

⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Introduction

In Hebrews 4.10, the writer makes the point that we only arrive at rest when our works on earth are complete, but our works are not complete, therefore, the weekly Sabbath rooted in creation and transformed by redemption remains. It remains (v. 9) because **whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his** (v. 10). We have not ceased from our works, so, in an important sense, we have *not* entered God's rest. That is, though we have entered His rest now by faith (4.3), we have yet to enter into His rest in the high noon of eternal glory.

We might compare the weekly Sabbath sign to a road sign, which points to something out in front of us in the future. For example, a sign with the picture of railroad tracks on it points to the reality of a railroad crossing just ahead of you. Such signs usually point to just *one* thing, but this God-given sign points ahead to *two* things: one near, one far; one temporal, one eternal, one now, and one not yet. The weekly Sabbath remains not only pointing ahead to *eternal rest*, but also pointing to *present work* we have before us in the six days of our weekly cycle.

Now, today, we are going to look more closely at the *works* that weekly Sabbath keeping encourage *in the comparison of our works with God's*: **whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his** (4.10). We are to work like He worked. We are to rest like He rested. In both ways, we function as the analogues of God. What we do bears analogy to what God has done; what we do is similar to what God has done; what we do is patterned after what He has done. He sets the pattern and we follow; He commands and we obey. In this light, what we find is that the abiding Sabbath sign encourages love, sacredness, delight, and family in our works.

1A. The Sabbath encourages love in our works

Since our works are like God's works and we are to follow His pattern, then we have to spend some time thinking about God's works on the six days of creation. Here is one way to get the ball rolling: there is no mention of love anywhere in the opening chapters of Genesis. Love is there, but the term love is not there (as it is present in Ps. 33.1-9, **the earth is full of [His] steadfast love**). How do we know that love is there in Genesis? Here is a hint: consider the difference between Genesis 1.1-2 and 2.8-9; 15-16, and consider what makes the difference:

Genesis 1:1-2: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 2:8-9: And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-16: The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden

What we have is a monumental difference between a formless, empty, dark, but stable earth, and a habitable, wonderful, and pleasant place for man to live. This shows God, can I say it, *servicing*; He serves man in fashioning such a marvelous place for us to live.

There are some love implications for our works in six days that emulate God's works.

1) This means working for others

To be His analogue then, we must view our work in a similar way no matter what form of work we do. We follow our Creator's example when we take up our six days of work for others. What a profound example to follow: be like God, work in order *to make life pleasant for others*.

This means doing your work in this way and fashioning the products of your work to this end. This applies to both the task and the people associated with our work. The work of the six days will be oriented to service to others to promote their life and happiness.

2) It means working with others

There is cooperation between the Father and the Spirit evident in Genesis 1:1-2, which reveals the fact that the Holy Spirit hovered like an eagle protecting her young: **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.** The young earth in all its stages of development went from the Father's hand into the Holy Spirit's embrace. And we know that Jesus was with God in the beginning and that nothing was made without Him (Jn. 1:1-3).

We must do our work with a most cooperative spirit if our works are going to be like God's works. Granted, others may not be cooperative. They may even hinder us as well as not help us. Nevertheless, we make this our goal in all our work to be like the triune God under whose authority we live as shown in our baptism (Matt. 28:19-20). Being a Christian means emulating God in the six days of work, especially in this love orientation where we work in service to others.

Thus, if you learn the lesson of the Sabbath six and one, you will seek above all else to emulate your Father in your work. When you do that, you cannot make an absolute disjunction between the "others" you are working for and the "others" you are working with.

2A. Second, the Sabbath encourages sacredness in our works

What we do for others we do for the Lord, serving others is serving God. If a slice of the pie is service to others, what is the whole pie? It is service to God. That is a way to explain the point of "not serving man." When you see the slice of the pie in light of the whole pie there is only one thing you can call it: service to God. What it is a slice of will tell you what it is.

Therefore, all of our work is sacred and religious. We follow God in our service to others. We look at, but beyond, those we serve, beyond to our sovereign. We do our works under the throne of Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath. We serve Him by His commands in the works we do on earth.

It is in this light that we are to understand and apply the duties of slaves cited in the NT, as in Colossians 3 (**Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, v. 22**). Being a slave is primarily an economic issue in Scripture. The master has ownership of his slave's time and labor not ownership of his person (cf. Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 97-98, "not the property of man in man...slavery is the property of man in the labour of another"). Without solving all the problems of slavery in the Bible, we can state that "slave" easily converts to "employee" when we apply the NT to modern culture. We make this conversion intuitively when we apply the text to ourselves in all our works (at home or office).

We are to serve with whole-heartedness (Col. 3:23b, **with sincerity of heart**) no matter what the task (Col. 3:23a, **obey in everything**, of course, within the boundaries of righteousness). And note who we work for in an ultimate sense: **"for the Lord, not for men"** (Col. 3:23c). We do serve men, we do work for men, but it is not merely or ultimately for them but **"for the Lord"** with **reverence** (3:22). We have a wage motivation that transcends the workers just and due reward. We know of a reward that is an inheritance from the Lord we serve (Col. 3:24, **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ**). We know also that there is a wage for sin that will be paid regardless of one's station in life (Col. 3:25, **For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality**).

All of these principles put a sacred and religious tone into our "secular" work. It is truly not secular work because we are not secular people. Instead, we are God's image-bearers who perform our work as children and analogues of God. What else can we think? Are we to suppose that our work out there in the "secular" world is somehow separate from our relationship to God, the Creator of all things, and the Lord of all?

