

Easter 2025

Luke Series Slide

No other invention changed the way we use time- like the clock. Its around 800 years old, invented in the 1200s.

There was time keeping before that, but is was all natural devices like Sundials, flowing water, sand in the hourglass. None of it was very precise.

But in the late 13 and 14 century, Christian monks, in order to keep track of 7 prayer services through the day, wanted a more precise measurement of time.

The first mechanical clocks were assembled in monasteries. Their movements governed by swinging weights. And it was bells of church towers that first sounded the hours by which people would eventually divide up their lives.

As a matter of fact, the etymology of the word CLOCK has nothing to with time at all. It comes from the celtic word “clocca” that means “bell”.

This is significant. We named the clock not for its time keeping ability, but according to its ability to ALERT us as to what time it was.

Soon, the royalty of Europe, eager to invest in the latest technology, began to fund the refinement and manufacturing of clocks. People began to move from the countryside to work in markets, mills, and factories rather than the field...and days were carved into finely sliced segments...each announced by the tolling of the clock tower bell in the center of town.

Bells sounded for the start of work, for meal breaks, for the end of work, the start and close of the market, the time for street cleaning, to indicate curfew.

In 1370, King Charles V ordered all of Paris to orient their entire society around the mechanized clock.

Eventually, the church moved from being oriented around liturgical hours set by meals, gardening, and prayer times...to the King's time, oriented around production. The mechanized clock ruled society and church.

In step with the culture around it, the church began to focus on the same material interests that the clock promoted...instead of the spiritual interests that those early monks had in mind when they invented it.

Eventually, clocks were personalized. You could have one in your home. Then....you could have one in your pocket. The personal clock became an “ever-visible, ever-audible companion and monitor” reminding its owner of “time used, time spent, time wasted, and time lost. It became the key to personal achievement and productivity”- From *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr

The personalization of precisely measured time increased individualism. With my watch, I became the master of my own time and set my own schedule. The mechanical clock changed the way we saw ourselves, and it changed the way we thought. We began to see time as a limited resource that could be picked apart into minutes and seconds.

We saw ourselves as the controllers of time, resolute on “not letting time get away from us”.

Theologically, this led to seeing God as “the Great Clockmaker”. No longer was creation a mystery to be accepted and enjoyed, but a puzzle to be figured out. And the clockmaker was unnecessary once we got time under control.

If we figured out his invention, and could manipulate it through a series of time-saving life hacks...it didn't really matter who created everything. We would be the kings of creation. We would rule.

Ironically, the machine that was invented by monks to bring about more devotion to God, became the machine that replaced God altogether.

...and then eventually the lightbulb allowed us to own even the darkness. No longer would sunset hold us hostage, with the clock and the lightbulb....we are masters of our destinies. We could work achieve and accomplish around the clock.

Funny... every time I turn on my phone...there's a glow of light in the darkness and the first thing I see even before the phone is unlocked....a clock.

And then there are those little bells and buzzes. Notifications. Like little clock towers in our pockets. Alerting us, that there's something important to attend to...something to move on to, before time gets away from us.

Corrie ten Boom was the daughter of a Watchmaker- and helped run the family clock and watch repair shop in Holland in the early to mid 20th century. You probably know her better for one of the heroes of WWII- her family- Christians- hid jews under their floor and behind a false wall during the Nazi invasion. She and her family were eventually caught and all but Corrie died in those camps.

Corrie ten Boom- having looked evil in the face- and also deeply familiar with the mechanization of time said this.

“If the Devil can’t make us bad, he’ll make us busy.”- Corrie ten Boom

Title Slide- “About Time: How Sabbath Tells the Truth about God, Humans & Salvation”- Luke 6:1-11

Today- in our journey through Luke’s gospel- Jesus is embroiled in a controversy with the Religious Leaders- the Pharisees- over the Sabbath. This passage is going to show us we aren’t created to organize our lives around managing and manipulating time. Rather around knowing and loving God and knowing and loving people.

Explain as you go...then make some points at the end.

Luke 6:1-2

On a Sabbath, he passed through the grain fields. His disciples were picking heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

Sabbath law- to rest, or stop- had been extended over and over- until the point it was no longer helpful, practicing rest itself had become burdensome.

