

How to Rest in a Crazy World

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[0 : 00] Hi everyone and welcome to this talk, this fourth and final in our series of How To, which is, as you know, how to now rest in a busy world.

And I think it's a question that's more pertinent now than ever before, but it's a question that I'm convinced the Bible has a lot of answers for. And so let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at this.

Heavenly Father, we do thank you that your word contains everything that you want us to know for life and godliness and for a life that you intend for us to live, both now and in eternity.

And so we ask, Lord, that you would guide us as we open your word now. Speak to us, send us your spirit so that we hear these words not only as the words of men, but as your words.

Please help us to understand what your word says about this topic and how to apply those truths to our lives today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, in a book by Kevin DeYoung called Crazy Busy, which is what I read in preparation for this sermon, he cites an anecdote of a woman who comes from another culture and visits a Western country.

[1 : 19] And after a while, she starts to introduce herself to people as busy. And it's a bit weird. And so people ask her eventually why she's doing that.

And she replies, well, I thought that was part of the traditional greeting in the West. Now, I know it's a silly story, but it actually reveals or illustrates quite a concerning trend in our modern culture today.

And that is the trend to not only always be busy, but to show to other people how busy we are. Typically, if you ask someone today, how was your week?

The answer most of the time will be it was pretty busy. And we almost see busyness as a badge of honor, which we subconsciously like to be thought of as a busy, productive person.

Hardly ever will I ask someone, how are you? And they'll reply, well, not very busy. Even though we know that too much busyness is actually really harmful to us.

[2 : 27] The physical effects of stress are more than we'd like to admit. And being overly busy and rushing from one thing to the other and always having something on our mind and always being connected leads to us typically, unless we have amazing self-control, leads to us being snappier than we like to be, less sociable than we should be, and just less joyful than we want to be.

So what we do, we go on holidays. Holidays are typically the way that we find the best antidote to busyness. And especially today, we might want to get away and go, if we can afford it, to a fancy place where we can just switch off.

But even then, I don't know about you, but holidays don't seem to do it, because very soon afterwards, we're back into the swing of things, busy and stressed like ever before. It's almost like on the first day, after coming back to work, we feel like we need another holiday.

I don't know if that's you, but very often it's me. And so what are we missing? If that's the culture we live in, which is just the standard, is a level of busyness that we know is not good for us, then what are we missing?

What is the secret to busyness? And why is resting in this world, truly resting, so elusive and so difficult to find?

[3 : 59] Well, those are some questions that I hope the Bible will answer this morning, because the Bible surprisingly has a lot to say about rest and work and busyness.

Because it also, it shows us what true rest actually is, and where we can find true rest from this crazy world. And so what I want to do this morning is look at a few revelations the Bible uncovers about rest, and what it really is, and what it's really about, and how we can have it.

So, the first of these, a very important one, is to realize, the Bible reveals to us, God wants us to rest. In fact, He commands it.

So, in His Ten Commandments, which, the law that God gave the nation of Israel, as part of showing to humanity, what is the good life, what His will for humanity is in human society.

So, He listed a number of laws, which you might be familiar with. Do not kill, do not steal, do not covet, do not commit adultery, all things that we would agree, would make a really good society, if everyone kept them.

[5 : 11] But one of the things, in His Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment, is to have a holiday. Seriously, there's a commandment, there's a command from God, to have a holiday.

Let me read it, from Exodus 20, verse 8. It says, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. You are to labor six days, and do all your work.

But the seventh day, is a Sabbath, to the Lord your God. So, the word Sabbath, I think it's often misunderstood, what Sabbath is, but essentially, the Hebrew word, is literally, just stop.

Just have a stop. Have a day of ceasing, to work. Put down your shovel, put down your laptop, put down your phone, and just chill.

Just deliberately be unproductive. That's what He's telling, His people to do, in this law. And then He, goes on, just to outline, and elaborate, just what He means.

[6 : 17] 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. 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 He declared it, holy. Literally, He declared it, a holy day, a holiday. And so, God, wants, people, to rest.

