

## Tired

I recently had a bout with pneumonia, and I had never felt so tired; it is a major illness that can drain a person of strength. I have stayed up all night before, worked myself physically to exhaustion, and been really sick before – but I had never felt as tired as that. The odd thing was that even though I was off work for three weeks, I had a difficult time feeling rested even as I started feeling better.

We all want rest, both physically and emotionally. We are also in need of spiritual rest, even though some people may not recognize that need. This week, we will study Jesus' offered rest. It is a physical and emotional rest in the sense that it frees us from the burdens we place on ourselves in trying to work for God's favor. Even more than that, it is a spiritual rest, finding that God has a place for us that does not depend on our goodness but on Jesus' goodness. Let's find out how Jesus is our rest.

### Monday – Choosing Your Burden

*"What can be lighter than a burden which takes our burdens away, and a yoke which bears up the bearer himself?"*

Bernard of Clairvaux, 12<sup>th</sup> c. French monk

1. Please read Matthew 11:25-30. What is Jesus' conclusion in verse 30? What do you think it means to put on Jesus' yoke?

**Text Insight:** It was common in Jesus' day for a young untrained ox to be yoked with one who was older and well trained. In so doing, the young ox, learned to work.

2. How do the concepts of God being lord of all (verse 25), God's pleasure (verse 26) and all things being committed to Jesus (verse 27) logically lead to Jesus' statement about finding rest in him?
3. Now look at Philippians 4:4-9. What insights does Paul offer as to how we experience God's peace in our lives?

**Making it Personal:** Do you walk so closely with Jesus that it's like two oxen yoked together, so that you have his peace, his rest? Pray, asking God to guide you into a steadfast relationship with him.

### Tuesday – Jesus and Sabbath, part 1

*"We are urgent about the body; He is about the soul. We call for present comforts; He considers our everlasting rest."*

Richard Cecil, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. English pastor

1. Please read Matthew 12:1-8. What did the Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders) criticize Jesus for? Why did Jesus say their criticism was misplaced?
2. In what way do Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11 support a high view of the Sabbath?
3. Jesus relied on 1 Samuel 21:1-6 in answering the Pharisees. In that passage, David and his men are fleeing from King Saul. How do David's actions support Jesus' assertion?

**Making it Personal:** Ask God to show you how you can honor him by obeying his word, not man's rules.

### Wednesday – Jesus and Sabbath, part 2

*"Never, never did Christ send a heavy laden one to work; never, never did He send a hungry one, a weary one, a sick or sorrowing one, away on any service. For such the Bible only says, 'Come, come, come.'"*

Hudson Taylor, 20<sup>th</sup> c. missionary

1. Please read Matthew 12:9-14. Whose synagogue did Jesus enter? What do you think the Pharisees thought when they saw him go in there?
2. Jesus had just told the Pharisees that it was ok to gather food on the Sabbath when you're hungry. What did they ask him next? How did Jesus respond?
3. Rest (Sabbath) is a blessing from God for us, which we are to use to honor him. How did the Pharisees turn it into a burden?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray about this blessing of rest that God has offered us. Ask the Lord for wisdom how to apply it in your own life. Pray for our congregation that we would learn what it means to live out of "restedness" rather than restlessness.

### Thursday – Sabbath and Rest

*"Either sin is with you, lying on your shoulders, or it is lying on Christ, the Lamb of God. Now if it is lying on your back, you are lost; but if it is resting on Christ, you are free, and you will be saved. Now choose what you want."* Martin Luther

1. Please read Hebrews 4:1-3. What needs to be combined with hearing the word of God in order to receive God's rest?

**Text Insight:** The Book of Hebrews was written for the benefit of early Christians who were Jewish and knew Jewish law and traditions well.

2. Now read Hebrews 4:4-7. When are we to turn to God, according to verse 7?
3. In Hebrews 4:8-11, we are told that we will rest from our work. What work do you think that is?

**Making it Personal:** Have you rested from the work of trying to earn your salvation? Have you entered God's rest because you have faith in the living God? Moreover

### Friday – Restless or Rested

*"Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise."*

Thomas Watson, 17<sup>th</sup> c. Puritan preacher

1. Compare Isaiah 57:20-21 with 58:13-14. How would you describe the two groups discussed there?
2. What is it about our Sabbath that is pleasing to God, according to Isaiah 58:13-14? How are we to do that?
3. According to verse 14, does the Sabbath sound like a burden or a blessing to you? Why?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Exodus 31:12-17, and consider how the Israelites were to honor God by keeping the Sabbath, and how we are now to honor God by finding our Sabbath rest in Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.

**For the Weekend:** Re-read Matthew 11:25-12:14. Sabbath is more than just a day. It is a way of life. How can you find your Sabbath rest in Jesus, and not just in a particular day of the week?