



Series: Created | Sermon #3

Text: Genesis 2.1-3

Sermon Title: The Sabbath - Finding Neverland

In 1904 J.M. Barrie released a play called “Peter Pan” subtitled “The boy who wouldn’t grow up.” The story of course became iconic. It has been told and retold to children for over a hundred years and has no sign of slowing down. And one of the things that makes Pan the man so appealing is where he lives. This mythical island you can reach by covering yourself in pixie dust, pointing yourself to the second star to the right and flying straight on til morning.

Neverland! Where the only grown ups are those mean pirates who try to stop Peter and the lost boys from having fun all day every day. Kids want to be Peter Pan. Adults still want to be Peter Pan. No meetings, No deadlines, a bunch of friends to have food fights with... and the ability of FLIGHT! Every child who has ever heard the story asks “Is Neverland real?”

The inspiration for Peter Pan’s adventures were surrounded by bleak circumstances in Barrie’s life. His brother had died at the age of 14 in a skating accident & his mother had never recovered from the loss. And so stories of a boy who never grew up were his way of consoling her. On top of that, he became guardian to two boys who had lost their mother to cancer. And these stories became a way to comfort them. In fact the oldest of the two was named Peter. Barrie built Neverland as an escape from reality. A place where people don’t die. Don’t grow old. A wild but somehow still safe place where your soul actually rests as it bounds from one adventure to the next.

Today we are talking about the 7th day of creation. If you have your bible open it to Genesis 2. We are only looking at the first 3 verses. We are in a series called “created.” Where we are looking at what GOD says we are created for. What is our purpose. We live in a world where people try any number of things to answer that question. And one of the things we do to try and answer it is fill our lives up to the brim with activities so that we don’t have empty time. We think of empty time as a sign of any empty life. And so since we don’t know what we are created to do, we just do a lot. And we attempt to fool everyone around us because hey, busy people must be important people. And so we fill up. Some people work long hours because maybe more money will make me valuable. Some people put their kids in 100 activities because maybe successful kids will make others value me. Some people go out every night because they think sitting at home alone would be a sign of social failure. The busier the better!

And then here we go into the Bible today and you are going to see what I believe is a very clear message from God that you are called to REST. To Rest. In fact I'm even going to try and convince you that God designed a weekly rhythm for you and it includes a FULL day of rest. Where your mind, body, and soul STOP. And rest. And for most people that sounds about like Neverland. It sounds wonderful! I'd love to do that! But that isn't a REALITY for my life.

You try living my life pastor. I got 2 jobs, 3 kids, and a stack of bills. Students say MY GRADES don't take a day off. I GOTTA STUDY! Athletes are like I CAN'T AFFORD TO Take a day off from training if I'm going to get where I gotta be. I've got major deadlines man...I CAN'T TAKE A DAY OFF. Accountants are like...Do you know what Tax Season is? Like many of you one of the guys in my group works at a hospital and its not like people take a day off from breaking bones. And so everybody's reaction is: I CAN'T AFFORD TO **WASTE** A WHOLE DAY RESTING...It'd be AWESOME but I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR NEVERLAND. I'M TOO BUSY.

Today we put busyness on trial. And I believe we will find it to be a liar and deceiver. Guilty of robbing us of the joy we are supposed to have in Christ. Big Idea for today:

You are created to rest. So you are not too busy to rest. But resting will take some work.

Here's what we'll do. I'm going to show you how the idea of "rest" develops in Scripture. We'll start in our passage for today. Then, I'm going to show you how it builds throughout the rest of scripture. This is one of the ways you learn the bible. When You trace the themes from the beginning all the way through what you'll see is that the 66 books of the bible really are just one book. You ever do those connect-the-dots pictures as a kid? Where its just a grouping of dots but once you connect them all a picture of a fish shows up? That's kind of what we are doing today with the theme of rest. I'm going to show you the big dots that when you connect them all, you will see what true "rest" looks like for our souls.

So I'll show you what God means when he says you are created for rest. And then we'll talk about what it means for our daily lives. And by the end of today I hope you will see that the reason you long for Neverland is that you were created for it. And that something even better than Neverland is real after all.