And He makes a big point of it, throughout the whole Testament, and the New. But we also see there, the reason, why, God, takes rest, for His people so, seriously.

Why He sees it as so important. And that is because, the purpose of creation itself, is to rest. We actually see this, in the very first chapter, of the Bible.

Genesis chapter 1. Now, Genesis, as you know, is the first book, and it, lays the foundations, for our understanding, of what we're doing here, and what this world is about, and why it was created.

[7 : 24] We've just finished, a preaching series, on Genesis. So, if you haven't, done much, reading of Genesis, it's a great way, to get your bearings, not just for Genesis, but for the whole Bible, to listen through those sermons.

So, they're available, on our website. But, right in this first chapter, of Genesis, we learn something, very important. We learn that the purpose, God made, this amazing world, was for us, to find, real, rest.

And so, what you see, is, as the, creation happens, on the first six days, as each of those days, is a different element, of God, adding to this world, light, and water, and animals, and people, each of those days, is marked, by the phrase, and it was evening, and it was morning, the second day, or the third day, or the fourth day.

But then you get, to the seventh day, and it's very different. Let me read to you, what it says. So, the heavens, and the earth, and everything in them, were completed. On the seventh day, God had completed, his work, that he had done, and he rested, on the seventh day, from all his work, that he had done.

God blessed, the seventh day, and declared it holy, for on it, he rested, from all his work, of creation. So, what's important, to notice here, is that there's no ending, to that day.

[8 : 50] There's no, and it was evening, and it was morning, the seventh day. Effectively, that seventh day, that rest, was to be a day, that continued, forever. A day, a period of time, where, we could now, just sit in, and enjoy, all of God's work, that he had done.

And that's the purpose, that's what rest, really is. Rest, is stopping, from, working for our own lives, and enjoying, the work that God has done, for us, in essence.

That's what rest, is. But here we see, just the basic principle, that, creation, and work, was meant, to result in rest. It's not the other way around.

Rest, is not meant to, be for the sake of work. Work, is actually for the sake of rest. And that's the first thing, we need to, understand. We also, need to appreciate, what God's original plan, for this creation was, which we see in these, chapters of Genesis.

But it was a beautiful, amazing thing. God wanted, and made, humans, to rule, this world, under him. Where they steward creation, and they do, work, in, building, and exploring, and, all kinds of things, that are necessary, to, bring the best, out of this world.

[10 : 13] But we also rest, while we do that. So we, enjoy, God's provision to us, in this amazing creation, that he's given us, as we work, and exercise authority, over the world, under his authority.

That was the plan. And it was an amazing thing. Basically, a, eternal, holiday, in the, best holiday destination, in the world, where, all the work we do, is actually, hugely, fulfilling, and rewarding, and doesn't feel like toil.

That was the plan. Believe it or not. Now, we're not used to that. We can't see that now, because that stage has passed, and I'll tell you why, in a second. But we need to understand, that was, the original plan, for creation.

And that is what, the Sabbath day, and rest, was rooted in. True rest is rooted, in this realization, that God made us, to enjoy him, to rest, to find our provision in him, and to find our value, in him.

That we don't have to, find it elsewhere, in our work. But of course, that's not how, the world is today, and that's not how, many of us, think about work.

[11 : 20] Because, of what happened, later on, in Genesis chapter 3, the fall, of mankind. Basically, humans decided, that, they could do better, without God.

That's what it comes down to. And so they, wanted to take the world, that God had, given them for a purpose, but ignore his rule, ignore him in the world, that he's made, and use it for their own purposes, and rule their own lives.

Now that seemed like, an attractive prospect, freedom, except, that it had a lot of, terrible consequences, on humanity. The first of which, was that when we, stepped outside of God's rule, of us, and his purposes for us, we also stepped outside, of his blessing, and his provision.

And we had to now, fend for ourselves, in a harsh world, that was, all of a sudden, hostile to us. Because when we, become enemies of God, his creation, reacts against us.

