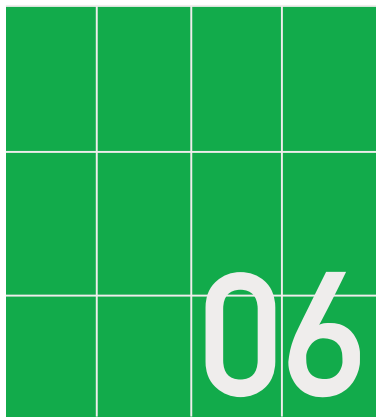




SACRED REST:

Finding Hope in Life's Rhythm

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Hope Channel. My name is _____ and I'll be your host for the series *There is More to Life*.

In this series of eight studies, we are exploring the foundational beliefs of Christianity from a biblical point of view. From the origins of the Bible to salvation and what happens when we die, our time together will be a time of discovery and learning, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Today, we'll explore the subject of the seventh-day Sabbath by asking: Why did God give us a day of rest? Is the Sabbath still meaningful? And, Did God ever change the day of rest from Sabbath to Sunday?

Let us open our hearts to rediscover the richness of God's Word. We begin with a word of prayer:

"Heavenly Father, we come before You with open hearts, longing to hear Your voice through Your Word. Fill our minds with understanding and our spirits with wisdom. May Your truth guide us, Your love inspire us, and Your presence transform us. Teach us to walk in Your light and to reflect Your grace to the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

II. MAIN ARGUMENT

Imagine the breathtaking beauty of God's creation. Picture the pristine earth, untouched by sin, radiant with the glory of its Maker. The rivers sparkle like crystal, the trees sway in perfect harmony, and the air is filled with the songs of creation praising its Creator. There are no predatory animals or death. All pulsates with life, peace, and joy.

As God finished putting all His ideas on the canvas of the brand-new earth, He did something extraordinary—He created an extra day for rest.

We read about this moment in Genesis 2:2–3:

“By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

We can imagine God visiting the earth on that first Sabbath inspecting His new creation. He must have taken His time to visit every corner of the Earth, seeing its colors and textures, hearing its sounds, breathing its air, and taking it all in.

From North to South, East to West, God sees it all.

He finally says “It’s all very good” (Genesis 1:31).

On that first Sabbath day, God decided to rest not because He was tired, but because He wanted to give us His gift of rest. This act of divine rest on the seventh day is the foundation of the Sabbath, a sanctuary in time, a holy space where heaven meets earth.

The Sabbath is so important for humanity that God included it in the Ten Commandments which apply to all mankind.

Let’s revisit the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:8–11:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male slave or your female slave, or your cattle, or your resident who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; for that reason the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

The Sabbath commandment demonstrates that it transcends time, places, and cultures. It is not confined to the Israelites thousands of years ago. It is a living, breathing invitation to experience God’s rest today and to anticipate the eternal

Sabbath in the world to come. It's not merely for spiritual purposes; it is central to our existence.

Even before the Ten Commandments were given at Mount Sinai, the Israelites observed the Sabbath during their wilderness journey. In Exodus 16, we read the story of the miracle of the manna. The Israelites gathered manna for six days and rested on the seventh:

“Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them, “This is what the Lord meant: Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.” So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not stink nor was there a maggot in it. Then Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”

This practical lesson reinforced the importance of trusting in His provision and honoring His day of rest.

All of us, at one time or another, have felt overwhelmed by hectic schedules and unending activities clamoring for our time and attention. Our bodies and minds are increasingly exhausted.

But we were not made for around-the-clock business. Adam and Eve's first day of life was spent resting and not busy working!

Recent studies highlight the benefits of resting fully one day a week. The article “The Science of Sabbath: How People Are Rediscovering Rest—and Claiming Its Benefits” published in 2019 highlights how a day of rest is associated with various health benefits, including:

- **Increased Longevity and Health:** Seventh-day Adventists, who observe a Saturday Sabbath, have been studied for their longer lifespans and better health, with Sabbath-keeping cited as a contributing factor.
- **Mental Clarity and Focus:** Research presented at the American Psychological

Association indicates that constant screen exposure leads to feeling “distracted, distant, and drained,” while taking a Sabbath break enhances mental clarity.