[1] So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. [2] On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done...

Ok before we go further I want to stop and acknowledge that as the seventh day opens Moses, our author, is telling us that God was finished. Creation was completed on Day six. So, day seven isn't a creating day for God. Yet, the creation week isn't 6 days long. It's seven days. And here's what he says happened:

and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation. -- Genesis 2:1-3

This is our first “Dot” on the connect the dots picture of rest we will see today. Alright two things right here about the seventh day.

1. What does God “rested” mean?

and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

If God is...well, God then he can't get tired. To be all powerful means to have all power. It means you can never run out of strength. So God didn't need a breather on day seven. It also didn't mean God stopped working all together. In fact Jesus says in John 5.17 that the Father is still working even up until this very moment. Christians believe Colossians 1.17 that says the God who created the world also holds the world together still today. If he were to stop working...just check out...for even a moment...our world would dissolve and fall apart entirely.

When Moses says God “rested” the literal word is he ceased. The root word is “Sabot.” Where we get the word Sabbath. He stopped creating. **God's rest was the rest of achievement, not the rest of inactivity.**

See in the Old Testament God's rest is tied directly to his “rule” over his creation. Now that he's done he sits down to preside over it. Think of it like a guy that builds a canoe in his workshop. When he finishes he “rests” by enjoying the boat. By taking it out and being the captain, not by leaving it to sit in the shop.

Second thing I want you to see: Is God's exalting of the 7th day above the rest.

[3] God **blessed the seventh day and declared it holy**, for on it he rested from all his work of creation. -- Genesis 2:1-3

He blessed it. He took such pleasure in the 7th day that he made it fruitful. That's what his blessing does. The other two times he “blessed” something it was the animals and the people. And he said be fruitful and multiply. God's creative power is infused in his blessing. The meaning here is similar except that it's a blessing that bears fruit for your soul. God's blessing gives this day a power...a power to give fullness to life that you wouldn't have without it. No other DAY gets blessed like this.

And not only does he bless it, he declares it holy. It's the very first thing to be “holy” in scripture. God wants Israel to cherish this day as sacred. That is a major, major deal. You gotta see the separation he's putting between the 7th day, what will become known as the ‘sabbath’ day, and these other days. Let me show you the rest of the dots of how the idea of Sabbath REST develops in scripture

Tracing the Sabbath

The next really big dot comes up is in the 10 Commandments. Exodus 20.8-11 details the 4th commandment:

Exodus 20.8-11

“8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: 9 You are to labor six days and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. You must not do any work – you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, your livestock, or the resident alien who is within your city gates. 11 For the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

Here it becomes really clear that OT law was now set that Israel was not supposed to work at all one day a week. Which listen that’s a big deal. Especially when they had daily chores they were supposed to be doing. Like gathering manna. While the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness God was providing daily manna, bread, for them each morning. That’s why Jesus prays “give us this day our daily bread.” And they were ONLY allowed to gather enough for the day. So they could learn to trust God for the next day. If they gathered more, it would rot. But on the 6th day they were instructed to gather enough for two days so that they could REST from their work on the 7th day. And when they did, the bread didn’t rot.

See God was training them in a weekly Rhythm of work and joyful rest. The 7th day was holy because in their

rest, God was showing them some really big truths. He was showing them there is more to life than work! By stopping...they had time to hear and meditate on God’s word, to pray to this God and commune with him. It taught them to trust him too right? I mean, they could get more done if they had an extra day. Yet here they were forced to trust that 6 days would be enough for them. And it taught them to remember their salvation from slavery. Where they could never rest. You pick up on this in Deuteronomy’s recounting of the 10 commandments.

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. --

In Egypt Israel had been overworked. Even forced to make bricks without straw. And pharaoh only let them go when God wrought his mighty deliverance at the Passover. With their redemption from Egypt came the rest that had not been theirs for hundreds of years. So on the sabbath, as they rested, they were to reflect on their miraculous redemption.

You see the two fold meaning in these 2 recountings of the 4th commandment? The sabbath allowed them the space to celebrate God as their creator and to celebrate God as their redeemer. The sabbath was grace to his people. Grace to their bodies with physical rest. And

grace to their souls as they celebrated their redemption together.

