

March 18, 2020



## ...Sabbath

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.” -Genesis 2:2

I can hardly believe that it was just over two and a half weeks ago that I stood before the congregation to preach on Matt. 11:28-30. In my earnest challenge to you to take on the easy yoke of Jesus, to slow down the pace of your life, and to just rest, I had no idea that in a matter of days, our lives as we knew them would come to a screeching halt. I encouraged you to get John Mark Comer’s book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. I began creating these devotional thoughts to help you practice the things he suggested would help you slow down your life.

Well, God decided to give us a hand. I will not say that he created or allowed the Pandemic in order to teach us something. I will say that he is doing something because of it that will most likely change our way of life forever. A quote has been floating around on Facebook. It is attributed to someone named Kitty O’Meara. I do not know who she is but this is the quote: “And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And in the absence of people

living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.”

We have been given a gift – the gift of time. That first week I preached, I told you that you can’t make more time. But you can be given it as a gift. We are locked down, mostly confined to our homes, staying appropriately distant from others. We may be more anxious than usual. We may be feeling lonely, isolated, or depressed because of it. But God is at work. God is showing us rest and giving us sabbath like we have never had and might never have again.

John Mark Comer says there are four ways that the Hebrew word *shabbat* is translated:

- 1) **Stop.** We cease from working, all thinking about working, all worrying and all wanting.
- 2) **Rest.** We rest our soul, our whole person. We sleep, we calm down, we relax, we cease our striving, we abide.
- 3) **Delight.** We pamper our soul with activities that spark joy, wonder, gratitude, and happiness.
- 4) **Worship.** We turn our hearts toward grateful praise and adoration of God in surrender and rest.

Choose a 24-hour period. Start at sundown and go until sundown the next day. Spend the first evening enjoying a good meal, and relaxing alone or with loved ones in your home. Engage your whole family in this exercise. Get a good night’s sleep. Get up when you’re ready. Spend the day doing what you enjoy. Look at the list above for ideas. Take a nap. Go for a walk outside. Lift your eyes, your hands, your hearts in full worship and gratitude to God. Know fully his easy yoke – his rest for your soul!