So you weren’t allowed to harvest grain, but the Pharisees counted even rubbing them in their hands to eat.

Even today- Shabbat Elevators- buttons- “No”- stairs- “YES”

This is not Jesus shirking the law of God- Its the Pharisees making laws up to ensure that people didn’t “accidentally” break the law.

Additionally- its good to understand that this is what Rabbi's do. They argue about how to put the law into practice. That's part of what it means to take up the yoke of your rabbi. Its his particular interpretation and teaching of the law.

So as the rabbis argue- their disciples are also learning their teaching. In some ways- its good conflict. Anytime someone questions something I believe- and I need to dig into it deeper- I always come out better- sometimes even changing my view if I realize I've just adopted a status quo that isn't what the Scripture actually leads us to understand.

Which explains what Jesus does next. He plays along. This isn't Jesus so much defending his actions- as it is him arguing along in the Rabbinic tradition.

He's teaching his disciples along the way. Which is the best kind of teaching.

Of course- Jesus- being God and led by the Holy Spirit- has insight and authority like no one had ever encountered from a Rabbi.

Luke 6:3-5

3 Jesus answered them, "Haven't you read what David and those who were with him did when he was hungry — 4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat? He even gave some to those who were with him." 5 Then he told them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Like any good Rabbi- Jesus argues from the Scriptures. There are 3 sections of the Old Testament- the Law- or Torah, The Prophets- Nevi'im, and the Writings- Ketuvim.

You need 2 witnesses to back up a truth- So Jesus doesn't use other Rabbis- He uses one witness from the Prophets...and the other witness (that I'll show you in a second) is from the Law.

Here- He is drawing from a story in 1 Samuel 21- included in the prophets. David- before he is crowned as King- is being chased by the lame duck king Saul- he is tired and hungry and basically fled his home with nothing.

So he goes into this place of worship and asks the priest there for something to eat. The priest- Ahimelech- tells David he's fresh out of regular people bread. All he has is the bread that has been used as a part of the worship ritual of YHWH. And that bread- once its removed from the table- is only supposed to be eaten by Priests- according to the ceremonial law delivered by God to Israel through Moses.

But in this case- Ahimelech sees David's deep need- recognizes that he is on a special mission from God- and decides to give him the bread. David also picks up a huge sword here- Goliath's in fact— its giving Legend of Zelda.

So- the point Jesus is making is very simply this. The ceremonial laws of worshipping God aren't meant to kill or harm, they are meant to bring life and flourishing.

Matthew 12:6-8

In the parallel story in Matthew's gospel- Jesus quotes another prophet- Hosea and says if they would have understood Hosea's phrase that "God desires mercy, not sacrifice" they would have no problem with breaking the ceremony of the Sabbath in order to feed hungry people with no food.

Sacrifice represents the ceremonial law, and Mercy is the character of God. The Ceremonial law POINTS to the Holy character of God- who values human life because he made us in his image.

He finishes with a statement of his authority- "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"

That first bit about the Son of Man is from Daniel- which is part of the "writings". So now he has drawn from the Law, the prophets, and the writings to make his point. In Daniel- the Son of Man is a powerful king who is given everlasting rule over all the earth." It is both a term of humility (just a son of man)- and one also one of power (someone who will rule).

And you can see in Matthew where he also says "something better than the temple is here"

In both of these statements- Jesus is saying- 'The Holy and Divine figure in Daniel's writings....and the very presence of God you recognize in the temple- THOSE ARE ALL ME! I am the son of man! I am Lord of the Sabbath! I am the one who created it and I created it for the flourishing of man- not to burden him. Its for Rest- not for additional burden."

This is another place where Jesus is making a claim not just to POINT to God. But to BE GOD.

Luke 6:6-11

6 On another Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. A man was there whose right hand was shriveled. 7 The scribes and Pharisees were watching him closely, to see if he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they could find a charge against him. 8 But he knew their thoughts and told the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand here." So he got up and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you: Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it? " 10 After looking around at them all, he told him, "Stretch out your hand." He did, and his hand was restored. 11 They, however, were filled with rage and started discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus.