Isaiah 58.13-14

13 “If you keep from desecrating the Sabbath, from doing whatever you want on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, seeking your own pleasure, or talking business; 14 then you will delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride over the heights of the land, and let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob

The sabbath wasn't to be drudgery, it was to be delight. In resting from work they would find true delight in the LORD. And when you delight in it, you delight in the Lord...you ride over the heights of the land....look at the imagery. Your closeness to God lifts your soul. Not in inactivity, but in active DELIGHT in the Lord. The Sabbath is the Neverland your soul was meant for.

So we finish the OT with the Sabbath as HIGH AND HOLY. A very, very important day to observe. And to break the sabbath is to do so under penalty of death.

Well Jesus comes on the scene and starts WORKING on the Sabbath! The end of Mark 2 & beginning of Mark 3 record back to back encounters on this.

Mark 2.23-28

23 On the Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to make their way, picking some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why

are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? ” 25 He said to them, “Have you never read what David and those who were with him did when he was in need and hungry — 26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the bread of the Presence — which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests — and also gave some to his companions? ” 27 Then he told them, “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. 28 So then, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath...”

Jesus is saying two things:

1. **The Sabbath was always a gift from God, not a burden.** Designed to bring God's people closer to him. The religious leaders were using the sabbath as a legal burden. a means by which they could control people through religious intimidation. And Jesus was angry at them for it. Because the Sabbath people were created for was for rest and delight...and it had become a hollowed out works-based tradition. They weren't delighting in the sabbath. It wasn't the restorative celebration of God's creation and redemption. So Jesus rejected it.

2. **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.** This is the big claim right. Jesus is saying “I made the Sabbath.” Another reminder that Jesus is God. And this is THE CLAIM. Jesus is looking at these leaders and saying man-made rules will not get you to God. ONLY Christ can get you there. So are you willing to lay down your traditions and pick up his cross? Oh listen right here:

Jesus isn't just the creator of the *day* of rest...He is the creator and sustainer of REST itself. Your body needing rest is an indicator light that your *soul* needs rest.

Augustine said "our hearts are restless until we find our rest in thee." He came to put an end to our search for rest. Our need for redemption from sin and healing. To satisfy Our longing to live in the fullness of life we are created for. "busyness" in your life and mine is a cheap substitute for the value, the acceptance, that we are created to find in Christ.

And then Jesus gets up on the cross and dies for the sins of mankind. And what are his words? John 19.30 says Jesus' last words were "It is finished." **THAT'S THE BIG DOT.** His atoning work for the sins of the world were finished. Jesus gives up his last breath and the God who finished his creative work now finishes his redeeming work. So now mankind can have a true day 7. TRUE REST!

Rest from the weight of our sin. Finally we can return to the God we were created for. The burden of sin is lifted off our backs. If you've never given your life to Christ let me explain. When I first believed as a teenager, I physically felt like a weight had been lifted that night. The weight of my sin was gone. And I felt so freed from that, so light weight it was like I could fly. No pixie dust needed.

The apostle Paul confirms this in our next to last Dot 16 Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of what

was to come; the substance is Christ -- Colossians 2:16-17 (CSB)

The Sabbath Day is a shadow of the Sabbath God. He is Lord of the Sabbath means he is the God of rest! No wonder Jesus says come to me all who are weary and heavy laden. Give your burdens to me and let me carry them! COME find rest for your soul! The sabbath day? It was a signpost...pointing you to Christ. Rest in him not in how well you obey religious rules.

Last dot: author of Hebrews puts some things together for us in Hebrews 4.9-11

9 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people. 10 For the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his. 11 Let us then make every effort to enter that rest...

Kent Hughes, who wrote a fantastic commentary on Genesis said "*Mere intellectual belief will not bring rest to any soul. Acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world will not bring rest. TRUST in him is what gives rest to our souls. True faith is belief plus trust. When you truly trust in Christ as Savior, rest comes because the burden of your sins is lifted. You rest from your works. And because you are in Christ, you enter the Sabbath rest of God. You know that he is your Creator and Redeemer.*

In neverland you never grow up & just play around. It's mythical and ultimately falls far short of something REAL that God gave us to find rest in: The Sabbath Man,

Jesus Christ. Who says “Come lay your heavy burdens on me. My yoke is easy & burden is light.” REST IN CHRIST!!

