

Preparing for Sabbath

Self-Guided Prayer

January 27, 2016

'This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning'. So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. Moses said, 'Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord, today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.' On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. Exodus 16:23-26

Taking Sabbath is going to take preparation. There is always something that can be done, errands to run, carpet to vacuum, dishes to clean, work to catch up on, and email to check. There is an element of just letting those things go for a day (if, like me they can become life-draining instead of life-giving). But there is also an element of preparation.

If we plan when we want to take our day (or afternoon) of Sabbath, we can plan to accomplish our errands and to-do lists on other days so that we can rest in peace. If we do not get those tasks accomplished, we will learn to rest in the midst of not having everything finished. Just like the Israelites had to gather twice as much manna on the sixth day, we too have a certain amount of planning to be had so that we can also not only have a Sabbath, but thrive in Sabbath.

The Israelites had to gather twice as much food on the sixth day of the week because *Today is a Sabbath to the Lord*. Does the Lord actually need to rest? Probably not, but the Lord knows that we need to rest and He was leading by example. By not making manna appear from the dew on the grass he was leading by example to take a Sabbath. God was showing He was resting and in turn the Israelites should also be resting. Of course there were those who needed to go out and be sure there was not any manna, and there was none.

Sometimes we have committed ourselves into a Sabbath defensive. By that I mean sometimes we have committed ourselves to so many things that there is literally not one moment of rest to be found in the midst of our busy schedules. And in those moments we must stop and discern. What can be given up for a season. What can we relieve ourselves of that will open up a moment for us to rest in God.

It is a beautiful thing that our Lord asks us to rest. Resting gives us rejuvenation, insight, patience and kindness. Resting in God allows the Spirit to move in us and breed the fruits of the Spirit that can only be nurtured by our Lord.

I invite you this week to rest. You have a card that has some questions to ponder. Feel free to take this with you this week and think through these things. May God give you an abundance of peace and rest this week, even in the midst of your days that are full of many good things.