

# the rest of God

## GOING DEEPER

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

January 28, 2018

## Discussion Guide

### SABBATH 101

#### CONNECTING:

45 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A WAY OF CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER SO THAT YOU MIGHT PARTNER IN THE WORK GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIVES.)

- IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD MOVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU RESPOND TO HIM?
- WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DID YOU INVITE GOD INTO THIS CHALLENGE?
- HOW HONEST HAVE YOU BEEN WITH US? (GRACIOUSLY THANK GROUP MEMBERS FOR THEIR HONESTY IF THEY STATE THEY HAVE HELD BACK.)

#### GETTING STARTED:

10 MINUTES

- WHEN YOU THINK OF SABBATH KEEPING, WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COMES TO MIND?

#### DIVING INTO THE TEXT:

60 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A SIMPLE ROAD MAP THROUGH THE TEXT. FEEL FREE TO USE THESE QUESTIONS IN WAYS THAT BEST FIT YOUR GROUP AND THE DYNAMICS OF YOUR OWN MEETING.)

- USING THE NOTES, TALK ABOUT THE APPROACH TO SABBATH KEEPING IN JESUS' DAY.
- READ MATTHEW 12.1-14 ALOUD, SLOWLY. TRY TO IMAGINE YOURSELF AS PRESENT IN THE SCENE AS IT UNFOLDS. READ THE TEXT ONCE MORE, SEEKING TO IMAGINE YOURSELF AS PRESENT.

- WHEN YOU WATCH THIS SCENE UNFOLD, WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU? LISTEN TO WHAT OTHERS NOTE AND ALLOW IT TO INFORM YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF THE STORY.
- JESUS AND THE PHARISEES DISAGREED ON PROPER SABBATH KEEPING. WHAT WAS IMPORTANT TO JESUS IN KEEPING THE SABBATH? WHAT WAS IMPORTANT TO THE PHARISEES? WHERE DID THEY AGREE AND DISAGREE?
- JESUS NOTES THAT PROPER SABBATH KEEPING HINGES ON DOING WHAT LEADS ONE TO DEVOTE HIMSELF IN LOVE TO GOD AND WHAT PURSUES WHOLENESS AND LIFE FOR OTHERS. IF THIS PROVED DIFFICULT, ONE COULD LOOK TO HIS LIFE FOR DIRECTION. WOULD YOU SAY THIS IS THE TYPICAL APPROACH TO SABBATH KEEPING TODAY? COULD YOU EXPLAIN?
- WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO KEEP THE SABBATH AS JESUS DIRECTS? IN YOUR MIND, DOES THIS APPEAR TO BE EASY OR DIFFICULT? WOULD YOU ELABORATE?
- WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS KEEPING YOU FROM LIVING A SABBATH RHYTHM? WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO COMMIT TO SEEKING TO LIVE THIS RHYTHM FOR A MONTH? WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AS A GROUP TO LIVE BY THIS RHYTHM?

### CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

#### *SABBATH KEEPING IN THE ANCIENT WORLD*

THE KEEPING OF THE SABBATH WAS IMPORTANT IN JESUS' DAY BECAUSE IT WAS ONE OF THE THREE "BADGES" WHICH THE JEWS FELT SET THEM OFF AS THE SPECIAL PEOPLE OF GOD, THE OTHER TWO BEING CIRCUMCISION AND THE OBSERVANCE OF FOOD PURITY LAWS. THEREFORE, GREAT THOUGHT AND CARE WAS GIVEN TO OBSERVING THE SABBATH. THE JEWISH RABBIS IN JESUS' DAY UNDERSTOOD THE EMPHASIS OF SABBATH TO LIE WITH WORSHIPPING GOD AND

ENJOYING FAMILY IN A CELEBRATORY MANNER. THESE TWO FOCI REMAIN IMPORTANT TO THIS DAY, THE CORE OF MODERN SABBATH OBSERVANCE. BASED ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT (EXODUS 20.8-11) THESE RABBIS UNDERSTOOD THE WILLFUL OR EVEN UNWILLING ENGAGEMENT IN WORK TO BE THE ONE OBSTACLE TO PERFECT SABBATH OBSERVANCE. THEREFORE, THEY SET ABOUT DEFINING WORK SO THAT THE AVERAGE JEWISH PERSON MIGHT NAVIGATE THE SABBATH DAY WITHOUT TRESPASSING THE COMMAND OF GOD.

AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT, THE PROCESS OF DEFINING WORK QUICKLY LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTINCT CAMPS OR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT. THE TWO DOMINANT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ARE REPRESENTED BY THE HOUSES OF SHAMMAI AND HILLEL. THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI HAD A MORE CONSERVATIVE VIEW, INTERPRETING WORK IN A LITERAL MANNER WHILE THE HOUSE OF HILLEL WAS MORE OPEN TO CONSIDERING SPECIFIC SITUATIONS AND HONORING THE SPIRIT OF SABBATH OVER SHAMMAI'S LITERAL INTERPRETATION. THE VIEWS OF THESE TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ARE REFLECTED IN THE MISHNIC BOOK SHABBAT.

THE DETAIL OF DEBATE IN WHICH THE RABBIS ENGAGED SHOCKS THE MODERN READER.

*A PERSON SHOULD NOT PIERCE AN EGGSHELL WITH OIL AND PUT IT ON THE OPENING OF A LAMP SO THAT [THE OIL] WILL NOT DRIP [OUT AND SUSTAIN THE LAMP] EVEN IF IT IS MADE OUT OF EARTHENWARE, AND R. JUDAH PERMITS [DOING SO]. BUT IF THE POTTER JOINED IT TO BEGIN WITH [TO THE LAMP], IT IS PERMITTED, BECAUSE IT IS ONE UTENSIL. A PERSON MAY NOT FILL A DISH WITH OIL AND PUT IT BESIDE A LAMP AND PLACE THE HEAD OF THE WICK INTO IT, SO THAT IT WILL DRAW [OIL FROM THE DISH OF OIL]. AND R. JUDAH PERMITS DOING SO.—SHABBAT 2.4*

IT IS EASY TO SEE TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN CONTENTION WITH ONE ANOTHER IN PASSAGES LIKE THESE, BUT IT IS THE SPECIFICITY WHICH ONE FINDS SHOCKING. HOWEVER, WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT, THE SPECIFICITY MAKES MORE SENSE. THE RABBIS, AND JEWS AS A WHOLE, BELIEVED THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN EXILES WERE WHOLLY A RESULT OF THE JEW'S DISOBEDIENCE TO AND IMPERFECT KEEPING OF THE MOSAIC LAW. THE EXPERIENCE OF EXILE WAS SO TRAUMATIC WITH ITS EFFECTS BEING FELT EVEN IN JESUS' DAY THAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE DETERMINED NOT TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN. THEREFORE, THEY SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT INTO DETERMINING WHAT PERFECT OBEDIENCE OF THE LAW LOOKED LIKE.

ACCORDING TO THE MISHNA, IN THIS DEBATE OVER SABBATH KEEPING, THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI OUTNUMBERED HILLEL (SHABBAT 1.4). THEREFORE, THEIR VIEW BECAME THE DOMINANT POINT OF REFERENCE. WHILE THE MISHNA MAY REFLECT A SITUATION

SHORTLY AFTER THE TIME OF JESUS, WHEN ONE READS THE GOSPELS IT IS HARD TO MISS THAT JESUS' SABBATH CONTROVERSIES ARE WITH THOSE WHO REPRESENT THE MORE CONSERVATIVE AND LITERAL VIEWPOINT OF THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI. IT MAY BE THAT THIS VIEW WAS ALREADY THE DOMINANT ONE, THOUGH UNOFFICIALLY.

## THE TEXT

### **MATTHEW 12.1-14: HOW TO KEEP THE SABBATH**

OF THE MANY DEBATES JESUS HAD WITH THE PHARISEES, ONE OF THE MOST HEATED, WAS THE DEBATE OVER PROPER SABBATH OBSERVANCE. THE JEWISH PEOPLE BELIEVED GOD HAD CALLED THEM TO LIVE AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE, AND THEY HAD THREE "BADGES" OR MARKERS TO WHICH THEY POINTED AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER IN MAINTAINING THIS DISTINCTIVENESS: CIRCUMCISION, DIETARY LAWS, AND SABBATH OBSERVANCE. ONE CAN THEREFORE SEE WHY THESE CONTROVERSIES WERE SO IMPORTANT TO THE PHARISEES. WHEN JESUS DISAGREED WITH THEM OVER THE SABBATH, THIS DISAGREEMENT WENT TO THE HEART OF WHAT IT MEANT TO BE JEWISH, THE SPECIAL PEOPLE OF GOD.

THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY OF MATTHEW 12 BEGAN AS JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES WERE WALKING THROUGH A GRAIN FIELD ON A SABBATH. ONE MIGHT ASSUME THAT JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES WERE ON THEIR WAY TO ATTEND THE LOCAL SYNAGOGUE SERVICE (MATTHEW 12.9). IT APPEARS THAT OTHERS, INCLUDING SOME PHARISEES, WERE WALKING WITH JESUS. WHILE THOSE WITH JESUS MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING HIM, IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT THOSE PRESENT, LIKE JESUS, WERE WALKING TOWARD THE SYNAGOGUE AND WERE USING THE SHORTEST ROUTE, THROUGH THE FIELD.

AS THE CROWD MOVED THROUGH THE FIELD, A FEW OF JESUS' DISCIPLES BEGAN TO PLUCK SOME OF THE RIPE HEADS OF GRAIN AND EAT THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE HUNGRY. THE PHARISEES PRESENT SAW THE ACTION AND WERE HORRIFIED. WHAT THE DISCIPLES WERE DOING WAS CONSIDERED TO BE WORK, SOMETHING STRICTLY FORBIDDEN ON THE SABBATH. THAT THIS WAS UNDERSTOOD TO BE WORK SEEMS TO INDICATE THESE PHARISEES WERE OF THE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT REFERRED TO AS THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI, A GROUP WHICH SOUGHT TO INTERPRET THE MOSAIC LAW THROUGH A CONSERVATIVE LITERAL LENS. THE HOUSE OF HILLEL WOULD MOST LIKELY HAVE ARGUED THAT THE PLUCKING OF GRAIN WAS NOT THE SAME AS HARVESTING (TRUE WORK) AND THAT THE HUNGER OF THE DISCIPLES COUPLED WITH THEIR HOMELESS STATE (LUKE 9.58) MADE SUCH A PRACTICE PERMISSIBLE BASED ON THE FREEDOM GIVEN TO THE POOR TO GLEAN FROM THE FIELDS (LEVITICUS 19.9-10). HOWEVER, WHAT WAS MOST ALARMING TO THESE PHARISEES WAS JESUS' FAILURE TO CORRECT HIS DISCIPLES, SOMETHING WHICH THEY CALLED HIM TO DO.

JESUS TURNS AND RESPONDS TO THE PHARISEES BY ARGUING THAT

HIS DISCIPLES ARE NOT GUILTY OF DESECRATING THE SABBATH BUT RATHER THE PHARISEES HAVE FALSELY ACCUSED THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE USING THE WRONG INTERPRETIVE LENS TO UNDERSTAND THE MOSAIC LAW. JESUS USES TWO OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES TO MAKE HIS POINT. FIRST, HE TELLS THE STORY OF DAVID EATING THE BREAD CONSECRATED TO GOD IN THE TABERNACLE (1 SAMUEL 21.1-6). EATING THIS BREAD WAS FORBIDDEN TO EVERYONE EXCEPT THE PRIESTS (LEVITICUS 24.5-9). HOWEVER, AHIMELEK GAVE THIS BREAD TO DAVID AND HIS MEN TO EAT WHEN THEY WERE HUNGRY. IN THIS CASE, DAVID AND HIS MEN WERE NOT GUILTY EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD VIOLATED THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW. AHIMELEK USED SOME OTHER NON-LITERAL MEANS OF INTERPRETING THE LAW AND IT WAS VIEWED AS PROPER BY GOD. JESUS' SECOND EXAMPLE IS DRAWN FROM NUMBERS 28.9-10. IN THIS EXAMPLE, JESUS NOTES THAT THE PRIESTS ARE TASKED WITH MAINTAINING THE TEMPLE ON THE SABBATH EVEN THOUGH SUCH MAINTENANCE IS TECHNICALLY WORK. HOWEVER, IN THIS CASE, THEY ARE NOT GUILTY BECAUSE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE TEMPLE SUPERSEDES AND REINTERPRETS THE LITERAL PROHIBITION OF WORKING ON THE SABBATH.

JESUS ARGUES THAT ONE CAN UNDERSTAND THE LAW ONLY WHEN THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD TRULY WANTS. QUOTING FROM HOSEA 6.6, JESUS NOTES THAT GOD WANTS MERCY NOT SACRIFICE. THE SECOND PART OF THIS VERSE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT GOD IS NOT INTERESTED IN THE LITERAL RENDERING OF HIS LAW. HOWEVER, WHAT GOD MEANS BY MERCY IS SOMEWHAT CONFUSING, UNTIL ONE READS THE FULL VERSE IN HOSEA. HOSEA 6.6 IS A POETIC COUPLET WHICH READS, "I DESIRE MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GOD RATHER THAN BURNT OFFERINGS." THE SECOND PHRASE CLARIFIES THE FIRST. MERCY IS EQUATED WITH ACKNOWLEDGING GOD, OR IF WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE WEIGHT OF THE WORD MERCY, IT IS TO DEVOTE ONESELF IN LOVE TO GOD. THEREFORE, WHAT JESUS SAYS IS WHAT GOD WANTS IS NOT THE PARTICULARS OF THE LAW BUT A PERSON WHO SEEKS TO DEVOTE HIMSELF IN LOVE TO GOD.

FOLLOWING THE PROGRESSION OF JESUS' LOGIC IN THESE STORIES, HE SEEMS TO SAY THAT THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW (THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI'S INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY) IS NOT CORRECT BECAUSE IT MISSES WHAT GOD TRULY WANTS. WHAT GOD WANTS IS PEOPLE FULLY DEVOTED TO HIM IN LOVE. INTERESTINGLY, THIS SEEMS TO BE THE CENTRAL POINT OF SABBATH. WITH SABBATH, GOD WANTS TO BE WITH HIS PEOPLE IN LOVE (GENESIS 2.1-3). THIS MEANS THAT WITH THINGS LIKE SABBATH, ONE WOULD ASK WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE TO FULLY DEVOTE ONESELF TO GOD IN LOVE BY HONORING THE SABBATH. HOWEVER, THE MEANS OF INTERPRETING THE LAW CAN BECOME HIGHLY CONTEXTUALIZED AND THEREFORE IS DIFFICULT FOR THE AVERAGE PERSON, BUT THE PROPER INTERPRETATION CAN

BE FOUND BY LOOKING TO A HIGHER AUTHORITY. JESUS CLAIMS HE IS THAT HIGHER AUTHORITY. IF ONE LOOKS TO JESUS, HE CAN SEE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO HONOR SABBATH IN A WAY THAT FULLY DEVOTES ONE TO GOD IN LOVE.

JESUS' ANSWER SETS UP THE NEXT SCENE. BECAUSE HE HAS CLAIMED THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW IS NOT CORRECT BUT THAT THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW IS FOUND IN ASKING WHAT LEADS TO A LIFE FULLY DEVOTED TO GOD IN LOVE, SOMETHING HIS OWN LIFE EXEMPLIFIES, THE PHARISEES TURN TO JESUS AND ASK HIM TO APPLY HIS INTERPRETIVE LENS TO A REAL SITUATION. IN THE SYNAGOGUE IS A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND. WHATEVER THIS MAN SUFFERED FROM WAS CERTAINLY DISABLING BUT IT WAS NOT LIFE-THREATENING. ACCORDING TO THE MOST LIBERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW, A PERSON WHO WAS DYING COULD BE HEALED ON THE SABBATH BUT IF THEY SUFFERED FROM A NON-LIFE-THREATENING AILMENT, THE HEALING WAS TO WAIT. IT APPEARS THAT THE PHARISEES ARE ATTEMPTING TO LUMP JESUS WITH THE HOUSE OF HILLEL, BUT JESUS DEFIES THEIR ATTEMPT TO LABEL HIM.

JESUS RESPONDS BY ARGUING IT IS ALWAYS LAWFUL TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH, AND HE DEFINES THIS GOOD AS SEEKING THE DELIVERANCE AND WHOLENESS OF PEOPLE. HE NOTES THAT EVEN THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI WOULD RESCUE THEIR SHEEP ON THE SABBATH AND PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN SHEEP. IF THIS IS LAWFUL, THEN IT IS MOST CERTAINLY LAWFUL TO SEEK THE WELL-BEING AND HEALING OF A PERSON. JESUS THEN HEALS THE MAN WHICH ANGERS THE PHARISEES SO MUCH THEY BEGIN TO PLOT TO KILL HIM. IN THEIR MIND, JESUS DOES NOT REPRESENT AN OPPOSING VIEWPOINT BUT A HERETICAL POSITION WHICH MUST BE SILENCED.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE HERE JESUS' SECOND INTERPRETIVE LENS WITH RESPECT TO THE SABBATH AND THE WIDER MOSAIC LAW. IT IS ALWAYS LAWFUL TO DO WHAT IS GOOD, WHAT SEEKS THE WELL-BEING AND WHOLENESS OF ANOTHER. WHEN ONE COMBINES THIS WITH THE FORMER LENS, ONE CAN SEE JESUS' DOUBLE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS AT PLAY IN THIS DIALOGUE (MATTHEW 22.34-40). IN JESUS' MIND, INTERPRETING WHAT WAS RIGHT AND GOOD COULD ALWAYS BE FOUND IN ASKING WHAT WAS MOST LOVING TO GOD AND OTHERS. IF ONE COULD NOT FIGURE THIS OUT, THEY COULD LOOK TO HIS LIFE AS THE EXAMPLE.

WITH RESPECT TO SABBATH KEEPING, JESUS' VIEWPOINT PROVIDES IMPORTANT GUIDANCE FOR PRESENT DAY SABBATH KEEPING. PROPER SABBATH KEEPING MUST MAINTAIN TWO POINTS. FIRST, IT MUST INCLUDE THAT WHICH LEADS ONE TO DEVOTE ONESELF FULLY TO GOD IN LOVE. IN JESUS' LIFE THIS TOOK THE FORM OF CORPORATE WORSHIP AND PRAYER (LUKE 4.16). SECOND, SABBATH KEEPING MUST MAINTAIN WHAT IS GOOD FOR OTHERS, THAT WHICH SEEKS THE WHOLENESS AND DELIVERANCE OF PEOPLE, STARTING WITH ONESELF AND MOVING

OUTWARD. THERE IS GREAT FREEDOM IN THIS SECOND PART, FREEDOM GIVEN TO THE INDIVIDUAL TO DO WHAT IS LIFE-GIVING, AND FREEDOM GIVEN BY THE INDIVIDUAL TO OTHERS TO DO WHAT IS LIFE-GIVING.

## REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO HONOR THE SABBATH? THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY QUESTION WHEN I HAVE HEARD PEOPLE TEACH ABOUT SABBATH KEEPING, BUT I HAVE NEVER REALLY GOTTEN A VERY GOOD ANSWER. ACTUALLY, NO ONE HAS EVER GIVEN ME AN ANSWER, WHICH HAS ALWAYS FRUSTRATED ME. I GUESS PEOPLE HAVE ASSUMED I WOULD FIGURE IT OUT, BUT I NEVER REALLY DID. SO . . . I NEVER REALLY KEPT THE SABBATH. THAT BEGAN TO CHANGE A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN I REALIZED THAT IF I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO KEEP SABBATH I COULD LOOK TO JESUS BECAUSE HE KEPT THE SABBATH.

WHEN I LOOKED TO JESUS, HIS SABBATH TEACHING AND PRACTICE, WHAT I FOUND WAS NOT AS HARD AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE. FIRST, ACCORDING TO JESUS, SABBATH KEEPING ISN'T ABOUT THE RULES BECAUSE RULES MISS GOD AND THE RELATIONSHIP HE WANTS WITH US SUBSTITUTING ACTION FOR DEVOTION. WHAT SABBATH IS ABOUT IS LEADING ME TO ENJOY GOD AND DEVOTE MYSELF FULLY TO HIM. SECOND, SABBATH IS SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD, FUN, AND LIFE-GIVING. SABBATH IS GOD'S GIFT TO MAKE ME, AND OTHERS WHOLE. NOW, WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

FOR JESUS, THE FIRST PART LOOKED LIKE WORSHIPING WITH OTHERS. IN WORSHIP, JESUS HEARD THE STORY OF GOD REHEARSED. IN WORSHIP, JESUS FOUND THE SPACE TO RESPOND AND ALLOW HIS FATHER'S STORY TO BE HIS STORY. SO, IN KEEPING WITH THE LIFE OF JESUS, WORSHIP, CORPORATE WORSHIP IS A BIG PART OF MY SABBATH EXPERIENCE. I WANT TO BE FULLY DEVOTED TO GOD, BUT IN THE HURRY OF THE WEEK, I FORGET WHO I AM AND WHAT IS IMPORTANT. I GET DISTRACTED AND MY AFFECTIONS DILUTED. WHEN I STEP INTO WORSHIP WITH OTHERS, I HEAR THE GREAT STORY OF GOD REHEARSED, HIS LOVE FOR ME AND HIS WORK IN MY LIFE AND THIS WORLD. I AM REMINDED AND ENCOURAGED TO RESPOND, AND I DO. ONCE MORE I GIVE MYSELF TO GOD AND ALLOW HIS LIFE TO SHAPE MY OWN.

