



“The Jesus Rhythm”

Biblical Text: Luke 9:28-37

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(* denotes frame change on screens)

Today’s message is the last on Brady Boyd’s book, **Addicted to Busy*. I loved Pastor Karen’s comment. She said, *“This book is the story of my life.”* Mine too!

The book is full of practical advice about breaking the cycle of over-commitment. I’ve suggested three simple things the book recommends, **“Unplug”* and **“Get filled,”* so you can have something left over so you can **“Give your best away.”*

I hope you’ve unplugged a little - turned off your mobile device, pulled out your ear-buds, or pushed “off” on the TV. I hope you’ve also done something that fills your soul - taken a nap, started a book, played golf – even over spousal objections! And I hope you’ve used that time, to be more available to others. If we will keep on doing those things, they’ll help **break our “addiction to busy.”* There’s something else. I hope we’ll resurrect the practice of *“keeping Sabbath.”*

Let me tell you why that is important. I was at Hy-Vee buying gasoline (*with a 40¢ discount*) a while back, and I ran into a member I hadn’t seen in a while. She said, *“You know what our weekends are like. We work full-time Monday to Friday, while the kids are in school. Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, we are running to a volleyball, basketball, soccer or dance, depending on which kid. I hope we get back some Sunday soon.”* ** I just said, “Yep, been there and done that.” And I have.*

I didn’t miss Sunday morning! The churches would likely have objected! But I have chased all over on Saturday, and sent my kids on with other parents on Sunday, scarfed down fast food after Church and ran to catch up. I didn’t miss Church, but I wasn’t keeping Sabbath either. My kids were worn out and so were we!

Now they are practicing what we modeled. **I’m not proud of that.** We pass on to our children and grandchildren the model of a balance between work and rest, busyness and recovery - or we teach them to be over-committed and stressed. So, I want to make a case today for the ancient practice of *“keeping Sabbath.”*

There are good reasons. First of all, *keeping Sabbath* is one of the ** “Ten Commandments,”* found, among other places, in Deuteronomy 5:12-14.

**¹²Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded. ¹³On six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁴But the seventh is a Sabbath to the Lord.”¹*

¹ Deuteronomy 5:12-14, New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National

*The Kiddush Prayer reminds us: **“Blessed are you O Lord, King of the universe. You made the Sabbath, for us to keep it holy, and remember all your blessings.”*

It was the rhythm Jesus kept. Luke 4:16 says: **“When Jesus came to Nazareth, he went to the synagogue, as was his custom, on the Sabbath day.”*²

God knew we’d need a time and place recovery once a week. The Sabbath is a gift for us. And it doesn’t have to be on Sunday. But if it isn’t on Sunday, here’s my question. *“When in a period of seven days, do you rest and restore your balance?”*

And I’m bad at it. I really am. I have a fully equipped study at my house as well as at the Church. *My desktop Mac is connected to the office, and everything else. And my iPhone goes with me everywhere I go. **And** with hands-free, I can even leverage my drive time. I can’t tell you how many times Ann has tried to get my attention and I have said, *“working”* or *“work call”* or *“work email.”*

I may be **just** little over-connected! **Have mercy!** There I go again, *dead man walking! But I am far better than I used to be. Again, I’m one of the lucky ones.

Somehow the Hebrews understood the importance of sacred rest, even during the most perilous parts of their lives. They kept Sabbath under siege, in famine, in times of drought. Mark Buchanan says, **“Keeping Sabbath nurtured something deep within them that only came to light in times of testing.”*³

And we see this in the ministry of Jesus also. We see this especially in Luke’s Gospel. We find Jesus in the midst of ministry, calling disciples, forgiving sinners, healing broken people, teaching and preaching and answering questions about the kingdom, working hard and running fast and strong. But in the midst of all this busyness, Jesus takes many well-deserved breaks and times for restoration.

I love the way Eugene Peterson translates Luke 5:16 in *The Message*: *“As often as possible,”* he translates, *“Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer.”*⁴

And I love the way Wayne Muller describes what he calls **“The Jesus Rhythm”** in his book on Sabbath, rest and renewal for our busy lives: *“Jesus obeyed a deeper rhythm. He doesn’t wait for the ‘official’ Sabbath to dawn.”*⁵ There is a time to engage, then withdraw, rest and restore, and engage again.

That’s how we’re invited to live too. **I believe in that rhythm – I really do!** But, if you observed me, you wouldn’t think so. And I know I’m not the only one.

² Luke 4:16, paraphrased and condensed by the author.

³ Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath*. Copyright © 2006, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, pg. 59.

⁴ Luke 5:16, *The Message, The Bible in Contemporary Language*. Copyright © 2002 by Eugene Peterson and NavPress. All rights reserved.

⁵ Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives*. Copyright © 1999, New York: Bantam Books, pg. 25.

Brady Boyd says, *“We act like we are indispensable - to our families, co-workers, maybe even to the world.”*⁶ But we are not. Important – yes. Indispensable – no.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Luke 9. In verse 10, Jesus takes the disciples to a “private place” in Bethsaida for rest and recovery. *But the crowds find out he is there. Jesus doesn’t turn them away, saying, *“Sorry, we are on retreat now, come back later.”* He meets their needs - it’s the *Feeding of the 5,000*. But then right afterward, we find Jesus charging his batteries, recovering and praying in verse 18.

And, not long afterward, we find our text, verse 28. **“Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.”*⁷ And again his closest disciples didn’t get it.

Vacations don’t last forever. Neither do spiritual retreats. We are supposed to go back to work. You can’t stay on your knees forever. Peter says, **“Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.”*⁸ Verse 33.

But he gets it partially right. *“It is good to be here,”* Peter says. It is good, God-honoring, essential, necessary, indispensable. In fact, unless we learn to keep Sabbath, to worship weekly, rest and restore, soon we have nothing left to give!

But those times of “Sabbath” are always to get us ready for engaging in ministry, living for Christ, once again. Look at what happens the next day, in verses 37 and 38, after they come down the mountain: **“...a great crowd met him, and a man shouted, ‘I beg you, look at my son; he is my only child.’”*⁹

There will always be opportunities to minister love, to listen, to sometimes, thank God, to help. But to meet those needs, we have to have enough margin to be useful to God and others. Otherwise, we neither see the needs nor have anything to give that might be able to meet those needs. But it doesn’t have to be like that.

Keeping Sabbath, the *Jesus Rhythm*, really means that once a week, for a day, we quit trying to be the master of our universe, and yield to God instead. It’s amazing what can happen if we truly make ourselves available to him.

I am convinced that, if we do, we’ll bring life to those around us out of the overflow of God’s new life in us!

⁶ Brady Boyd, *Addicted to Busy, Recovery for the Rushed Soul*. Copyright © 2014, David C. Cook Publishing, pg. 106.

⁷ Op. Cit. Luke 9:28, New Revised Standard Version Bible.

⁸ Ibid. Luke 9:33, New Revised Standard Version Bible.

⁹ Op. Cit. Luke 9:37-38, paraphrased and condensed by the author.