



Sunday Teaching Guide

Sabbath, Week 1

October 15, 2023

Bible Texts

- Genesis 1:1-31
- Genesis 2:1-3
- Exodus 20:9-11

Important Terms

- Shabbat: The Hebrew word for "rest" that is transliterated into the English word "Sabbath."

Sermon Notes

- One way to read the story of creation in Genesis is through the lens of theology: Who are we? Who is God? What is God's nature? Is God active? And what does God want for us? These questions aren't framed academically, but in the genre of poetry.
- Reading through the creation narrative, there is a pattern developing in these words. This rhythm is the work of the creative act, the recognition of what was created as good, and the passage of time from morning into evening, one day. On each day of creation, God creates something new; however, on the seventh day, God rests.
- The seventh day is the only day in this creation poem that has no end. There is no evening and there is no morning. There is no more chaos, there is completion. There is no more darkness to experience, but only light. There is eternal rest in God's presence. On this final day, there is no work, there is only worship and rest.
- This isn't the reality of our world or the ancient world either. The scriptures go on to tell the story of the brokenness that comes after this as people find themselves tied to the chaos of survival in light of humanities sin. But the story of God's love in action, seeking to restore, redeem, and renew his creation continues. Central to it is the Sabbath, given as a gift in the present as a reminder of what is to come as God's plan for this world unfolds. The ancient people were reminded to reenact, to participate in the divine story, anticipating and participating in a holy day of rest.
- God's desire is for us to find a new rhythm, modeled for us by this picture of creation, and given to us as the gift of sabbath. It's not bound by the chaos or circumstances of our lives.

Reflection Questions

- Ryan said that the creation story presents answers to various theological questions. What questions and answers do you think the story provides?
- How do you think a day off from work differs from a day of rest?
- What does a day of rest look like for you?
- How often do you take an actual day of rest?
- How important do you think that your day of rest should fall on the same day as the day you go to church?
- Do you think there is the relationship between rest and worship?
- How do you feel about your current patterns of life at the start of this sermon series?
- In what ways do you hope to grow during this sermon series?

Prayer for the Week

- God, creator of the universe, you have invited us to participate in a holy rest. Guide us to along the way so that we may enter into the pattern of your creation. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Ezekiel 20:19-20
- Mark 2:23-28
- Luke 13:10-17