

BELPRES CHURCH

Sermon Title: The Invitation

Icebreaker Question: Would you rather ask for help or figure it out on your own?

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

This week's scripture:
Matthew 11:25-12:13

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."

³ He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? ⁶ I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

⁹ Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰ and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

¹¹ He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

¹³ Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do you think Jesus means when he says his yoke is easy and his burden is light? Does his yoke seem easy and light to you or not? Explain.
- How would you describe Jesus' understanding of sabbath in Matthew 11:25-30? How would you describe the Pharisees' view of sabbath in chapter 12:1-13? Are there any similarities? What are the differences, and how do those differences inform your practice of sabbath?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- What is one thing you can stop for one day this week to be restored by Jesus?
- Sabbath can move us from restlessness to restfulness in Jesus. Scott shared that listening to Christian hymns, picturing Jesus sitting next to him, and talking to him like he's having a conversation with a friend is how he connects with Jesus. What are some things that work for you?

Closing Question and Application: Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Take the challenging parts of your conversation to Jesus. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.

This week's Sabbath practice:

What's one thing you can STOP for Sabbath?

- Work, homework, errands, chores. Anything that leads you to "hustle."
- Technology, screens, news, email, social media. Scrolling.
- Shopping, overspending, consumerism.