

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2016: *The Book of Matthew*
Lesson 6 “Resting in Christ”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 11:28–30; 12:1, 2; Luke 14:1–6; John 5:9–16; Matthew 12:9–14; Isaiah 58:7–13.

Memory Text

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Light Yoke of Christ
- III. Unrest Over a Rest Day
- IV. Jesus’ Response
- V. Healing on the Sabbath
- VI. Keeping the Sabbath
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. When it comes to Sabbath keeping in today’s world, which is the higher priority, relationship with God (and inner peace) or relationship with others? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Matthew 11:20-24. What did Jesus mean when He said that the inhabitants of Galilee were “worse than the inhabitants of Sodom”? What would that tell us about the Galileans of Jesus’ day? Read Matthew 11:25-27. How do these verses relate to the previous passage? Does the context mean that verses 20-24 are intended to tell us something about God? What would that be? Read Matthew 11:28-30. How does that relate to the previous passages? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. In the gospels Jesus often created unrest over a day of rest (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 14:1-6; John 5:9-16)! What were the issues at stake in the preceding texts and what issues were not at stake? (Monday’s lesson)
4. The Pharisees often tried to avoid sinning by “making a fence around the Torah,” so that they wouldn’t come even close to sinning. This meant multiplying rules and regulations regarding every detail of life. What kind of view of God must have lain

behind such proposals? Or to put it another way, what kind of God would approve of such legalism? Is such a fence around the law really possible? In what ways do we do the same kinds of things the Pharisees did? (Monday's lesson)

5. Read Matthew 12:3-8. How does Jesus respond to the "heavy yoke" of the Pharisees? Compare Matthew 12 with 1 Samuel 21:1-6. What is Jesus' line of reasoning here? Why would Jesus suggest that the hunger of His disciples was more important than Sabbath guidelines? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. The lesson quotes Ellen White: "In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father." DA 284. What kind of Sabbath-keeping best reflects the character of God? (Tuesday's lesson)
7. Read Matthew 12:9-14. What was the issue in this story and why would that be a cause for contention? (Wednesday's lesson)
8. Read Matthew 12:12. Why is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath? What are some greater or lesser "goods" that we should consider for the Sabbath? 13:44-52. What does the Sabbath tell us about God? What does the larger view of God's character tell us about the Sabbath? (Thursday's lesson)
9. Read Isaiah 58:7-13. According to this passage, what does it mean to truly live out the principles of the Sabbath? What does it mean to be a "repairer of the breach" in today's world? (Thursday's lesson)
10. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice (Matthew 12:7)?" What light do Matthew 9:10-13, Hosea 6:6 and Isaiah 1:11-17 shed on His comment? (Friday's lesson)
11. Why are so many people who love Jesus deeply adamant in their rejection of the Sabbath? (Friday's lesson)

Bible Texts for Special Consideration

Matthew 12:1-8, ESV

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." ³ He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? ⁶ I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

Mark 2:23-28, NRSV

One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" ²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? ²⁶ He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." ²⁷ Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; ²⁸ so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

Luke 14:1-6, NIV

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. ² There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. ³ Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" ⁴ But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away. ⁵ Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" ⁶ And they had nothing to say.

John 5:9-16, ESV

And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." ¹¹ But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" ¹² They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Or, as one translation has it, “Their worship of me is but the commandments of men learned by rote.” And rote, unthinking worship is such an insult to our intelligent God. Then Jesus set out to tell the truth about His Father and the kind of obedience that is really pleasing to Him.

You recall what He did at such great risk on the Sabbath. It was all so innocent and good. He healed people and helped them. But those gloomy legalists were shocked and they denounced Him for disobeying the law. Think of the Lawgiver being denounced as a lawbreaker. “No,” Jesus said, “I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets,” which meant not just the Ten Commandments, but the whole Old Testament. “I have not come to destroy it,” or misrepresent it, “I have come to fulfill it, to explain it to you.”

By teaching and example, especially on the Sabbath, Jesus set out to correct the wide misunderstanding of God’s law and to explain what it was all about. He said the law was given *for* you. Especially was the Sabbath given for you, to be an advantage, not a restriction. He said this one day, as He defended the right of the disciples to pluck some ears of grain and rub them in their hands and eat them: “The Sabbath was made for you—you weren’t made for the Sabbath.” The Sabbath that you work so hard to keep and which has become such a burden to you, was given to help you, not to be a restriction and certainly not to be a mere test of obedience.

“If only you knew the truth about God and His laws,” Jesus went on, “you would find that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.” (As He glanced at all the books of rules and regulations they had accumulated.)

Look at those famous words in Matthew 11:28:

Come to me, all of you who toil and are burdened and I will let you rest. Let my yoke be put upon you and learn from me, for [though I am God] I am gentle and humble-minded [Have you ever thought of the Infinite One being humble-minded?]. And your hearts will find rest, for the yoke I offer you is a kindly one, and the load I ask you to bear is light. (Goodspeed)

You would think the people would be relieved to hear this right from headquarters. But instead, they accused the Son of God of blasphemously misrepresenting His Father. They even said He had a devil to be talking about God and His laws like this! And they condemned Him as lawless and crucified Him as a heretic. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #11, “God’s Law is No Threat to Our Freedom” recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>

Lou: When you talk about the seal of God, that leads to another phrase that you commented on, and promised us more a little later. What really is the mark of the beast?

