



Much Needed Rest

***God's Rest for Us
Today***


Have you been fully loaded with burden?

Think about a time when you were fully loaded with burden. I think back to a previous job where I felt like I had to do it all, and be available all the time. I was not able to un-tether from my phone in fear of missing a phone call. In the middle of the night my sleep would be interrupted with anxiety of a possible 2 AM phone call. I was so full of burden that it was affecting all parts of my life. If you are anything like me, you probably shudder at this memory and at how exhausted you had become. You may be struggling with a lack of rest right now. Do you feel like you can't rest? I think we can fall into a trap where we think that things will not be taken care of if we stop and rest. The deadlines at work won't be met, you might lose your job, and you may not be able to provide for your family. You may in this time think back to the protestant motto of "if you don't work, you don't eat" so you just keep going. This goes beyond a 9-5 job. Maybe you are worried about your kids or grandkids, are over exerted as a volunteer, or are suffering under the weight of day to day stress. If this is you, listen to Jesus's words here in Matthew 11:28. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." 1 Peter 5-7 puts it this way, "Cast all your anxiety on him [God], because he cares for you." I like to think that Peter is speaking from experience here out of all of the time he felt anxious, perhaps he looked over at Jesus and in the very sight of him realized that whatever he was feeling failed in comparison to the love of Jesus. Maybe Peter was thinking back to Jesus teaching about the birds saying,

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“Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”



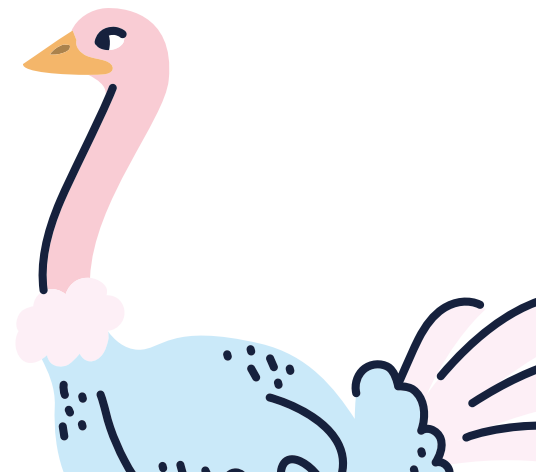



Jesus assures us that we do not need to be anxious for the next day, we can trust God for what we need. Even Paul gets in on this party, writing to the church at Philippi, “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” What they are all saying is that it is ok to rest and that we are free from worry when we cast our cares upon Jesus and trust that God can handle it without us. So, to sum all of this up, it is ok to take a break. What does this break look like? Maybe we can take our cues from the master of rest, God. We see God resting in the creation account. After working six days to create the world, we see God resting on the seventh day.

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“And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.”

What do you think it would even look like for God to rest? If you were in God’s position would you be able to let go and say that it is all good now and just stop? This is something that I would find hard to do. Maybe the zebras need more stripes or the ostrich needs to be able to fly. And what is going on with that platypus thing, do I need to fix that? That’s not what we see here, we see God putting a stamp of approval on it all, “it is good!”





Creation is so good that even God can step away and rest! Imagine for a bit what it would look like for God to rest. Personally, I like to think it looks like what God does in Genesis 3 right before he finds that humanity has eaten from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. He walked in the Garden. He looked at the light reflecting back to him from a nearby river. He felt the lush grass underneath his feet as he walked. He watched the birds dance across the sky and the deer prance through the woods. It was good, it was all good. He took in His creation and enjoyed what good work He had done. He even wants to walk with His creation and enjoy that time with Adam and Eve. If we are to rest like God, maybe that means we enjoy the fruits of our own labor, and reflect on the good things we have done through the talents God has given to us. This is a time to walk with God and to show gratitude for taking care of everything while recognizing and trusting that God is running the show. We are not needed to keep it afloat because God created a good system where even He can rest.



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