

## ***Jesus is the Better Sabbath - Hebrews 4:1-11*** **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

### **Notes from the Sermon**

“Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.” To be Jewish was to know the Fourth Commandment, God’s call to join Him in the rhythm of creation and rest on the seventh day. Not only was it in God’s top ten Laws, but their history as a people had moments of divine judgment in which God’s reason was their failure to obey this Command. No work on Saturday, a day off for rest, worship, and family. By the First Century the Sabbath was equated deeply with what it meant to be a Hebrew. So much so that the key religious leaders in Israel, the Pharisees had written myriads of explanation laws giving definition to God’s Command, explaining the point where a task became work and therefore was not acceptable on Saturday. The way to God’s blessing was through Sabbath keeping, so they thought, and with threat of jail or community rejection they demanded the allegiance of Israel to the Sabbath.

But along comes Jesus, who somewhat intentionally messed with and broke these Sabbath Laws. Let’s be clear, he never broke God’s actual Command, but He did pick grain on the Sabbath, heal on the Sabbath, and travel on the Sabbath, all of which broke the guardian commands of the Pharisees. They took notice and confronted Him on multiple occasions. In one of those confrontations Jesus shocks the system with two crazy statements. First, He told them that man was not made for the Sabbath, rather the Sabbath was made for man. In other words, it was a silly thing to define one’s humanity and relationship with God purely on the basis of a religious observation. Rather, God’s command of resting on the Sabbath was His gracious gift to people because we so deeply need to pause, rest, and remember that we are not defined by our work or religion. Second, and more radical, Jesus claimed to be the God of the Sabbath, the creator and the one who gives purpose to this very command. These fighting words for these early Jewish leaders, and so the conflict began that led to the cross.

But the early Christians believed Jesus’ words. Furthermore, the early church was made up of Jews and Gentiles, and they started gathering on Sunday for worship. Their Gentile brothers and sisters did not have a history of taking Saturday off, so many of them never even tried to keep the Sabbath. Many Jewish Christians did both, kept the Sabbath and also worshiped on Sunday. But some didn’t, and this all became a source of tension for unbelieving Jews who viewed following Jesus as a rejection of everything Jewish. On top of this, some who once claimed Jesus were leaving Christianity and returning to their Jewish religious system and rituals.

The author of Hebrews wants the reader, therefore, to understand a couple of key truths. Our passage this week is a clear continuation of thought from the second half of chapter 3, all of which is an exposition of Psalm 95:7-11. The passage in Hebrews uses the warning from Psalm 95 to remind these First Century Hebrew believers that their hearts can be hardened to the Gospel, and they will join the long list of Jewish people who ultimately rejected the living God by returning to ritual while rejecting relationship with God. So the author wants them to think deeply about the Sabbath and remember two clear truths. First, Jesus is the ultimate and true fulfillment of the Sabbath. This whole passage speaks of entering God’s rest while making examples of those who failed to do so. And he relates the entering and experience of the rest of God to belief in and obedience to the Gospel (verses 2 and 6). The Sabbath points us to Jesus in a clear and specific way. The Sabbath was made for man because we have to stop working in order to be reminded that our identity is not in what we do and our ultimate salvation is not in our works. The Sabbath was the ceasing of work. But it was little more than a picture of what Jesus offers us in the Gospel. Our salvation is not by works, but purely based on grace. Verse 9 tells us there is a Sabbath

rest for the people of God, and then goes on to say that this rest is the end of works and entering in to the finished work of God.

The second warning is the clear message that to return to the religious ritual of the Sabbath would equate to their missing the whole meaning of God's gift in the Command and to do so would actual result in missing out on the rest that is promised in the idea of Sabbath. The economy of God in our salvation is the economy of grace. We did nothing to deserve it, brought nothing that could earn it, and no religious activity can balance the scales. So God in His grace and kindness sent Jesus to be the True an Better Sabbath who gave His life so undeserving sinners could find rest for our souls. To return to the rituals of the Sabbath was actually a return to works based religion. Its actually a pun, to make a day off on Saturday the pinnacle of your religion is to do works, and those works will cause you to miss the rest promised in the command. This passage is a great text that tell us that rest is promised, but it is only found in the person of Jesus, our True and Better Sabbath. For us, this means that the amount of spiritual strength in life will be equal to the level of our rest in the finished work of Christ.

**Bible Reading for the Week**

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Zechariah 7	Zechariah 8	Zechariah 9	Zechariah 10	Zechariah 11	Zechariah 12	Zechariah 13

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 4:1-11

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 4:12-13

**Family Worship**

Song - *His Mercy is More*

[https://youtu.be/G-JGcVRNPRo?si=rxckvBvsnP7r\\_8\\_W](https://youtu.be/G-JGcVRNPRo?si=rxckvBvsnP7r_8_W)

Gospel Project

Unit: God Is In Control

Story: Jacob & Esau

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything?

Answer: God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

Scripture: Genesis 24-25

New City Catechism

Question 45: Is baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?

Answer: No, only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from sin.

Verse: Luke 3:16

Scripture

Hebrews 4:1-11

- What is the Sabbath and why was it important for Jewish people?
- How is Jesus th fulfillment of the ultimate hope for the Sabbath?
- Where in your life do you tend to trust in your own religious works and goodness rather than on grace for your identity and salvation?
- How do we enter into and enjoy the rest of God in Jesus? What are some practical ways we can lean in to Christ as our S
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Prayer

\*Pray for election on Tuesday and for our country.

\*Pray that we would find true Sabbath rest in our relationship with Jesus.