



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

June 2, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

2nd Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Deuteronomy 5:12-15](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 122 CWS

Second Lesson: [Colossians 2:13-17](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Mark 2:23-3:6](#)

A Top-Down Faith Rest is a Gift, Not Something to Be Earned JESUS GIVES US REST

1. We love _____
2. We think we _____ much, especially _____
3. Jesus frees us by _____ the _____
4. God gives us _____ through Jesus

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Over the last few years, we've had this little seminar that we do every now and then on a Saturday. We call it Partnering in the Gospel. It is a couple hours long. It's meant to be a little review and a refresher for people as members or people who transfer here to review what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We talk about the five marks of discipleship. We talked about that in a sermon before of how we want to not serve ourselves but serve others and take up our cross and follow Jesus and that we look at doctrine and it's about love. In that, we also look at different things that we do here at church. But then we get a little bit later into stewardship and we have the surveys (that we have downstairs) about how to serve.

In that section when we talk about serving, we also want to talk about healthy discipleship and what it means to be healthy. So we go through a thing called The Lies We Believe and then there is another little survey. This one is called Emotional Healthy Discipleship and it goes through different sections of our life and asks how things are going emotionally and spiritually. There are some things that you haven't thought about before. The first section says "Be before you do," which is talking about resting

and thinking about the Sabbath. The problem for me is that I'm not very good at these. A lot of times people go through and they think "Oh, okay, I could look at these a little bit more," but I kind of have this ADD ADHD and I always need something going on, like music or something in the background.

One of these things is, "I regularly spend time in solitude and silence. This enables me to be still and undistracted in God's presence." How many of you are really good at sitting there in silence and you can just be quiet and let things be quiet around you? In nature it's easier for me, but if I'm in the house, if I have work and family around, I just need people or sounds, so I have a hard time doing that.

Another one here is where it talks about setting a 24-hour period each week for Sabbath keeping: to stop, to rest, to delight, and to contemplate God. People talk about your Sabbath, once a week, and then once a year to make sure you get that rest. How many of you are good at resting even when you're on vacation? If you're like me, it takes about day 2-3 when you finally start shutting things off in your mind and to not think about work.

I was at a conference recently where a woman said she got a promotion to be administrator and when she was in this new administration position, she said "I'm not working on weekends. I'm not answering emails. From Christmas to New Years, I'm not answering emails. I'm setting these boundaries." A few years later when she retired from that position, her boss came and said, "I really appreciated that you set those boundaries and you focused on this rest because when I would go to the lake and to the cabin, the first thing I did was set up Wi-Fi in my cabin so that I had Wi-Fi on the pier and on the dock so when I was fishing, I still had connections to work." Even though he was on vacation, at rest, he was not at rest and he was not shut off and with his family.

It's hard for us in our world to find rest, different ways of being quiet and spending that quiet time with Jesus or having that emotional and physical time to rest. We struggle with that. But we also struggle with the idea of rest and the Law. We are going to see here that **Jesus gives us rest**, but what are the challenges for us? Why is it so hard and why do we need Jesus to give us this true rest?

Our lesson comes from [Mark 2 and 3](#). We aren't going to walk through everything. We are going to review it because if you've heard it, it's actually two different stories and the first story is kind of like the movie [Inception](#). It's a story and they are talking about a law, and then they are talking about how Jesus references the Old Testament lesson inside of this in referencing, so it's a story within a story within a story.

What was the main concern on both of these Sabbaths? Here we have the disciples, who were actually justified in what they were doing. They weren't working. In Deuteronomy it said you could go through the field and pick the grain, not harvest, but

in the corners, the people were actually supposed to leave some for people walking by to gather food. And then the second time, the Pharisees were upset that Jesus was going to heal. They are watching Him.

The Pharisees loved the Law. What about you and me? I think it's true that *we love laws*. We love to be able to put that checklist down and compare ourselves to other people. We like to know what I need to do to measure up and to look righteous, especially to look righteous before others. It's very easy for us to compare. So what do we use to compare? Let's use some laws, some things where you should do this, don't do that. Then, like the Pharisees, maybe we go a step further. The big problem with the Pharisees is there were laws about the Sabbath, but what they did is they had this law and then they built a fence around it and a fence around it and a fence around it and added all these ridiculous laws. One of the examples was if you had a casket that had a leak in it, on the Sabbath Day you could not fix the leak on this casket. So if that happened on the Sabbath, too bad. Your house was going to have that stain of wine or whatever is leaking out.

How do we do that? How do we love laws? Maybe we set up things that make us pretty righteous because we are here at church and those people are not. Maybe we set up laws about what we wear or what we do with our time outside of church. We can set up all sorts of laws to compare ourselves to others, but the really dangerous part is when it's not really Laws that God gives. We set up laws that make us feel good. They are laws that can make us feel set apart from others and more righteous than others.

As we look at those laws and we look at the Sabbath, it's important to understand why God gave us the Sabbath. When we go back to the Deuteronomy section, we see the reason He did this and then Jesus speaks about it as well when He said, ***"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."*** God gave us this but it's not supposed to rule over us. It's not supposed to be just another law. But I think what is really interesting is in that Deuteronomy reading, when God says you are supposed to rest, notice He lists all the things. You are supposed to work for six days, do all these things, and then you rest.

