

# Words from the Fire #4

7.18.2021

Message

Exodus Series

Exodus 20:8–11 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Genesis 1:27 (CSB)

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image;  
he created him in the image of God;  
he created them male and female.

Genesis 2:1–3 (CSB)

So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. <sup>2</sup> On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

Introduction:

A. Throughout history, the Jewish people have been marked by 3 observances:

1. Kosher laws.

2. Circumcision.
3. Sabbath observance.

B. These 3 observances made it impossible for true Jews to blend into the world.

1. Daniel and the Hebrew stood out because they refuse to eat the diet of the King of Babylon.
2. Any male who had been circumcised would be markedly different than the surrounding Greeks and Romans at war, at work, and at play.
3. And everywhere the Jewish people have been, since centuries before Jesus, they have celebrated the Sabbath.

C. The Jews have a troubled history with Sabbath.

1. The prophets, some kings, and leaders like Nehemiah had to remind the people of God's command to stop and worship.
2. It isn't natural for people to pause their labor for one day a week in order to worship and rest.
3. When we avoid Sabbath, we put ourselves outside of God's rhythm.

### "Illustration"

- 1) Quack, Quack, Quack
- 2) Staying Alive
- 3) Amazing Grace

2 possible outcomes: Complete chaos for a few moments, OR everyone will modify their original rhythms and blend them in.

### 1. God established a holy rhythm for humanity.

A. God created and worked for 6-days.

1. Each day He worked, He declared that day to be good.

2. But on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, He rested and declared that day to be holy.

B. Adam and Eve's first full day of existence was a Sabbath Day.

1. This was before the Law.

2. This was before Moses.

3. This was before Grace.

a. In fact, this was an act of Grace.

b. God commanded humanity to rest in the holiness of the Sabbath, not in the goodness of the workweek.

4. When we rediscover God's intention for the Sabbath, we reclaim the holy from the good.

a. The world established the weekend.

b. The world provides vacation and holiday.

c. God provides the Sabbath.

2. Before the Exodus, we have no evidence of God's people practicing Sabbath.

A. In fact, the word Sabbath is not really used in Genesis at all.

1. Genesis calls it the 7<sup>th</sup> day, and that God "rested".

2. So when is the "Sabbath" first truly mentioned?

3. Exodus 16 is when God puts a hard emphasis on "Sabbath".

B. Exodus 16 tells of the first time that God provided bread from heaven.

1. God told the people to gather their food each day.

2. And on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, gather double the amount because God wasn't sending any the next day.

Exodus 16:4-8 (CSB)

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.

<sup>5</sup>On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days."

<sup>6</sup>So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "This evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup>and in the morning you will see the LORD's glory because he has heard your complaints about him. For who are we that you complain about us?" <sup>8</sup>Moses continued, "The LORD will give you meat to eat this evening and all the bread you want in the morning, for he has heard the complaints that you are raising against him. Who are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."

### 3. Context plays a large part here.

A. Israel had been in slavery 430 years.

1. Guess what slaves don't get much of?
2. They do not get much time for rest and worship.
3. **Slavery places endless and unreasonable demands upon a person's time, talent, and treasure.**
  - a. Sin and slavery are synonymous in Scripture.
  - b. Think about your past:
    1. When you were living hard in sin, you never had enough time, money, or margin.
    2. The enemy of your soul is known as the devourer.
  - c. **The devourer consumes all of you so that you have nothing left to offer to God.**

B. God wanted to change Israel from a nation of slaves into a nation of priests.

1. Priests are concerned with what is holy.
2. The Sabbath was declared "holy" by God.

3. God's command to keep the Sabbath day holy is part of Israel's calling to worship God and lead the Nations in worship.

C. This reason helps explain God's instruction in Exodus 20.

On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

1. God did not tell only the Jews to Sabbath.

a. He said it was for everyone with them.

b. Not just the men, not just those who could afford it, not just those who wanted to.

c. God declared this Sabbath rest for everyone, including the stock animals.