That is, why, in Genesis chapter 3, the, curse, was this. Listen to, part of the curse, essentially God, announcing, the results of us, stepping outside, of his rule of our lives.

[12 : 42] It says this, the ground is cursed, because of you. You will eat from it, by means of painful labor, all the days of your life. It will produce, thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants, of the field.

You will eat by the sweat, of your brow, until you return, to the ground, since you were taken from it, for you are dust, and you will return, to dust. And so, we find this world, that is now hostile, to people, and people are hostile, to the world.

We've got a toil, in it, which means that, the once good, interaction, interplay, between work, and rest, where both of those, could be enjoyed, together, is now divided, and work becomes toil, and it becomes the enemy, of rest.

We are reminded of that, every time we go to an airport, and we're asked at the customs gate, work or pleasure? Because those, two things are seen, now as, completely different things.

They're in conflict, with each other. And that's the, first result of, of this fall, from God's rule, and God's plan, for us, because of our sin.

[13 : 49] But the second, result, was that, we now have to provide, for ourselves. So it's kind of like, a child, leaving school, not a child anymore.

So, a young adult, 19 year old, just out of school, really, really looking forward, to break away, from living under, their parents rule, and finally be free, that they've been looking forward to, for their entire teenage life.

and so they leave, and they set up, at their own flat, or whatever, and they feel, wonderfully free, until of course, they realize, that the bills, don't actually pay themselves, the clothes, don't wash themselves, and the food, doesn't make itself, and, they realize, how much, they took for granted, what, they received, the blessing, they received, under their parents rule, and the provision, they received, well in the same way, but, on a much, larger, and more serious scale, humanity, thought, we can be free, of God's rule, we can rule, our own lives, we left, God behind, and suddenly, we find, we have to now, fend for ourselves, and we take for granted, all that we received, under, God's, care, and provision, so we lose, God's provision, through sin, because now, we have to work, to provide for ourselves, but, I think the, the saddest thing, saddest result, of the fall, is that, we also have to, find our own value, rather than, finding our value, where we should have found it, in, an open, and free relationship, with God, now that, that relationship, is ruined, we, try to find, our value, and our identity, in our work, and that is, essentially, how the world, is wired, people's value, are rooted, in how productive, they are, how useful, they are, how much, work, they do, not in who they are, in and of themselves, and I think, that's why, we wouldn't admit it, but, we want to be busy, a lot of the time, you know, it's amazed me, through this, coronavirus, pandemic, when we went, into lockdown, serious, like level five lockdown, and we were all, just, stuck at home, and we couldn't meet, like we used to meet, and we couldn't go, do all those things, we were busy doing, and it was a surprise, the world, still carried on turning, that actually, if we look back, much of that stuff, that has stopped, we didn't really need, to be doing, but we chose to, nobody forced us, to do a lot of the stuff, that makes us busy, in our daily lives, but we do it, because, we want to feel, productive, we want to feel, busy, we want to feel like, we're juicing life, for all it's worth, because, we get our sense of value, and our sense of identity, through what we do, not through, sitting around, doing nothing, and that is rooted, actually, in our broken relationship, with God, because we, we don't find, who we are, through him, we now have to find, our identity, through, our works, and what we do, and so those were, some of the results, of, the fall, but, that's not the end, of the story, thankfully, the Bible goes on, to reveal to us, that God, still has a plan, despite us, turning our backs, on him, and breaking, his law, ignoring, his authority, over us,