WHAT ABOUT THE SECOND PART? WE ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT LOOKED LIKE IN JESUS' LIFE, AND I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT WE DON'T BECAUSE IT CAN LOOK DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT IT MUST BE LIFE-GIVING TO US AND OTHERS. FOR ME, THIS MEANS GOING FOR A WALK, PREFERABLY WITH MY CHILDREN, BUT FOR RACHEL IT MEANS TAKING A NAP. SO, I MAKE SPACE FOR HER TO REST AND SHE MAKES SPACE FOR ME TO WALK. I ENJOY COOKING AND MY FAMILY ENJOYS EATING. SO, I MAKE A HUGE MEAL AND WE PAUSE AND FEAST, ENJOYING GOD'S GOODNESS TOGETHER. WHEN THE WEATHER IS WARMER, WE BUILD A FIRE OUTSIDE AND ROAST MARSHMALLOWS. IT IS GOOD FOR US. IT FILLS US WITH HOPE AND

JOY. IT ISN'T FOR EVERYONE, AND THAT IS OK. WE GIVE PERMISSION FOR OTHERS TO DO WHAT GIVES THEM LIFE AND DO OUR BEST NOT TO ASK ANYONE TO SERVE US, WHICH FOR US INCLUDES NOT SHOPPING, SO OTHERS HAVE PERMISSION TO SEEK THIS REST. WHEN I GET THESE TWO PARTS RIGHT, MY HEART IS FILLED WITH GREAT JOY AND A SENSE OF PRESENCE, THE PRESENCE OF THE REST OF GOD.

## REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO HONOR THE SABBATH? TYPICALLY, WHEN WE ASK THIS QUESTION WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOME STRICT GUIDANCE BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO MESS IT UP, WHEN IN FACT THIS VERY APPROACH WILL ALMOST ALWAYS LEAD US TO MESS IT UP. YOU SEE, SABBATH KEEPING ISN'T ABOUT THE RULES. SABBATH KEEPING, ACCORDING TO JESUS, IS ABOUT HONORING THE DAY IN A WAY THAT LEADS US TO GIVE OURSELVES FULLY TO HIM IN LOVE, AND TO DO WHAT IS LIFE-GIVING TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS. IT SOUNDS A LOT LIKE MATTHEW 22.34-40 BECAUSE IT IS. WHAT IS UNIQUE IS SABBATH IS A DAY WHERE WE HAVE NOTHING STANDING IN OUR WAY FROM LIVING THIS KIND OF LIFE. SO, WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

FOR JESUS, THE FIRST PART LOOKED LIKE CORPORATE WORSHIP. IN KEEPING WITH HIS EXAMPLE, WE RECOMMEND BEGINNING SABBATH WITH WORSHIP. WHILE THIS CAN BE PERSONAL WORSHIP, IT IS ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF CORPORATE WORSHIP THAT WE ARE KEPT FROM DECEIVING OURSELVES ABOUT WHO WE ARE AND WHO GOD IS. IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WE FIND ENCOURAGEMENT TO DEVOTE OURSELVES FULLY TO GOD. IT IS EASY TO GIVE YOURSELF A PASS WHEN NO ONE IS THERE TO CALL YOU UP TO MORE!

THE SECOND PART IS HARDER BECAUSE WE HAVE NO EXAMPLE FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS. MAYBE THIS IS THE POINT. WHAT IS LIFE-GIVING DIFFERS FROM PERSON TO PERSON. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO THINK WHAT IT IS THAT FILLS YOU WITH JOY AND LIFE, WHAT MAKES YOU WHOLE. WHATEVER THAT IS, AND IT ISN'T WORK, DO THAT. AND GIVE PERMISSION TO OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. TYPICALLY, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE SOME ALONE TIME AND SOME FAMILY TIME TO CELEBRATE THE GOODNESS OF GOD AND WHAT HE IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE. THIS CAN BE A MEAL, OR IF THAT IS WORK, FROZEN PIZZA AND SODAS! THERE IS NO RIGHT WAY HERE.

WHATEVER YOUR PLAN, HAVE A PLAN. IF YOU DO NOT INTEND TO KEEP SABBATH AND PLAN TO DO IT YOU WON'T KEEP SABBATH. SO, THIS WEEK, WRITE DOWN SOME IDEAS AND TRY THEM OUT. SEE WHAT HAPPENS AND CONSIDER JOURNALING ABOUT IT.



SENIOR  
PASTOR  
**BLAKE**  
SHIPP

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