When you go on vacation, what is one of the thoughts and feelings you have about vacation and rest? We deserve it, especially now with summer vacation when there is more time to go on trips. We think "I really deserve that rest and that vacation. I've worked so hard." I'm not saying you haven't and in work, yes, we store up that vacation and we get that for our work, but the truth is, often *we think we deserve much, especially rest*. We think God owes us and the world owes us. But why does God give the Sabbath day? He created the world in six days and then on the sixth day, He created man. Did God need to rest? He didn't need to rest but He set up this pattern for you and for me, for the world, to say "Rest."

In Deuteronomy, He is explaining to them, "You rest because it is a gift. I rescued you and I delivered you from all of your enemies and that gives you rest." But it's not given to you because you have done something so great that now you get this Sabbath rest.

Our world loves to be entitled. We love to think we deserve so much from people. We deserve all this respect. You hear on all the awards shows of any athlete or musician or actor that they really deserve this award. Why? What do we really deserve? What does the world owe us? One of my favorite examples of this was just a little picture meme of a note pad and it says "This is what the world owes you." What's on the paper—nothing. The world doesn't owe us anything. What does God owe us? What about our sins? How are we born? We discussed it today with baptism. We are born sinful. We don't deserve anything from God on our own. We struggle with this because we think "I do a lot of good. I'm better than others." We cling to that law to think that we deserve things from God and we deserve this rest. But we don't. This points us to that top-down blessing from God and teachings that even rest (that we love to say we earned) is this beautiful gift from God. Why do we know it's this beautiful gift from God? Again, we see that Jesus says **"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."** Jesus was Lord over this.

One of the most interesting things about this lesson is who is the one picking the grain? Who are the people doing that? It says the disciples were going through the fields and were picking the grain. The Pharisees were watching and they said to Jesus, "Why are they doing this?" Was it wrong for them to do it? No, but it seems like Jesus knows they are watching and He maybe was hungry but He didn't do it. He didn't want to enrage them more.

And then look at the miracle in the second story. As He is in the synagogue, it says that they were watching Him. They are watching what He was going to do. Is He going to heal on the Sabbath? So He asks the question, **"Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"** In Matthew when they talk about this, they even discuss how the people agree that it's okay to save an animal stuck in the thickets, but to give someone food or to heal someone, that's wrong. It goes back to the way that people love the laws and not people.

But then notice how He heals. He has the man stand up, which He could do on the Sabbath. Then, as He is angry because of what the Pharisees are asking and He is deeply distressed, He says to the man, **"Stretch out your hand."** He stretched it out and it was completely restored. Often when Jesus did miracles, what did He do in those miracles? He often touched them. Sometimes He made a bigger show of it and used different elements to do it and to really show He was doing it. Now, did He do the healing—yes—but did He do any work? Did He tell this man to do any work? What is interesting is that He didn't. Both in the first part, He is not picking from the grain and He is not doing any work, other than actually healing the man. But He wasn't enraging

them more in actually breaking Sabbath law. He kept the Old Testament Law. We know that. So another way that we have rest is because *Jesus frees us by keeping the Law perfectly*. This gives us true rest because even though we love laws, we fall very short.

We fall short over and over again and we like to take the laws that we can follow and then ignore the ones we don't and then we say it's okay, but not if we really know our own hearts. So we look to Jesus and say He was the perfect one. He kept the Law perfectly for you. He fulfilled the Old Testament Law in every way that we were tempted. He did not stumble. So He gives you true rest by saying the Law is now abolished in that you do not feel like you have to earn your way to heaven, because you cannot. You can rest in what Jesus has done for you.

We are encouraged then to keep the Sabbath, to be in His Word. It's a command. But we are resting. What are we to rest in? It's that weird paradox of a command—you do this—it's a law, but it's a gift. It's this understanding that God gives us laws of things that are good for us and things that He knows help us. So the Sabbath day is about rest, but it's also about being in God's Word, of growing and spending time with Jesus, your Savior. Though we talk about rest and it's important to have physical rest, we are always going to have stresses and sadness and fears in this world, so where do we find true rest? Again, in Scripture in another time where it talks about healing, right before it Jesus says ***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*** ([Matthew 11:28](#))

As the disciples are following and then the Pharisees are angry, what do they want? They see Him heal and they want to kill him! Notice He said "What is better to do, heal or kill?" Jesus is willing to be hated and killed so that you can have true peace. Colossians talks about all those things that we are set free from; from the burden of sin—that He nailed our sins to the cross and the debt is paid. But what we so often do is again, we like the laws, so we take things that are full of grace and are supposed to give us rest, like baptism, and what does much of the church do? They make it into something you do? It's something you earn or something where you say "I'm full in. It's my commitment." But today we saw the amazing blessing of an infant being baptized. Why do we rejoice in an infant being baptized? It's because we can have rest through Jesus. You can look back on your baptism and say "This is what God has done for me. I'm loved and I'm forgiven. That can't be taken away."

There are going to be hardships. There are going to be times when you are not at rest and it's because of the world, or maybe because of struggles you are going through, sins you committed, sins that are committed against you, and the true rest we find is in the Lord. *God gives us true rest through Jesus*. The true Sabbath rest is not just on what used to be Saturday or is now Sunday. What is the true Sabbath rest? What we look forward to in heaven when there is no more sin, no more pain. We know that this

is what is in store for us because our God loves us. He gives us rest and it's something you cannot earn. What a blessing that is because it's free, it is grace, and it's love.

Today and this year, find some time to rest physically. It's good to do. But most of all, find time to rest in your Savior; to rest in Jesus and know you are loved and forgiven and He has done everything for you perfectly. He is your Redeemer. He is your Lord. Through Him, you have true rest. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.