

A 10 minute family devotion based on our Lenten Wednesday series, “*By His Wounds You Are Healed: The Wound of Breaking the Sabbath*”

Opening Versicles

O Lord, open my lips,

And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

Make haste to help me, O Lord.

All: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and forever shall be. Amen.**

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities;

Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;

And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. [Isaiah 53:4-6]

All: **Amen.**

Scripture Readings

Psalm 127:1-2

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. ² It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. (ESV)

Mark 2:23-28

One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴ And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” ²⁵ And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: ²⁶ how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” ²⁷ And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.” (ESV)

Brief Meditation on the Word of God

You work too hard, or you play too hard. Either way, you are busy. Too busy. Too busy for the Word of God. Too busy to be a creature, a mere human, as you and I truly are. **“The Sabbath was made for man”** because man needs the Sabbath. Man needs rest.

In our culture, being stretched to our limits is a badge of honor. Being overly busy is a source of pride. But it causes a wound. Stretching ourselves thin inflicts harm. And willingly doing so is a sin against the Third Commandment. Let’s remind ourselves of what our Small Catechism says concerning this command:

What is the Third Commandment?

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Our Savior Jesus is indeed Lord of the Sabbath [**Mark 2:28**]. Jesus does not bind us to refraining from physical labor on any specific day of the week as in the Old Testament. But it is our Lord's will that we acknowledge that we are not all-powerful. We are not God. Only God is unlimited. We humbly acknowledge that we are limited. We need rest from work and busyness.

Busyness not only deprives us of rest, but, worse than that, our busyness has been depriving us of the Word of God. The rest of sleep is needed. So is rest in God's Word. Jesus said, "**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest for your souls.**" [Matthew 11:28-29].

During this Lent, we have all been forced to take a Sabbath rest by the coronavirus and our state's "stay-at-home" order. Don't let it be a rest for your body only, although that is needed. And do not seek rest in social-media, cable news, or Netflix binges. Those deprive us of true rest. Use this time to rest your soul. Give time to God's Word and God will give the rest that is truly needed for you.

Jesus won rest for your wounded body and soul by being wounded for you on the cross. By His wounds you are healed. His death on the cross brings forgiveness to you for your pride and for thinking you can do it all. His resurrection brings the dead back to life and even raises you from your tiredness.

Your Savior labored in the turmoil of suffering to give you rest - rest from self-inflicted busyness - rest from the busyness of life heaped upon you. You have rest for your soul.

You and your family, find that greater and true rest together during this time. Spend time together, truly. And spend time with Christ in His Word.

Psalms 127:2 says, "**It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for [God] gives to his beloved sleep.**" Being busy is no badge of honor in God's eyes. God desires to give rest to His beloved – to you – and He has done so in Jesus. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer

Dear Father in heaven, You rested from all Your works on the seventh day, and You give to us rest. Thank You for the true rest for which Your Son Labored. Forgive us for neglecting that true rest. Help us to seek our rest day by day by coming to Jesus in prayer and in His Word and in the Lord's Supper. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our Father in heaven, come to the aid of those on earth who are sick, in danger of disease, frightened of death or sickness, lonely, in financial distress, or in any other need. Provide our daily bread and give us faith that You are our Father and will forever take care of us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves, one another, all members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, all members of all churches, our state and nation, and the whole world, trusting always in Your goodness, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who taught us to pray....

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen.

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen.**