Graham: The sealing is mentioned first in Revelation, then the mark of the beast. And I think the mark of the beast, really a symbol of loyalty to the opposition, should be compared with the symbol of loyalty to God. I believe that to receive the seal of God is to be so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually that one cannot be moved. I believe that to receive the “mark of the beast” is to be so settled into the lie, and there are Scriptures that talk about the Lie, preferring Satan’s lies to the truth, you’ve substituted his lies for the truth. I believe to receive the mark of the beast is to be so settled into Satan’s false picture of God that not even the Spirit of God could move us. We cannot be moved. So in essence, the seal or the mark represents an inner decision and commitment for eternity with respect to God.

Lou: Well, are you suggesting then that the seal of God—and for those of us who have roots in Seventh-day Adventism for example, the seal of God has been tied very closely to the Sabbath.

Graham: All my life.

Lou: In fact, I probably have referred to the Sabbath as the seal of God in itself. But I hear you making a distinction there.

Graham: One has to stop and realize that the people who crucified Christ kept the seventh day Sabbath scrupulously, very, very carefully. Did they have the seal of God? They certainly were not settled into the truth about God. When Jesus brought the truth about God, they said He had a devil, and they killed Him to silence His witness. On the other hand though, you remember the evening we talked about how the Sabbath sums up the good news about our God. I believe that knowing, meaningful, intelligent, thoughtful observers of the seventh day as a reminder of all these great demonstrations of the truth about our God, could be an outward expression of an inward conviction and a settling into this truth about our God. The seventh day Sabbath beautifully fits this mark of identification of those who are committed to the truth about God.

Lou: So it has something to do with very deep understanding and experience.

Graham: Yes. That’s why you can see, when the chips are down, I mean, when the issues in the great controversy are clearly seen, it’s conceivable that the preference for a substitute Sabbath could suggest preference for, even faith in, the substitute for the Son of God; the one who said, “I will be like the Most High.” The one who said to Christ, “Worship me.” But not until then. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10 with Lou Venden, “The Reminder of the Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>

Lou: Someone has asked: “Why did Jesus heal the paralytic on the Sabbath?”

Graham: Many of His healings were elective, weren’t they? The paralytic had been there thirty-eight years.

Lou: Not a critical emergency.

Graham: Not at all, you see. I think Jesus tried to keep a low profile most of the time. He knew if He became very public, He was so controversial, He wouldn’t last very long. And indeed He didn’t when He became very conspicuous. But when it came to the Sabbath, He risked His life repeatedly to clear the Sabbath of misunderstanding. Because an arbitrary approach to the Sabbath puts the Father in the worst possible light; and so, to clear this up, He ran the risk of doing healing, and helping on the Sabbath. And He ran into trouble every time. It evidently is that important to redeem the Sabbath of arbitrariness, because the Sabbath speaks so eloquently of God, for good or ill. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13 with Lou Venden, “How God Treats His Erring Children” recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>*

A most significant verse about God is in Isaiah 29:13. What was wrong with their worship? They were busy with their worship. Just as when Jesus came, they were never more religious. They tithed, they health-reformed, they kept their Sabbaths, they memorized the scriptures. But it wasn’t doing them any good! Jesus quotes this later on in Isaiah 29:13. “The Lord said: ‘Because this people draw near with their mouth.’” Remember He also says, “Who requires you to trample my courts?” They came, and Amos says they sang a lot. “They honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.” The heart is where a man does his thinking, his best thinking! Amos continues, “And their fear of me”, and that is their reverence, their worship of me, “is but a commandment of men learned by rote.” Unthinking, mechanical worship is an utter insult to our intelligent, gracious God. And it doesn’t do us any good! It destroys us to simply do these things because we’re supposed to. And if we Adventists, when we’re asked why we do something or don’t do it—if all we can say is, “Well, because God said so, and I believe it, and that’s all there is to it,” that’s something learned by rote. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Isaiah, recorded 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The demands upon God are even greater upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They ask more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His special attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests. Heaven's work never ceases, and men should never rest from doing good. The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. {DA 207.2}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world, and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath for man. After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the ten commandments existed before the fall, and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall, the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state (3SG 295). {1BC 1104.3}

The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image. {Ed 250.1}

Christ, during His earthly ministry, emphasized the binding claims of the Sabbath; in all His teaching He showed reverence for the institution He Himself had given. In His days the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of God. Christ set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. Although followed with merciless hostility by the rabbis, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God. {PK 183.1}

God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life's great essentials. Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasant's home, a peasant's fare, a craftsman's occupation, living a life of obscurity, identifying Himself with the world's unknown toilers,—amidst these conditions and surroundings,—Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {Ed 77.2}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

As a Teacher sent from God, Christ's work was to explain the true significance of the laws of God's government. His work was important; for He sought to present truth in contrast to the many false theories so destructive to the salvation of all who entertained them. He came, not to abrogate the law, but to be in His life a correct expositor of the character of God, which the law revealed. To remove the confusion of opinion existing everywhere concerning the meaning of the law, He Himself lived the law in its purity. {ST, May 7, 1902 par. 7}

Recommended Reading: *Desire of Ages* Chapter 29 – “The Sabbath” <https://egwwritings.org/>