So Jesus enters back into the argument. This time- he doesn't argue using the Scriptures- he heals a man right in front of their eyes. Showing a sign of the Kingdom of God- another verifying miracle to his Messiahship.

And once again he points to this idea that the Sabbath IS for good...and its about HEALING- not laying burdens on people to make life miserable.

It's a pointer to the coming Kingdom of God and the true rest he offers.

But all you get from the Pharisees is anger. Rage. That their authority is being usurped and their power over people through empty religion is being threatened.

Transition:

1) Sabbath is for life-giving restoration and delight.

In both these stories- Jesus challenges the Pharisees view that has turned the Sabbath into an act of work.

Instead- Jesus is making the point that feeding hungry people and healing broken people are right in line with what God intends for the Sabbath.

Genesis 1:28-29

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." 29 God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you,

Genesis 2:3

God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

So he creates them with a job...and immediately the 7th day. God wants to be with them...they are not Cogs in his machine- they are his children- his image bearers. God did not create out of need- HE created out of his love and desire to share with them.

And Notice how he gave them food to eat. and enjoy. IOW- the first day was not LETs get to work- the first day was lets enjoy this together! It was fuel. It was meeting their need- Spiritual wealth!

2) Sabbath is for remembering God's unearned salvation & showing his faithfulness to others.

In Egypt- they were pieces of machinery. They were not treated human beings. Egypt was slavery- work, work, work, work- their value was in their production.

And the production was so Egypt would have more more more.

In fact- the Pharaoh had two cities built just as storage units.

Exodus 1:11

So the Egyptians assigned taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh.

So before Israel enters the promised land- God reminds them to keep the Sabbath to remember that he has saved them from being mere cogs in a system of production- to be his people. To be with him and enjoy him.

Deuteronomy 5:15

15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Obviously we are not saved out of Egypt- but there is another way we are enslaved to work.

We believe that our worth comes from our production. Our pride comes from our ability to produce something. We like to believe that we can prove how good we are- if we can produce something that everybody loves.

But the truth is- that can never be enough. Talk here about finding value in work.

Ephesians 2:1-10

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins

2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, 5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! 6 He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in

Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

Note the blend of YOU CAN'T EARN THIS..along with... this is going to set you up to good work that blesses others.

SABBATH AS SIGN.

2 signs- circumcision (With focused on the be fruitful and multiply part- the work command)

and Sabbath-

Ezekiel 20:12

I also gave them my Sabbaths to serve as a sign between me and them, so that they would know that I am the Lord who consecrates them.

Sabbath showed God's faithfulness in provision and rest to the other nations. IOW- you are going to show people how God is your faithful provider. This is the circumcision of time.

Practical ideas for Sabbath- REDEEMING the time- which doesn't mean squeezing every ounce of productivity out of every minute

Ephesians 5:15-17

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk — not as unwise people but as wise — 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

We make the MOST of time by fitting our lives into the rhythm God has called us to.

Now let's talk about some BEST practices.

Be gratefully inactive & quiet

Use some of your Sabbath time to not DO anything.

PLAN to have inactivity.

Take a nap.

Sit outside and watch nature.

Take a walk. Go to the park.

Additionally, in our age, I think digital silence/inactivity is important

Turn off the TV, Turn off the phone. Put the computer away.

Take time to JUST be a living human being.

Now, when you do this, it will creep all sorts of busy thoughts.

That's a great time to pray.

Prayers of gratitude.

Move your mind to thinking about the good that God has given you instead of worrying about tomorrow or stuff you don't have or haven't yet accomplished.

If you need to, keep a pen and paper nearby. If a thought comes that you can't get out of your head about something you need to do, jot it down on the paper with a heading of "NOT FOR SABBATH" at the top," then you can come back to it tomorrow without the anxiety you are going to forget.

Remember, Sabbath isn't just a day off to do whatever you want to.

It needs to be about Witness, and witness.

Being WITH GOD and a Witness to his glory.

So use that time of quiet for gratitude.

Delight in God by enjoying his gifts

Make it a ritual to have lunch or dinner with friends or family on the Sabbath. Make your best meal of the week on the day that you Sabbath.