Let me summarize the picture you should see by how we just connected together, why the bible says you need to Sabbath and then I’ll finish with some “getting started” steps.

The Sabbath reminds us that we were created for God¹ “theologian Robert Barron argued, at the heart of original sin is the refusal to accept God’s rhythm for us. The essence of being in God’s image is our ability, like God, to stop. We imitate God by stopping our work and resting. If we can stop for one day a week, and even for mini-Sabbaths each day, we touch something deep within us as image bearers of God. Our human brain, our bodies, our spirits, and our emotions are wired by God for the rhythm of work and rest in him.”²

We weren’t created first and foremost FOR our jobs or For our spouses or for our kids or for Fishing or Fortnite. We were created for God! And the Sabbath allows us to enjoy him again. To remind us that we were created to *be* before we were created to *do*.

The Sabbath reminds us that God is the provider for our lives

No other society in ancient times took a day off. Provision was a day to day season to season reality. And

¹ These three reasons come from J.D. Greear’s blogpost on 10.3.2018 “Three reasons God gives us the Sabbath.” <https://jdgreear.com/blog/three-reasons-god-give-us-sabbath/>

² Scazzero, Pete. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (_____) 156.

God set up the world so that our provision comes from the work we do. Because of this we can easily begin to assume that we bear the primary responsibility for providing for ourselves. Giving yourself this kind of margin SEEMS wasteful. But its only wasteful if you believe YOU are the provider for your life. If you believe GOD is the provider, trust him that he will provide for you and bless your life as you trust him. Obvious example: Chick-fil-a. So many studies have been done about this company because of their day-off policy in an industry that never does that. They could make LOADS more revenue if they were open on Sunday. And it seems I always want it on Sunday the most. Yet they are the most profitable fast-food-chain in the world per location. And their CEO will tell you this rest actually improves the quality of the work they get out of their employees. The reason I love the Sabbath is because you can’t shrug it off as an abstract thought. It’s a DAY. The question is: Do you trust in YOU or GOD more for provision for your life? If you trust God, you’ll sabbath. No spiritual mumbo jumbo talk your way out of it...just rest.

The Sabbath reminds us that God is the savior of our lives

Tim Kriedner wrote an OP-ED in the NY Times on the ‘busy’ trap and said of Americans “They’re busy because of their own ambition or drive or anxiety, because they’re addicted to busyness and dread what

they might have to face in its absence... ““I can’t help but wonder whether all this histrionic exhaustion isn’t a way of covering up the fact that most of what we do doesn’t matter.”

There is an uncertainty rumbling just under the surface of busyness for most people. And if we do enough, we’ll never have time to confront it. Which is a good thing, because that monster might eat us alive. Pause right now: WHAT AM I CREATED FOR. I know many don’t want to think about that because trying to answer it would put them in a tailspin. So they go on, enslaved to their routines, dreading the real things.

The Sabbath gave the Israelites space to reflect on their salvation and the fact that God had accomplished their greatest need—deliverance from sin—all by himself. The Israelites did not make one single contribution to the Exodus, so Moses is saying, “If God took care of your greatest need all by himself, don’t you think you can trust him to take care of your day-to-day needs now?” As they trusted, they were to reflect on their new relationship with God (v. 15). In Egypt they had been slaves; now they were sons and daughters. They had been under the cruel reign of Pharaoh; now they were under the tender care of their Father, and they could trust him. This is what Christ does for us. He breaks the chains of slavery that our sin weighs us down with. We are free to be sons and daughters of God!

“The Sabbath is a day to remind us to stop thinking like slaves and to start thinking like Sons and Daughters.” - Dr. J.D. Greear

So where do you go from here? How do you put this into play? Cause depending on where you are right now, one day a week might sound crazy.

