

Rest

Rest used to be easier. When you are young rest is so simple. Little kids fall asleep sitting straight up in their car seat with their neck at a ninety-degree angle. Teenagers sleep until early afternoon without a second thought. As responsibility and stress increase, life becomes chaotic and rest becomes elusive.

Summer rest has begun. Another school year is in the books. The final grades are entered and end of the year checklists have been completed. Now it's time to rest, but it can take days if not weeks to unwind from a long school year. This is true of good years and bad. And of course, not everyone is done working. Administrators are still up at school. Coaches are already on the field weeks into summer practice. Maintenance staffs can finally get some work done with all those people out of the way. Teachers are cleaning out classrooms and inevitably already thinking about ideas to make next year even better. The work slows, but never stops. And of course, many aspects of life are quite unaware that it is summer. Parenting does not stop in the summer. Illness doesn't disappear in the summer. Broken relationships do not mend simply because it's summer.

Where is our rest? Maybe the answer isn't summer rest.

God invites us to enjoy Sabbath rest:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God." (Exodus 20:8-10a)

People of the Ancient Near East (those people and nations that were contemporaries of Israel at the time of Moses) understood rest as a safety from enemies. They relied on their created gods to provide rest by defeating their enemies and protecting them from future attack.

We must remember that our sin, our rebellion, makes us enemies of God. As an enemy of God's, we will never enjoy rest or peace. BUT, it was while we were His enemies that Christ died for us reconciling us to Himself (Romans 5:8). Paul writes, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

Now on account of Christ we are at peace with God. So, we live without fear of judgment. We live with hope, certain of the promise of the life to come.

Regardless of the circumstance of our life, we can enjoy true Sabbath rest.

Gracious Heavenly Father, grant us summer rest so that we are ready for another year of ministry in August. Grant us Sabbath rest, keeping us mindful that through Christ's death and resurrection we are at peace with you. Prepare us to share the message of Jesus with all those we encounter that they may know the peace that passes all understanding and enjoy true Sabbath rest now and forever. Amen.