

**Sermon:** God's Time

**Series:** Downtime: Even God Rested!

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 2:1-4

**Preacher:** Rev. Jasiel Hernandez Garcia

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“Time is what we want most but what we use worst.” <sup>1</sup>

There's a profound and uncomfortable truth in William Penn's words.

Time is, without question, the most sought-after resource in our lives. We ask for more of it every day: more time to rest, more time to work, more time to play, more time with loved ones, more time to get things right. And yet, it is also the thing we squander most easily.

This Sunday, we begin a new three-week sermon series focusing on the importance of rest, contemplation, and feeling grounded. Trust me, this sermon series is a message I also need to hear [myself].

The world has felt more chaotic in recent months.

As of last night, it seems we are now involved in a war that I am not sure belongs to us. And we don't really know the implications for our future as a nation and the tensions in the Middle East.

All we hear about is far from good and positive news.

I don't know about you, but this is a lot to take in and digest. These headlines keep many of us up at night. I know that. I've been there.

A few weeks ago, I came across an article that presented how the world could be much better today if we only took the time to rest.

That's an interesting take, I thought to myself.

The journalist delved into great detail about how a lack of rest prompts us to make irrational and thoughtless decisions. Exhaustion leads to immediate irritation, malnutrition, and distancing ourselves from others. Not feeling rested as we begin a new day often results in endless frustration. If we don't feel productive or at least energized, we count our time as wasteful.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://philosiblog.com/201/02/08/time-is-what-we-want-most-but-what-we-use-worst/>

Think about it for a moment and bring to mind one of those mornings in which you felt terribly exhausted and groggy.

The alarm blares like a siren in a fog. Or the dogs bark to go outside, and we stumble over all sorts of things as we make our way to the door. Our limbs feel heavy, our eyes burn, and all we see is this haze around us. Simple tasks, like brushing our teeth, making coffee, getting dressed, or finding our keys, feel strangely difficult.

Oh, and what happens when one of those simple tasks goes wrong? Hell breaks loose.

Talk about feeling angry without a real purpose.

Don't get Jessie started on what happens when I can't find my church keys!

It feels as if our brain is still stuck somewhere between dreaming and waking. Everything feels just a bit *off*. Instead of feeling refreshed and ready, we feel like we're running on fumes—and the day hasn't even really started.

The worst part is how that feeling stays with us for the remainder of the day. A bad start often leads to a bad outcome.

In other words, insufficient rest can lead to self-destructive tendencies that may have a severe impact on both ourselves and those around us.

Is it possible that most of us just need a nap to feel better and be better?

My grandfather often said, "When you're having a bad day, all you need is good food and a good nap."

You've heard this before, and probably multiple times already: the idea that rest is not valued because it doesn't produce anything continues to poison our society.

God cares about rest. And God wants us to rest.

But rest feels unproductive and seems like a luxury rather than a necessity. Therefore, we come up with various excuses and begin to believe that we are indeed "too busy" for that which nourishes our bodies and souls.

In his book, "We Have Forgotten Sabbath," renowned writer and minister Wayne Muller describes how his work through his non-profit *Bread for the Journey* has enabled him to see a universal truth across the borderlands of society. He writes,

As the founder of a public charity, I visit the large offices of wealthy donors, the crowded rooms of social service agencies, and the small houses of the poorest families. Remarkably, within this mosaic, there is a universal refrain: **I am so busy.**

It does not seem to matter if the people I speak with are doctors or daycare workers, shopkeepers or social workers, parents or teachers, nurses or lawyers, students or therapists, community activists or cooks....Their work in the world rarely feels light, pleasant, or healing.

**Instead, as it all piles endlessly upon itself, the whole experience of being alive begins to melt into one enormous obligation. It becomes the standard greeting everywhere: I am so busy.**

[And] we say this to one another with no small degree of pride, as if our exhaustion were a trophy... To be unavailable to our friends and family, to be unable to find time for the sunset (or even to know that the sun has set at all), to whiz through our obligations without time for a single, mindful breath, this has become the model of a successful life.

How have we allowed this to happen?

Friends, this wasn't God's intention for our lives, was it?

