

Yesterday, I found myself restless and spinning as I flitted from one thing to the next
Partly, I wondered what to say as we gathered in worship today
Partly, I just couldn't settle on the inside
I realized that going into the office was actually easier as it gave order to the day
As I was sitting here the words that came to me were "Sabbath rest"
I thought, we've been given a gift of down time and I'm not taking advantage of it
Hebrews 4:9 reminds us that *"a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God."*
How is it that we are to relax into this gift of Sabbath rest while we are doing social distancing?

Genesis 2:1-3 – The Creation story tells us that God "rested" on the seventh day
The Creation story is a poetic story expressing the big picture of creation
Days 1-6 God creates the universe, earth, and all living creatures
Day 7 God sits back with a grin and surveys creation
God is resting in the knowledge of a job well done and delighting in the creation
In so doing, God models a reflective practice rooted in celebration and delight

Exodus 20:8-11 – The 10 commandments given to Moses gave the Israelites laws to order their lives
One of those laws was to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy
They were to work 6 days but they were to set aside the 7th day as a day of rest
Within this commandment, they were reminded of God's rest and delight in completing creation

Today, we no longer live under the law, nor the penalties of the law
Rather than see Sabbath as a law to be obeyed—I like to think of it as a gift—a gift of time apart

In modern America, we take the five-day work-week so much for granted
that we forget what a radical concept a day of rest was in ancient times.
The weekly day of rest has no parallel in any other ancient civilization.
In ancient times, leisure was for the wealthy and the ruling classes only, never for laborers
In addition, the very idea of rest each week was unimaginable.
The Greeks thought Jews were lazy for having a "holiday" every seventh day.

If, for the ancient people of Israel this day of Sabbath was a radical concept for a day of rest...
What is it that our culture today needs? Not another law or day of imposed restrictions!
But in our 24/7 culture where we never stop—we do need respite!

Hebrews 4:9 NRSV - *So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God...*
I have long thought that this was a wonderful verse
That there is a place we can enter now that is a Sabbath-rest—a place to be with God
I don't think this is just for the future of heaven
But it is a place we can enter now, within the Kingdom of God
It is where we gain strength and power for the doing of God's work
It is where we live and are not alone – it is home!
It also goes with us in the middle of the chaos and busyness of our world

As a result of the coronavirus, we've been given down time as we stay home in order to stop the spread
How is it that we are to relax into this gift of Sabbath rest while we are doing social distancing?
How do we enter the Sabbath rest in a way that is restorative and life giving?
Sabbath is a gift—will I accept it?