2. The Sabbath is not a luxury; it's a command.

a. Yet, in America we act as though the Sabbath doesn't apply to us.

b. And, just in case, we make sure we go to Church on Sunday just to be sure.

c. We have reduced the Sabbath day from a holy day into a holy hour.

4. How does the Sabbath apply to me?

A. As we read the New Testament, we can see that the Sabbath looks very different now than it did in Moses' day.

1. Jesus was hated because He healed on the Sabbath, because healing was considered a form of work.

2. Jesus taught that Sabbath was created for man, not the other way around.

- a. In other words, Sabbath is an act of grace and love for us.
- b. God, in His love and mercy, established creation with a rhythm that includes 6-days of work and 1-day of rest.
- c. We must be careful not to treat God's gift of Sabbath as a curse.

3. The New Testament also describes a shift away from Christians worshipping on the last day of the week and toward the first-day of the week.

- a. They did this to honor the day that Jesus was resurrected.
- b. We must not fear we are worshipping God wrong by worshipping on Sunday, because we still honor the intent and purpose of God's Sabbath by meeting on the Lord's day.

4. Paul upholds the value of Sabbath, while granting permission for people to worship differently and on different days.

a. Colossians 2:16–17 (CSB)

<sup>16</sup>Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. <sup>17</sup>These are a shadow of what was to come; the substance is Christ.

b. **Did you catch that:** These are a shadow of what was to come; the substance is Christ.

B. The command to Sabbath points toward something far larger than the need for a day off.

1. The writer of Hebrews expresses this in Hebrews 4.

Hebrews 4:1–11 (CSB)

**4** Therefore, since the promise to enter his rest remains, let us beware that none of you be found to have fallen short. <sup>2</sup>For we also have received the

good news just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith.<sup>3</sup> For we who have believed enter the rest, in keeping with what he has said,

**So I swore in my anger,**

**“They will not enter my rest,”**

even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world.<sup>4</sup> For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: **And on the seventh day God rested from all his works.**<sup>5</sup> Again, in that passage he says, **They will never enter my rest.**<sup>6</sup> Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience,<sup>7</sup> he again specifies a certain day—**today**. He specified this speaking through David after such a long time:

**Today, if you hear his voice,**

**do not harden your hearts.**

<sup>8</sup>For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. <sup>9</sup>Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people. <sup>10</sup>For the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his. <sup>11</sup>Let us, then, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

2. God’s invitation to Israel to Sabbath was more than a day off.

3. **Hebrews says that the Sabbath was an invitation for Israel to enter into God’s salvation on a weekly basis.**

a. One day a week, the people’s striving to survive would cease.

b. One day a week, the people would cease from their labor and reflect upon God’s redemptive plan.

c. One day a week, the people would rest from their own work just as God ceased from His.

d. When believers today Sabbath, we express our hope and confidence in the finished work of the Jesus.

e. He has provided for our salvation, our redemption, our provision, and our future.

4. When Christians today take one day and Sabbath, we express our hope and confidence in Jesus to the world.

a. The world's rhythm is a rat race.

b. Our rhythm is to be in beat with God's.

c. In the chaos of this sinful world, the Sabbath anchors our physical reality with our hope in Jesus.

d. When I Sabbath, I proclaim my faith and trust in Jesus' power to save us from our present reality.

## 5. What is God teaching His people through the Sabbath?

A. First, **the Sabbath demonstrates God's power.**

1. Only God could provide double on the 6<sup>th</sup> day so that Israel could rest on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

2. Only God could cause the 6-days be more productive than the full 7.

3. Only God would be able institute a weekly reminder of His power, authority, and completeness.

4. Only God calls out to His people and invites us to join Him in this supernatural rest.

B. **The Sabbath tests our obedience.**

1. All of these benefits are ours, if we will obey.

a. God knew this would be hard for us.

b. So the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandments provides more details and instruction than any of the other 9.

2. Will we trust God?

a. Will we trust God enough to get out of His way and "rest" one day a week.



b. Will we trust God that He can do more with our 6-days of labor than if we work all 7?

c. Will we trust in God's weekly provision?

3. The Sabbath is counterintuitive.

a. Years ago, Bill Gates was asked why he didn't believe in God. "Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient. There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning."<sup>1</sup>

b. While all of us here more than likely disagree with Gates, I'm afraid if you were asked "why?" you don't Sabbath you would say "It doesn't seem to be very efficient."

c. Yet, God didn't design worship to be efficient in human terms.

C. **The Sabbath creates margin for worship.**

1. God knew that His people would be busy.

2. God knew that His people would have their work cut-out for them, even before the introduction of sin complicated and frustrated our work.

3. This is why **God created margin in the weekly rhythm so that we would always have time to worship the One who created us.**

a. When we do not carve out time to worship God, it is because we have carved out time for false-gods.

b. In God's progression of Commandments, God places this Word along with the Words against false gods, idols, and using the Name in vain.

c. If you don't create margin to worship the One true God, you will find time to worship other Gods.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, [\*Exodus: Saved for God's Glory\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 590.

4. *God, therefore, gave the Sabbath as a gift of grace to us, a foreshadowing of the Sabbath to come.*

Application: How can I rediscover a healthier rhythm?

**#1. Schedule it.**

- a. What gets scheduled gets done.
- b. Make an appointment and establish boundaries that honors the intent of the Commandment.

**#2. Recognize the connection between money and time.**

- a. When you are overextended financially, you will have no margin in your calendar.
- b. One of the most dangerous phrases in our vocabulary, "I can't afford to take a day-off."
  1. Sometimes we can't afford to take time off because we have over-leveraged ourselves with debt.
  2. Just as we are all called to tithe and budget financially, we should also tithe and budget our time.
  3. Sit down as a family, and devise a plan that works well for you and Holy Spirit.

**#3. Learn the most powerful word in the English language: NO.**

1. When you say Yes to something, you have to tell something else "NO".
2. Learn to establish healthy boundaries and rhythms.
3. Respect a person's "no".
  1. If someone won't respect your no, they don't respect your yes.
  2. Give people around your permission to tell you "no" and not have to explain themselves.

#### **#4 Remember that Sabbath is necessary for spiritual and physical health.**

- a. Back in the early days of coal mining, coal miners depended heavily upon the use of mules.
  1. The mule provided the muscle and work that a man or a horse could not provide.
  2. Without the use of mules in the early days, the development of America and the Industrialized world would have been slowed.
  3. A man once walked through a town where the mules were taken care of on a Sunday.
  4. He asked why they weren't working, when every day was needed for work.
  5. The man in charge of the mules declared, "We have to bring the mules up to the surface once a week, otherwise they will lose their sight."
  6. You see, being in the darkness all week without a break would result in the mule going blind.
- b. When we refuse to come up for air, when we refuse to stop and rest and worship, when we commit 110% week after week, year after year, without a Sabbath, we lose our sight.
  1. We can no longer see what God is doing or wanting to do in us.
  2. We see the world through lenses that are tired, cranky, broken, or even blind.
- c. **Your need for regular, weekly rest is not a design flaw.**
  1. The Sabbath is not a result of sin and the fall.
  2. The Sabbath is part of how God created us and His Creation.

#### **#5. Believe in the validity of Sabbath.**

- a. Many of us don't Sabbath or Rest because we don't believe in it.
- b. We view Sabbath as law, not grace.
- c. We view Sabbath as weakness, not God's design.
- d. We view Sabbath as a waste of time instead of a redeeming of time.
- e. We won't practice something we do not believe in.

Close: The place for us to start today is by believing.

A. We all should believe that Sabbath was created for me.

1. We all should recognize that we are not strong enough to live life outside of God's rhythm for our lives.
2. We all need weekly, regular worship in our lives.

B. Prayer points this morning:

1. If you are tired and weary, I want to invite you to confess that to God and receive His rest and instruction on what to change.
2. If you are tired of the pace of life that you are in, and don't know how to change it, would you take a moment to pray for wisdom and discipline.
3. Let us all be reminded of our need for a Savior.
4. Weekly, we are to be reminded that it is only Jesus that provides true peace and rest in the midst of our fallen world.