- **Reduced Social Media Exposure:** Excessive social media use has been linked to loneliness and disrupted sleep. Practices like a “Technology Shabbat,” where all devices are turned off, counteract the negative effects of constant connectivity and enhance overall wellness.
- **Enhanced Mental Health:** Disconnecting from secular activities and technology for a 24-hour Sabbath is associated with improved mental well-being.
- **Better Sleep Quality:** Reducing screen time and stress during a weekly rest day improves sleep patterns.
- **Stronger Relationships:** Sabbath practices, such as sharing meals and spending quality time with loved ones, promote deeper family and community connections.

These are great benefits of resting on the Sabbath.

But the Sabbath isn’t just a day off—it’s a divine invitation to rest in God’s presence, celebrate His work, and live in harmony with His will. How will you embrace the Sabbath as a reflection of God’s love and power in your life? By observing the Sabbath, we experience a rhythm that reflects God’s purposes for us: rest, renewal, and relationship. It’s a gift that draws us closer to Him, reminding us of who He is as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

In Isaiah 58:13-14 God invites us to delight in the Sabbath, promising that when we honor it, we’ll experience the joy of the Lord.

***“If, because of the Sabbath, you restrain your foot
From doing as you wish on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a pleasure, and the holy day of the Lord honorable,
And honor it, desisting from your own ways,
From seeking your own pleasure
And speaking your own word,
Then you will take delight in the Lord,
And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
And I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,***

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Notice how this passage invites us to avoid seeking our own interests on this day and seek our joy in God. There’s at least two reasons God does this:

The Sabbath is a powerful memorial of God’s creative power and His desire for humanity to find rest in His presence.

First, the Sabbath reminds us of God’s completed work in creation. Genesis 2:2-3 tells us that after creating the world in six days, God rested on the seventh, blessing it and setting it apart as holy. Every Sabbath, we are invited to pause and celebrate the beauty of God’s handiwork.

But the Sabbath isn’t just about looking back; it also reflects **God’s ongoing work of redemption**. The Sabbath is connected to God’s deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt. Notice

“And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to [d] celebrate the Sabbath day” (Deuteronomy 5:12–15).

Just as God set Israel free from slavery, He sets us free from the bondage of sin.

Hebrews 4:9-10 takes the Sabbath even further, connecting the Sabbath as our ultimate rest in Christ. Through His sacrifice, Jesus offers us freedom from sin and the assurance of salvation. Observing the Sabbath becomes a weekly reminder of His grace and a foretaste of the eternal rest we will experience in His kingdom.

When Jesus walked the Earth, He upheld the Sabbath. In Mark 2:27-28, He declared,

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Jesus emphasized the true purpose of the Sabbath—a time to connect with God and others, free from burdensome traditions.

What about after Jesus’ resurrection?

The Apostles continued to observe the Sabbath, meeting regularly for worship

and prayer. Acts 17:2 describes Paul’s custom of reasoning in the synagogues on the Sabbath, showing its ongoing significance.

And the Sabbath isn’t just for the past or present—it’s part of the future. Isaiah 66:22-23 prophesies that in the New Earth, all humanity will come to worship before God from one Sabbath to another.

***“For just as the new heavens and the new earth,
Which I make, will endure before Me,” declares the Lord,
“So will your descendants and your name endure.
And it shall be from new moon to new moon
And from Sabbath to Sabbath,
All mankind will come to bow down before Me,” says the Lord.”***

Notice how this passage gives the Sabbath a new meaning; it is a day set apart for worship, renewal, and connection with God. Here’s how you can embrace the blessing of the Sabbath and honor its sacred purpose.

Many Christians, however, do not keep the seventh-day Sabbath as God intended during Creation. While some have chosen Sunday as their day of rest, many Christians do not really keep a Sabbath day of divine rest.

The Bible provides no evidence that God changed the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath to another day. From the beginning of creation to the end of Scripture, the seventh-day Sabbath is consistently upheld as the true day of rest and worship.

As previously explored, the Sabbath was established at creation when God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it as holy (Genesis 2:2-3). This divine act set the seventh day apart as a perpetual reminder of His creative power.

Later, the Ten Commandments reaffirmed the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship, explicitly commanding God’s people to “remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Exodus 20:8-11).

During His earthly ministry, Jesus observed the Sabbath, teaching in synagogues and honoring it as a day for doing good (Luke 4:16; Mark 3:4). He emphasized its purpose as a blessing for humanity, saying, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Some argue that Jesus nailed the Sabbath to the cross. This is a common misunderstanding based on faulty reading of Scripture. For example, Colossians 2:14 is often cited in this discussion. It says,

“Having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Was Paul talking about the Ten Commandments in this passage?

First, we need to find out whether Paul thought that God’s law was “a certificate of debt” in his other writings. Did he? As we have previously explored, Paul considered the Ten Commandments as “good” and that the grace of Christ does not free us from God’s will as expressed in the Ten Commandments.

The Bible makes a clear distinction between the moral law, which includes the Ten Commandments, and the ceremonial laws, which were specific to the sacrificial system and pointed to Christ’s ultimate sacrifice on the cross for our sins and his intercession for all believers in Heaven today.

It seems clear that this passage about this “certificate of debt” in Colossians refers to the ceremonial practices meant to atone for sin in the form of animal sacrifices and feast days, which were fulfilled in Christ. These rituals pointed forward to His sacrifice and became unnecessary after His death.

The Sabbath of the Ten Commandments, however, is different. It is part of the moral law, which reflects God’s unchanging character. The Sabbath was established at creation (Genesis 2:2-3) as a perpetual reminder of His creative power and a day of rest.

We see that Jesus upheld the Sabbath throughout His ministry.

In Matthew 5:17-18, He declared:

“Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!”

His teachings clarified the Sabbath’s purpose and freed it from burdensome

traditions, reaffirming its significance as a day of worship and renewal.

Christ's death on the cross did not nullify the moral law. Instead, His death affirmed the importance of the Sabbath rest by demonstrating the depth of God's love and the seriousness of sin. The Sabbath, as part of the moral law, remains an enduring symbol of God's desire for humanity to rest in Him.

The Sabbath wasn't nailed to the cross—it was lifted up as a testament to God's creative and redemptive power. It continues to invite us into a rhythm of rest, worship, and relationship with our Creator.

The Apostles and early Christians continued to observe the Sabbath after Jesus' death and resurrection. We read about Paul's custom of Sabbath observance in Acts 17:2:

“And according to Paul's custom, he visited them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,”

We look in vain for a passage in Scripture that rescinds God's command to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. It continues to stand as a testimony to His unchanging character and His desire for humanity to find rest in Him.

Sunday observance arose centuries after the New Testament period, however, this shift was not based on any command from God or Scriptural mandate.

The seventh-day Sabbath remains God's designated day of rest and worship, a time set apart to connect with Him, reflect on His creation, and experience renewal. It is a sacred gift that points back to creation and forward to the eternal rest promised in His kingdom. In summary, the Sabbath is a tremendous blessing that we can enjoy here and now!

Now I'd like you to reflect on this question: How will you respond to this sacred invitation to keep the Sabbath as a holy day of rest?

First, preparation is key. Exodus 20:10 calls us to cease from ordinary work on the Sabbath:

“but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male slave or your female slave, or your cattle, or your resident who stays with you.”

Tasks like cleaning, cooking, or errands should be avoided to help create a peaceful transition into the day of rest. This preparation allows you to fully focus on God without unnecessary distractions.

To experience the full blessing of the Sabbath, it's important to avoid secular activities and distractions. Activities like shopping, entertainment, or work that shift your focus away from God and disrupt your rest. Instead, use the time to enjoy God's creation, spend meaningful moments with loved ones, and engage in quiet reflection.

The Sabbath is a time for spiritual renewal. Spend the day worshiping, praying, and studying God's Word. Reflecting on Scripture helps deepen your understanding of His will and strengthens your relationship with Him.

Gathering with family and your church community for worship is also a meaningful way to honor the Sabbath and share in its joy.