Right there in the beginning of the Bible, before any commandments were given, before any nation was formed, before sin even entered the world, God rested.

In the Genesis creation story we just read, one of the ways God transforms chaos into order is by separating light from darkness. This separation allows each element to have a specific duration, ultimately allowing creation to measure time.

God saw that this system was good and delighted in it. God found joy and satisfaction in the rhythm brought by what we call *time*.

God didn't see time as something that must be conquered or acquired, but as a space where productivity, imagination, playfulness, thoughtfulness, relationships, and rest could coexist.

Time is supposed to deliver a perfect balance between doing and enjoying. Remember, there is a time and a season for everything under the sun.

Unfortunately, we do not utilize or interpret time as God intended.

In preparing for this sermon, I discovered three perspectives on how humans interpret time.

Some see time as a "tyrant." Time controls every aspect of our lives and dictates what we should do. Think of ourselves as Amazon warehouse employees, where every second and every minute is accounted for, and we must accomplish specific tasks during those periods of time because we are told to do so. As you can imagine, there is very little enjoyment in places like that.

Second take: Some of us see time as “efficiency.” We attempt to control every minute and every hour of the day. We have calendars full of appointments and responsibilities. We keep adding to our to-do list. We work relentlessly as if doing more means more contentment with who we are and what we have.

Lastly, most see time as a “luxury.” We simply do not have enough of it, and that forces us to live in a state of scarcity and fear. Time does not exist in the physical sense, so it cannot be saved, reclaimed, or borrowed. It belongs to God, not us.

Let’s be honest with ourselves.

We all fall into one of those three categories. We rarely see time as a gift that must be enjoyed. It is only because of a tragedy or a life-changing experience that we begin to see time beyond those three traditional and unhealthy lenses.

But again, let’s be honest, how long does that last? A few days? A few years?

God wants us to view time differently every day.

Besides creating and declaring things good, God gives three blessings at creation: God blesses the creatures (1:22), the humans (1:28), and the rest itself (2:3). God stops working and enjoys what God has made.<sup>2</sup>

Isn’t it radical to believe in a God who undoubtedly sees the importance of rest? A God who values rest just as much as the work he has already performed?

If we pay close attention to this part of the creation story, we will notice how the seventh day reveals God as an entity concerned not only with creating and sustaining the world but also with intentionally taking time to enjoy, relate to, and connect with everything God created.

God teaches us that all good things must be enjoyed, and the only way to enjoy them is by intentionally setting aside time for them. God’s rest is a symbol of contentment and satisfaction.

If you think about it, time is the most accessible currency we possess. Unlike money, assets, or status, time is given to every one of us equally and universally. We all have the same 24 hours in a day.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/narrative-lectionary/preaching-series-on-sabbath-2/commentary-on-genesis-21-3-john-159-15>

Therefore, every choice we make about the time God has gifted us reflects what we truly value and who we are deep in our bones.

We may claim that family is our top priority, but if we consistently choose work or distractions over meaningful connection, the truth is exposed, right?

We might speak about our commitment to our church, justice and benevolence, friendship, or self-growth, but how often do we carve out moments to pursue them? In the seemingly infinite cycle of time, how much are we spending on what matters most to us?

Friends, our calendars and routines don't lie.

God resting on the seventh day expresses God's priorities. It teaches us about God's character and what God expects of us.

What we do with our time matters.

William Penn was right: Time is what we want most, but what we use worst. But it doesn't have to stay that way. We can begin again. We can realign our lives—not with the tyranny of busyness or the fear of scarcity—but with the divine rhythm of creation: work, yes, but also rest... contemplation... connection... and joy.

God did not give us time to enslave us. We are not meant to mark our days with fear, anxiety, and regret. We are not supposed to conquer time and win this game of life.

God created time and gifted us with it so that we, too, could find a balance between doing and being, between productivity and rest, between accomplishment and enjoyment.

So, friends, this week I invite you to reclaim your time.

Ask yourself: What am I doing with the precious and limited time God has given me? What am I prioritizing? What do I need to let go of to find rest? How would God want me to spend my time here on this earth?

May it be so. Amen.