesus Rest. Note that God does not need to restore his strength the way we do; God stopped and rested because His work of creation was done. We are called to imitate God in this weekly rest, to stop one day each week to remember that we are not God but mortal beings. He teaches us to trust Him to look after all that we cannot, for only He is all-knowing and all-powerful and has our best interests at heart (Romans 8:28). As we believe this, we can let go of our worry and fear of failure to rest in His sovereignty. As we repent and change our minds, our minds are transformed and thereby our ways are changed (Romans 12:2).

A Sabbath rest involves stopping all work, and doing something entirely different. God makes us stop and lie down (Psalm 23:1-2) while He holds the world together (Colossians 1:17). We also need to recharge emotionally - doing something fun, energetic, or creative that delights us. And finally, we need to reflect and refocus spiritually. During this period of prolonged isolation, are we re-examining our lives and what really matters in order to re-align our values and priorities (Matthew 16:26)?

God also gifts us with Jesus Rest. Jesus invites us to His rest (Matthew 11:28) by submitting to Him daily and letting Him lead us in the same way that He lived in total dependence upon His Father as He chose not to exercise His divine attributes but lived as we do. When asked how he would describe Jesus, Dallas Willard responded, “Relaxed”. Concerned only with daily assignments from His Father, He lived without cares or burdens. Jesus extends the same invitation to us, promising rest for our souls.

We are not what we think we are, nor what others say we are. We are who God says we are: His beloved children (1John 3:1). Nothing satisfies the longings of our heart but God’s love (Psalm 62:1). Instead of hopeless despair or frustration, our lives become characterised by peace, joy and simplicity.