Jesus taught that the Sabbath is a day for doing good. In Mark 3:4, He healed on the Sabbath, demonstrating that acts of kindness are in harmony with its purpose:

And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

And again in Matthew 12:12:

"it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

The Sabbath is a gift, designed to restore our minds, bodies, and spirits. It's a reminder of God's creative power, His redemptive work, and His desire for us to find rest in Him. I invite you to set aside the seventh day for worship, rest, and acts of love. Embrace the Sabbath as a sacred time to connect with God and deepen our faith.

Did you know that the Sabbath is a controversial topic in Christianity? People raise many questions about its purpose, observance, and relevance. Now let's explore some of the most common ones:

Why is the Sabbath observed on Saturday?

The Bible identifies the seventh day as the Sabbath, which corresponds to Saturday. This weekly cycle has not change since Creation week.

Is the Sabbath only for the Jews?

No, the Sabbath was instituted at creation, long before the Jewish nation existed. Jesus affirmed that “the Sabbath was made for mankind” (Mark 2:27), highlighting that it was a gift for all humanity, not just one group of people.

Can Christians worship on other days?

Christians can and should worship God every day of the week. However, the seventh-day Sabbath remains unique as the specific day God sanctified and commanded for rest and worship. Observing the Sabbath is an act of obedience and a recognition of God’s authority as Creator and Redeemer.

What about emergency work on the Sabbath?

Jesus taught that acts of necessity and mercy are legitimate activities for the Sabbath. Helping someone in need or addressing emergencies aligns with the Sabbath’s purpose as a day for doing good.

How can I introduce the Sabbath to others?

Sharing the biblical foundation of the Sabbath, personal testimonies of its blessings, and the spiritual renewal it brings can help others understand its significance. Invite someone to spend the Sabbath with you so they can have this experience.

Will the Sabbath be observed in the New Earth?

Yes! Isaiah 66:22-23 reveals that in the New Earth, “from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” declares the Lord. The Sabbath will continue to be a time of worship and celebration in eternity.

I hope these answers highlight the timeless relevance of the Sabbath as a day for rest, worship, and connection with God for you.

III. CONCLUSION

I would like to close our time together with a story.

Desmond Doss was a soldier during World War II who refused to carry a weapon or work on the Sabbath unless it was to save lives. His faith and commitment to

observing the seventh-day Sabbath made him an outlier in the military, and he faced ridicule and hostility from his fellow soldiers.

But his dedication to God's commandments gave Doss the courage and strength to risk his life repeatedly to save others.

During the brutal battle of Okinawa, Doss famously saved 75 men by lowering them one by one from an exposed ridge while under enemy fire.

What many don't know is that Doss had a pattern of prayerfully observing the Sabbath even in combat. On one occasion, his unit was about to launch an attack on a Sabbath, and Doss requested to delay the assault by one day. His commanders reluctantly agreed, and remarkably, that decision spared the lives of many soldiers, as the enemy launched an unexpected counterattack on what would have been their original assault day.

Doss later attributed his strength, courage, and clear mind during his heroic rescues to God's blessings for keeping the Sabbath.

His Sabbath observance not only set him apart but also became a powerful testimony to his fellow soldiers. Many who initially mocked him for his faith grew to respect and admire him, recognizing the consistency and power of his convictions.

Doss's story inspired the famous movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, inspiring millions to live dedicated to God's will.

Desmond Doss's story is a profound example of how honoring the Sabbath as a day of rest and trust in God can have life-altering consequences.

It reminds us that the Sabbath isn't just a commandment—it's a living, practical gift that allows us to experience God's provision, protection, and peace in extraordinary ways.

From creation to the new creation, the Sabbath stands as a constant reminder of God's love, provision, and desire for a relationship with us. It's a gift that transcends time, inviting us to rest in Him. It is a reminder that we are not defined by our labor but by our relationship with the One who made us. From the dawn of creation to the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, the Sabbath stands as a timeless testament to God's love, His sovereignty, and His desire to dwell with His people.

The Sabbath also serves practical and relational purposes. It's a time for spiritual renewal, allowing us to step away from the busyness of life and refocus on God. It's an opportunity for family bonding, strengthening relationships in an atmosphere of love and peace. And it's a day for community worship, gathering with fellow believers to praise God and align our lives with His will.

I invite you to take advantage of this special gift God gave you. If you have never observed the seventh-day Sabbath, I invite you to make the next Saturday your first day of divine rest!