We of course work for wages that are justly due to the workman. But underlying the paycheck is the greater purpose of serving. We look for the gain of good to others however and wherever we can promote it. This covers all our work as a calling to priestly service from helping a fellow employee solve a problem to doing our work with skill and heartiness as unto the Lord. We are children of the king. We live under His direction. We follow His example.

Thus, work is priestly service: **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light** (1 Pet. 2.9). Remember, the sign above the door to your work place says, "The Temple of the Lord" because you are a priest. Therefore, your workplace is the workplace of a priest (a temple). That being the case, you are to do your work in the six days as worship (the work of a priest). What is the difference come Sunday? On Sunday, you do the work *of worship*; on the other days you do your work, heartily and with excellence, *as worship*. There is no secular realm of life.

3A. Third, Sabbath encourages us to seek and find delight in our works

1) Aiming at delight is image bearing

He saw that all that He made was good, in fact, very good (Gen. 1:9, 18, 31). This is a pattern for work that we should emulate. We should work until there is fulfillment-until we can feel satisfied with the effort put forth and say, "that's good, that was a good day's work." At the least, that should be our goal whatever hindrances may be there due to sin.

2) Delighting in creation is image bearing

We are surrounded in our work by the things in which God takes great delight. Delighting in the things that God has made is image bearing; it means delighting in what delights Him. Consider the things that are good in broad outline: light, sun, moon, stars, seas, dry land with mountains and valleys, vegetation, animal life (sea creatures, birds, livestock, and wild animals) and man, male and female. The non-believer shows that he is God's image whenever he looks at a sunset with awe or experiences an all absorbing delight standing under a star filled sky. He contradicts his humanity when he fails to acknowledge the Lord in all he sees and experiences.

God created the environment of our work, its context, and the substance of our work, its content. Therefore, to delight in work is godly. Remember, God's speaks through the visual aid of His creation. Whatever you do at work, you do it surrounded by the voice of God and His warm invitation to fellowship with Him in the works you do in life.

4A. Fourth, Sabbath encourages a family orientation in our work

We ought to emphasize family because God does. Love, marriage, and family are all a delight to the Lord. He made us male and female to be fruitful and fill the earth imaging His nature (let us make man, male and female, Gen. 1:26-27). Work with regard to family also images God. It is being like God to work at your marriage to make it a taste of heaven on earth because you work at it as the analogue of your heavenly Father who "blessed them" and said "be fruitful." God honors this institution. So should we.

Our work does not end at work; it is not simply money making. Ironing, mashing potatoes, painting, decorating, drawing, fixing, mowing the lawn, raking leaves, and cleaning are all tasks of the human family.

The main implication here is that we are to put forth the work needed to develop companionship and family life that pleases the Lord and reflects His inter-trinitarian love. Of course, broken families exist because the human family is fallen. We are to do all we can to promote peace, "as much as is possible." There are many dead ends. We have to put forth much effort nonetheless. Effort means work but we do so following God's example of work if we take delight in family life in making it an object of loving, sacred, delightful work.

But by the grace of God, there is a new family, a restored family. This is the household of faith that is to have a priority in our good doing (Gal. 6:10, **So then, as we have opportunity, let us do**

good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith). We are brothers and sisters in Christ. To work at Christian family life that is an honor to God our Father and to Christ our elder brother should be a special part of the fabric of our workweek. It should be something we never forget. Thus, at the least (or better the most), the family will be on our hearts in the work of prayer weekly.

In this connection, the writer of Hebrews connects our works with love and the assembled church: ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Heb. 10.24-25). This considering and figuring contemplates how to work during the week.

Conclusion: Why so pattern your lives? Why should you follow God's six days of work?

1) It pleases the Father

He worked six days in original creation to show us that He is pleased to work out His purposes in this way. It pleased Him to work, to work in six days, to work for others serving man. By hard work with the right attitude, you promote that which pleases the Lord. You should value this pattern as given to you by the Lord. It is His word on how you should think about your days on earth in a weekly cycle of six and one. He gave this pattern for your good. He is helping you, guiding you, in the organizing of your time. He seeks in this way to give you a sense of value and dignity in your work. Why ought you to do this? Work in this way because it pleases the Lord.

2) It glorifies God

When you emulate Him in this pattern of life on earth you image Him, you reflect your Creator. It is glorifying to God when you work with love, sacredness, delight, and family balance. You are to look back to your labors in the past week and ahead to the work that shall begin tomorrow with a consciousness of time. You are theologically conscious of time when you recognize the divinely given 6-1 temporal pattern for life on earth. Instead of being bound by the clock, you should be bound by the six and one for the great, ultimate, and supreme end of glorifying God.

Therefore, make it your goal to find delight in your work for that too is a way to glorify God. Surely, as God's image bearer saved by grace, you can trust the Lord to provide the way, whatever the difficulties may be for your work in a fallen world.

3) It builds the city of God.

Your eyes are thus fixed on Jesus the author and finisher of your faith as you look for a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God. Because this is the case, then all your work should be done to honor Him and to do that you should do your work as under-craftsmen who are building and making the city of God in your six and one pattern of work. You do not do this work exclusively in some form of missions, though of course, evangelism is more direct. Your work "out there" like your work "in here" is nothing less than kingdom work. This is truly a refreshing view of work. This sacred goal of fashioning a people to populate the heavenly city is accomplished in our daily work in weekly cycles as part of God's daily accomplishment of His purposes!

May we fall down before our sovereign Lord and Sabbath king; may the Holy Spirit give us refreshment and encouragement in following the Father's example of work and rest in hearty anticipation of the rest that is promised when the city of God reaches culmination and all our work on earth is complete. To the triune God be all glory, now and forever, amen.