Now you have to be careful. Because this can turn into a production. You aren't entertaining people, you are enjoying a delicious meal and good company.

Married couples, this is a great day to renew your covenant by taking an "extended nap" with the door locked.

Play a game of basketball in the driveway or football in the backyard.

Listen, there is lots of discernment here. For some folks, the Sabbath is going to be a day to leave the TV off. For some folks, it could be a where you watch a couple of football games. For some folks, it could be the one day a week you play an hour of video games with your kids. For others, playing ANY video games makes it just like the rest of the week. Sabbath is NOT a day for your addictions...to sports, or video games, or work, or anything else that has you imprisoned. Sabbath celebrates REDEMPTION, not SIN. So please don't use the LORD's Sabbath as an excuse to indulge in your addiction.

Additionally, if you have no self-control with food or drink throughout the week, don't use Sabbath as an excuse to eat garbage and drink alcohol.

This is where the "Withness/Witness" framework helps. If you aren't sure whether you should delight in something on the Sabbath...ask
Is this life giving to me and others?
Does this draw me close to God?
Does this show others the goodness of God?

Ask those you are around to weigh in on that.

Do avocational things

A lot of times people want to know, "Is gardening work? Is mowing the lawn work? Should I wash the dishes on the Sabbath?"
Well, if you are landscaper...probably don't do gardening and lawn work.
If you wash dishes the other 6 days of the week...probably don't wash them on Sabbath.

Do things that are outside of your normal job.
If you work primarily with your mind, then do things with your hands.
You can tinker with something, build something...as long as its restful and not chasing something you don't have.

If you work primarily with your hands, do something with your mind. Read a book. Work puzzles. Sudoku.

Be Relational/Invite others

Withness and Witness require others.

Now, certainly, contemplative time alone is good on the Sabbath.
But so is time with others.
Slow down. Have conversations. Get to know someone deeper.

There are a couple of tricky parts to this.
One, is you might be an introvert. And relationships might be really taxing on you.
Or parents especially with young kids, you could laugh at the thought of trying to do about half of the things I've mentioned because your kids aren't just going suddenly allow you to "take naps" or sit on the back porch and stare at a tree.

I get that. I really do.
And you know relationships within a family can be really taxing as well.
But keep in mind, that the Sabbath is designed for relationships. For being grateful for the people in your life and being human beings together with them.
So you might have to think ahead. Can you have each kid spend a little time in their room playing with toys, drawing a picture, reading a book? And then come back together later for some board games or games in the yard or park.

Can you write out a Sabbath question that you will ask family and friends on the Sabbath?
Things from, "Who is a person you aren't related to that has positively impacted your life?" to "If you had a million dollars to give away...what would you do with it?"

Questions that both stoke gratitude and contentment and also prime thoughts of generosity and cultivation.
At the same time, you are getting to know a little something more about a person.

And Sabbath works GREAT in community.
Invite some other people and families in the church or your neighborhood or apartment complex to hang with you on the Sabbath.
For some of us, getting quiet time will be hard on the Sabbath. For others, especially for those of you that are single and live alone...it could be hard to find OTHERS to Sabbath with.

Families in the church, invite some single folks in.

Older married couples with kids, invite some newly-weds in.

And yes, invite people who don't know Jesus to eat a meal with you. If the Sabbath is about witness, then what a great day to have people over, share a meal, and be grateful to God with them right there in the room with you.

Practice God's Presence

Last but not least, Read Scripture and pray. Show up here and contribute at the worship gathering.

Make sure the Sabbath doesn't become about you.

This is a day for BEHOLDING GOD.

This is not a day to take the day off.

SO read a Psalm as a prayer.

Maybe read it as you gather with everyone before dinner.

Acknowledge God's presence at every turn.

LORDS SUPPER-

Happened on a Feast. Passover. A break in the rhythm. A remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt was a foreshadowing to Jesus delivering us from the slavery of our sin against God. Of taking over God's rule and turning life into something we decide to make it.

Think about Bread. And Wine. Neither occur in creation. They are a part of the mandate from Genesis. And think about Jesus saying "I'll drink this cup again with you"

That is the eternal rest- that will include work- but restful work done WITH GOD. Which in Jesus- you can start right now!