God still has a plan, to redeem us, and in, relation to rest, what, redeeming us, means, is bringing us back, into the rest, that he planned for us, that he's always wanted, for us, and we, see this, in that Sabbath command, that he gave, to the Israelites, because what he wants them, to realize, is that, he has rest, planned for them, in the future, and this day, where they are, to just stop, and chill, is to be a foretaste, and an indicator, and a signpost, towards, the rest, where God, will once again, provide, for them, and God, will once more, give them, the value, that they try to seek, in all these other things, that was the, heart of the Sabbath command, heart, but sadly, I think, the Israelites, by and large, missed that point, because what they, ended up doing, was they, took this, Sabbath, idea, where God, intended for them, to find, rest, and to have a foretaste, of the rest, that he wanted them, to experience, and they made it, into, ironically, a work, they made it, into, a law, to keep, a duty, to fulfill, in order, for them, to be, in the right, with God, which it was never, meant to be, and so they, took, what was meant, to give them, rest, and they, turned it, into a work, and that is, one of the reasons, that,

Jesus, had so many, conflicts, with the religious, leaders, of his day, he, often, had, arguments, with them, specifically, about the Sabbath, I mean, you read, any of the Gospels, eventually, you'll come across, him arguing, about the Sabbath, with religious leaders, now why was the Sabbath, so important, here's, an example, of, just such an argument, on the Sabbath, he was going, through the grain fields, and his disciples, began to make their way, picking some heads of grain, the Pharisees, said to him, look, why are they doing, what is not lawful, on the Sabbath, he said to them, have you ever read, what David, and those who were with him, did when he was in need, and hungry, how he entered, the house of God, in the time of Abiath, of 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, so what he's referring to, here is a story, where the king of Israel, David himself, essentially broke, the Sabbath, but for a good purpose, and then Jesus, concludes, with these words, the Sabbath, was made, for man, and not man, for the Sabbath, so then the son of man, is Lord, even of the Sabbath, by son of man, he was referring, to himself, and so what he's saying here, is that they were really missing, the whole point of the Sabbath, that God made it, for us, to enjoy, and to find, rest in, not, not to be a religious, work, but more profound, than that, by calling himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, what he's saying, is that he himself, has come to fulfill, the whole purpose, for the Sabbath, in fact, he puts it beautifully, in this way, in Matthew, chapter 11, listen to this, he says, come to me, all of you, who are weary, and burdened, and I will give you, rest, the rest, that God, always, wanted us, to enjoy, see what Jesus, is saying here, is that, he is the one, who has come, to bring us, what the Sabbath, idea, was always pointing towards, into a place, of true rest, a state, of true rest, and that's why, he called himself, the Lord, of the Sabbath, not just because, he can tell us, what the Sabbath, is really about, but because, he can actually, fulfill the purpose, of the Sabbath, he can restore, humans, to a place, in a state, of rest, that God designed them for, how, on earth, can he do that, well, he went on to show us, when he died on the cross, because his death, was for human sins, not for his own, because he never sinned, but for the sins of others, and so by, dying, the penalty, for the sins of others, they could be forgiven, and be restored, into a relationship, with God, even though God is holy, and just, and we are sinners, through Jesus, death on the cross, we can be restored, into relationship, with our creator, that's why, as Christians, we're so excited, about talking, about Jesus, dying on the cross, is because it's the one thing, that he came to do, to restore us, into right relationship, with God, and you know what that means, right relationship, with God, available through Jesus Christ, means, the way, to find true rest, that we all, desperately want, because in relationship, with God, we find our value, and we find provision, again, for all, our needs, we find our value, because, like a child, in a house, in right relationship, with their parents, the child doesn't, consider their work, the thing that determines, their place in the family, or, determines their value, they, they consider their relationship, with their parent, the underlying foundation, of their value, they don't come, to the end of the day, and say,

[22 : 52] I don't deserve, to be in this house, because I haven't done, enough work today, they are confident, and secure, in their identity, because of the relationship, they have, with their parent, and in the same way, Jesus came to bring us, into a relationship, with our heavenly father, such, that we don't have to, try to find value, and identity, in frenetically, working ourselves, into the ground, because we can find it, once again, where we were always, meant to find it, in a relationship, with our heavenly, father, but also, there we find, provision for all, our needs, through our relationship, with God, we can know, that God, is in charge, of our lives, and that God, as he promises to do, will provide his people, with everything, they need, for this life, and the life to come, and so, through his death, on the cross, Jesus achieved, what we, work, and labor, so hard, to achieve, but never, truly, truly, find, and that is, true rest, the rest, that we were made for, in God, and this, was, ultimately, climaxed, in, his resurrection, from the dead, now, very interestingly, his resurrection, happened, the day, after, the Jewish Sabbath, and that was not, a coincidence, or mistake, that was, intended, and the idea, is just as God, created, in seven days, and established, the Sabbath, as the rest,

