



ALL SAINTS

## Sermon Discussion Guide

Practices of a Missionary People for a Secular Age: Sabbath & Retreat

MARCH 8, 2016

**Excursus:** Watching World

I quoted Dr. Sinclair Ferguson who said this about imparting faith to our children:

*“There is no formula, there is no book as it were that will give you five easy steps...there is only this great principle: That the children in my home, from their infancy, breathe in the spiritual air that I have breathed out. And that is how they learn to think about the Lord Jesus.”*

This is most profoundly applicable to our children, but it also applies to our close friends and even neighbors. They will see Christ in us, for better or worse, and it will either draw them to faith or convince them it is a farce...or worse.

Discuss how this makes our practices so central to what it means to be a disciple of Christ and to love others.

Charge: Don't feel discouraged by this quote, feel convicted to repent of how your "beliefs" and practices don't align. And feel inspired to live and practice your faith before a watching world, through the power of Christ and his spirit living inside you!

### INTRO Questions:

Why is it so difficult for us to set aside a day to be still, rest and worship? How are retreats like extended Sabbaths?

### Background:

The Sabbath is a vital element of God's created order—he wove Sabbath rest into the fabric of creation and rested himself on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, blessing it and making it holy. He commands his people to keep the Sabbath in Exodus and Deuteronomy, the same command in both places, with 2 different explanations. In Ex 20:11, God says we must rest because he rested, so keeping Sabbath helps us remember he's the creator. It help us trust in him to sustain us. In Deut 5:15 God says we must rest because he freed us from bondage (ultimately to Sin), so keeping the Sabbath helps us remember God as deliverer, and trust in his love and salvation. In the gospels we often see the Pharisees abusing the Sabbath, using this symbol of freedom from oppression as an instrument of oppression, and they try to catch Jesus breaking it. Jesus tells them they don't understand the Sabbath, that it was made for man not man for it, and he reveals that he's the Lord of the Sabbath. He embodies true Sabbath rest in himself. Ps 46:10 is a microcosm of all this rich theology: “Be still, and know that I am God...”

**Read** the text aloud

### Discuss:

- 1) vv. 1-3: How can keeping the Sabbath help us trust that God is a “very *present* help in trouble,” even if the midst of the sort of chaos and danger described in vv. 2-3? Trusting in his help in the midst of suffering requires trusting in his love. Discuss.
- 2) vv. 4-5: The river, Jesus, has “streams” that make glad the city of God. How does Sabbath rest help us become streams carrying Jesus' rest & salvation to a weary world?
- 3) vv. 6-9: We have a picture here of God's sovereignty even over the world's political and military superpowers. How does this help us trust in his provision/protection?
- 4) vv. 10a: “Be still, and know that I am God...” How does busyness prevent this? What are ways busyness masks our doubt of God's provision and his love? Think about overworking/over-worrying in connection with doubting God's provision, and avoidance/denial in connection with doubting his love. Remember that doubt is sin.
- 5) vv.10b-11: God will be exalted among the nations and on the whole earth. How is this both a comfort and a warning—a call to repentance (of doubt) and faith?

### Conclusion/Application:

Our practices matters; they reveal what we really believe and help our unbelief (Mk 9:24). And practicing Sabbath helps us trust God's provision and his love. It helps us order our lives according to the fundamental stories undergirding our faith and all reality—The story of God the creator making a good world and entering it as a man, Jesus Christ, in order to save us, because he loves us. We must stop weekly, be still, rest, remember what God has done and is doing, and worship him!

**Psalm 46**

**English Standard Version (ESV)**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 46:1** *To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamothe. A Song.*

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

<sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

<sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.

<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

<sup>10</sup> "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

<sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah