

The Blessedness of Rest Series: 2

The Blessedness Of Rest

Last week I began a new teaching series on the Blessedness of Rest. This is a continuation of the theme of walking in wisdom that we have been studying recently.

Genesis 1.26-31 - Genesis 2.1-3

The very first words that God spoke to Adam were “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea...”

This was his life's work – being fruitful and replenishing the earth. Having dominion and authority in it.

God told him how he was to plant seed as a means of food and resources. Sowing seed would be his means of support, it was the way he was to operate in order to replenish the earth. Sowing seed would be how he fulfilled his God ordained task.

That was day 6 of creation – before Adam could do anything that God had spoken to him came day 7 – the Sabbath, the day of rest.

God was setting a precedence here, He was showing the importance of entering the rest – a necessary part of our life of faith.

On Wednesday we were looking at spending time in the presence of God as a pre-requisite for our service to God. We cannot continually give out without being filled with something to give – that comes from resting in His presence. There's blessedness in rest.

Mark 2.27

“And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath'”

The Sabbath rest “*was made on account and for the sake of man*” (Amp). It was to “*benefit people*” (NLT).

There is a blessedness in rest. You cannot be fruitful by labouring all the time – rest is necessary. People think that if they can work 7 days a week they will earn enough to live – that thinking is wrong, flawed and unscriptural.

It is also just as wrong to rise early in the morning and retire very late (**Psalm 127.2**) “*It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep*”

Fruitfulness comes out of rest. Blessing comes out of rest. We see it in nature

- **trees and flowers have to rest** – they lay dormant through the winter months but burst into fruitfulness once spring arrives and produce their flowers or fruit. After the harvest or flowering season they take their rest again.

- **land has to rest** – a farmer cannot keep cultivating his land year after year without resting it.

We also know that a really successful farmer will not grow the same crop in his fields year after year (crop rotation) this is to revitalise the soil with essential minerals

This is also scriptural – land was to be left fallow (allowed to rest and lie still).

Exodus 23.10-11 “Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove”. This not only rested the land from producing food, but anything the land produced of its own accord was a blessing for the poor.

Exodus 20. 8-11

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.... therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it”

God instilled rest into Adam from his first day on earth – God gave commandment to rest. Not to curb people's enjoyment or prevent them from doing something but to bless them.

Exodus 23.12

“Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger **may be refreshed**”

Sabbath (*Shabbat* Heb.) and it means “intermission, cease from labour, desist from exertion, rest, sit still (see Isaiah 30.7)”

“For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still” **Isaiah 30.7** (KJV)

“For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: “In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” But you would not” **Isaiah 30.15**

God wants you blessed... but that involves rest. And many miss out on the blessing because they won't rest.

Mark 4. 26-29

Jesus taught this parable to explain how the Kingdom of God functions and operates. He said it was like a man that sowed seed in the ground. The man slept at night and got up in the morning. The seed grew by itself until the time came for the man to reap the harvest.

In this parable what work did the man do? - He sowed the seed and he harvested the crop.

Did he make the seed grow? - No

What was he doing between sowing and reaping? - resting.

He wasn't panicking over the seed, he wasn't worrying whether or not it would grow, he wasn't losing any sleep – he was resting.

That's the essence of the meaning of **Philippians 4.6**

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” - pray and rest

We are going to develop that thought and theme in a later study

There is a rest for the people of God.

Our flesh and natural man want to take control of the situation and sort the problems out, the flesh wants to go it's own way, run it's own course.

Fruitfulness and blessing come from rest - we have to strive to enter that rest (as we touched on last week)