Jesus, rising, again, on the eighth day, the first day, of the new week, was, pointing, to, a new creation, and saying, that that, day, that Jesus, rose from the dead, bodily, he actually, walked around, after he had died, miraculously, in a new, creation body, shows us, that the new creation, has in a way, already broken in, to this old, passing away, broken world, and so the new creation, has started already, and his resurrection body, is the first bit, of that new creation, that, world of rest, that God has, always planned for us, to have, and so, if we are to find, true rest, in this world, we need, to understand, what, what the Bible says, about why, it's so difficult, to find rest, because actually, through sin, we are cut off, from the rest,

God intended, but through Christ, that rest can be, restored, now there are many books, I can direct you to, as to, practical aspects, of, how to find, rest, and how to rest better, you know, not, to go to sleep, with your, cell phone screen, in your face, not to, have cell phones, at the dinner table, just put your screens away, not to worship, your children, not to, set, high expectations, of yourself, that you can, never achieve, and in his book, Kevin DeYoung, actually, touches on a lot, of these, practical aspects, of just how to, have a, a more balanced lifestyle, but, he ends, in fact, where scripture, points us to, and that is, finding rest, in, Jesus, and believing, what he says, when he says, come to me, all, who are weary, and burdened, and I will give you rest, because you are weary, and burdened, otherwise, you probably wouldn't be, watching this, and, his words are true, that if you come, to him, you can find, a rest, like you never knew, because as any,

Christian, who has come to him, in faith, and submission, can testify, our relationship, with God, gives us a rest, that nothing else, on this world, can give us, I can, testify for myself, how, the days, that I have been, most at rest, and least stress, are the days, that I have spent, good time, with God, in his word, and in prayer, I'm sure, if you're a Christian, you can agree, that that is the case, because this relationship, we have with God, and being able to take, all the anxieties, of our life, and hand them over to him, knowing that he's in charge, is the source, of a great, release of anxiety, and a great rest, but also, we rest, in relationship with God, because we know, where we're going, in future, we know the rest, that he has planned for us, that, he is already secured, for us, through what Jesus, has done, and knowing that, and being able, to look forward, to that rest, to come in a new, restored creation, without death, and toil, and pain, and suffering, that knowledge, and that hope, allows us, to relax, even when the world, around us, is falling apart, at the seams, and that, is how to rest, in the midst, of a crazy world, well, shall we pray,

Lord, we thank you, that you've revealed, in your word, your intention, for us, to have true rest, to rest in you, to rest in, your provision, and you're giving us, our identity, and our value, rather than having to, work for that ourselves, we thank you, that Jesus, has come, to, deal with our sins, so that we can be, restored, into a relationship, with you, that brings, true rest, once more, I pray for anybody, here, who has not yet, come under Jesus, rule, and salvation, that they would realize, what Jesus, has done for them, and how he died, to pay for their sins, to unlock, this relationship, with you, that brings rest, again, we do, I do pray, Lord, that you would, bring them to, know, Jesus, and realize, what he has done, and realize, the reality, of his resurrection, Lord, I pray for those, who have submitted, and come under, the rule of Jesus, that you would, help them, to do what Jesus said, to come to him, constantly, to find rest, for their souls, that even in this, crazy world, we can know, that in our relationship, with you, and in our, future hope, we can relax, and we don't have to worry, because, you have everything, under control, even when it doesn't, look like it, and that you have, a future, rest, secured for us,

[29 : 26] Lord, help us to meditate, on these things, and encourage each other, with these words, in Jesus name, Amen.