If your life feels too full, then To say yes to Sabbath is to say NO to something else. So the first question to busy, tired people is: what do you need to say no to so you can say yes to rest?

You are created to rest, you are not too busy, but you resting will take some work. And one of the most important things you will do to create room for resting in the Lord is saying NO. No to things you are currently saying yes to, and no to opportunities. And it will be foreign to others. I know some of you are expected to WORK, somehow or another, every day. You sneak in work here or there because you are always plugged in. We don’t treat work like it comes with an on/off switch anymore. We treat it like it has a dimmer switch. So I’ll dim it down in my off time but never be completely off. You need rest from notification fatigue. “But I’ll be behind if I turn it off.” BEHIND IN WHAT? WORK? YOU ARE WOEFULLY BEHIND IN SOMETHING THAT MATTERS SO MUCH MORE TO YOUR SOUL. **HOW** bout you catch up with God and trust him that work will be ok without you and you will be ok without work.

Now, let me give a caveat to parents of young children, specifically the like pre-school and younger age: You can’t completely say NO to your kids one whole day a week. Like “sorry you can’t have food cause I aint cooking cause it’s the sabbath...chick-fil-a is closed...you

figure it out.” You can say no to activities but, they still crawl around & try to eat...everything.

In fact: let me say something: Moms & Dads of young children - Take a deep breath right now. God loves you. Life is really hard. Sleep will come again one day ok. Yes your shirt is on inside out and backwards, yes that's a sock static clinging to your leg again...but its gonna be ok. You may be physically exhausted and you just need to hear God loves you and if there are two of you, you guys try hard to be partners in helping one another celebrate the Sabbath. If there's only one of you come talk to your pastors and let the church help you. And give yourselves a lot of grace. God does.

What should fill up your time during Sabbath “rest?” Well the idea of rest was...to celebrate your rest in Christ. So what allows you to rest?

Worship alone. I do believe this has to involve some real set aside time to commune alone with the Lord. More time than you get in the rest of the week.

Worship together. For many people Sabbath is a Sunday where they can be reminded of God's love for them and celebrate it with others. We were pretty convicted this week about how we structure ministry teams here because we want you to be able to serve others while you rest. Which happens when everyone is engaged btw. When everyone watches and only a handful do the work, the church gathering becomes a burden a select few carry until they burn out. Now lets be clear, Sunday is not my Sabbath. It's a workday for me and for some of

our other staff. So our family tries to Sabbath on Saturday. It's not about the day but the practice.

Remember that REST does not equal inactivity. If you leave today thinking I've given you a license to Netflix, you've missed everything. For some people who work with their minds, they rest with their hands. SOME Yard work for me is restful. I just walk around cutting grass and nobody can bother me. Others work with their hands and need to rest with their minds. A good book may be what you need to rest with. COMMUNE WITH GOD & WITH OTHERS. Rest the mind & the Body.

Start Somewhere. Maybe start with half a day. Pick the day and decide on it. And then work as hard as you can to be able to rest on that day.

This whole series is about what you are created for. And you are created, ultimately, to find rest in God. See Neverland was one man's attempt at adventure-some paradise. But God says we will get something way better than neverland one day.

3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. -- Revelation 21:3-4 (CSB)

True rest. Isaiah says wolves will lie down with lambs & kids will play with cobras. This better-than-neverland reality comes to you through Christ. And you can begin to experience that rest now. Come to Jesus. Whose yoke is easy & whose burden is light. Come.

6 The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat. The calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf will be together, and a child will lead them. 7 The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like cattle. 8 An infant will play beside the cobra's pit, and a toddler will put his hand into a snake's den. 9 They will not harm or destroy each other on my entire holy mountain, for the land will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is filled with water. -- Isaiah 11:6-9 (CSB)

You were created for that day. A day of complete rest where there will be no more pain, no more tears.

By keeping the sabbath, God's people entered into the 7th day rhythm of work and joyful rest. 7th day pointed the Hebrew worshiper to a day of rejoicing over the created work of God.

- Implicitly it instructs humanity that there is more to life than work. It afforded God's people the time to hear and meditate on God's word, to contemplate eternal things, and to pray.