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Take Time To Be Holy

MARK 6:30-32

Introduction

1. Tomorrow, September 5th, we as a nation will celebrate a federal holiday known as Labor Day.
2. Labor Day, also known as a “workingmen’s holiday” was signed in to law by President Grover Cleveland on June 28, 1894.
3. It is celebrated on the first Monday in September every year as a time to recognize the works and contributions of laborers throughout our country.
4. Many of us will enjoy a day rest tomorrow, but even as you do, I want to encourage you to think about the rest to which God originally called man, the rest He established for the Israelites and the ultimate rest to which He calls each of us.
5. In our reading today, we find Jesus and His disciples so busy with people “coming and going” that, as Mark tells us, “they did not even have time to eat” (Mark 6:31b).
6. For this reason, He invited them to “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31a).
7. There are times when we each need rest, but we fill the time with things which need doing around the house or trying to get ahead on office work.
8. When we do this, we do not find the rest for our souls which Jesus intends.
9. I want to encourage you to spend time with God. Let Him fill you so that you have the inner strength to continue on.

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I. God’s Provision For Rest

A. THE SABBATH DAY

1. The first book of our Bibles is known as Genesis, it is the book of beginnings and reveals to us how everything which we see around us came into being.
2. By the time you come to the end of the first chapter in Genesis, you have a synopsis of all that God created in six days.
3. The first verse of the second chapter has these words, “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts” (Genesis 2:1).
4. The next two verses share something significant which God did:

“By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” (Genesis 2:2–3, NASB95)

5. God did not rest because He was tired. He doesn't grow weary or tired (Isaiah 40:28).
6. No, He set a pattern of rest for His people.
7. When God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites there at Mount Sinai, His fourth commandment was, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).
8. He then told them how they were to keep the Sabbath day holy, set apart for Him.

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus

20:9–11, NASB95)

9. So it was that God's people, the Israelites, were to set aside the seventh day for Him. It was to be a day of rest in Him, reflection upon Him and thanksgiving to Him.
10. Also by resting on the seventh day, both man and animals could be refreshed for another six days of work.

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B. THE SABBATH YEAR

1. In addition to the Sabbath Day, they were also to recognize a Sabbath Year.
2. In Exodus 23:10-11, Moses describes for the Israelites how it was to be honored:

“You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.” (Exodus 23:10–11, NASB95)
3. During the seventh year, they were not to sow their field or prune their vineyard (Leviticus 25:4).
4. If you are like me, you may be wondering what they did for food during the seventh year and even the eighth year until they were finally able to reap another harvest.
5. In Leviticus 25:21-22, God promised His people that He would provide such an abundant harvest in the sixth year that it would be sufficient to carry them until the harvest of the ninth year came in!
6. This sabbatical year reminded the Israelites that God owned the land and He was entrusting it to them.
7. God knew the importance of His people taking a much needed rest.
8. The purpose of both the Sabbath day and the Sabbath Year was that it

allowed the Israelites to rest from their labors and focus upon the fact that they were to be holy, set apart, unto God.

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II. Our Need For Time With God

A. THE WORLD RUSHES ON

1. You and I are no different from the Israelites of old.
2. We too have a need for time with God, a time to be holy, set apart. Why?
3. W. D. Longstaff indicated the reason 140 years ago in a hymn he wrote, one titled "*Take Time To Be Holy.*"
4. In the first line of the second stanza, he wrote, "**Take time to be holy, the world rushes on.**"
5. Our lives are hectic, fast-paced, filled with any number of activities which consume our time.
6. Before we know it, we are looking back and asking ourselves where did all the time go.
7. In Psalm 144:4, David said that our "days are like a passing shadow."
8. James compared them to "a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

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B. IT TAKES TIME TO BE HOLY

1. In all of our hurrying we have to realize that it takes time to be holy.
2. It doesn't just happen, it must be pursued (Hebrews 12:14).

"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14, NASB95)
3. Paul, in his second letter to the Christians in Corinth said that it is something we must perfect (2 Corinthians 7:1).

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1, NASB95)

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III. How Do We Take The Time

A. “ABIDE IN HIM ALWAYS”

1. We “feed on His Word”

- a. “. . . like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2, NASB95).
- b. In Psalm 19:7-8, David named a number of benefits we receive from God’s Word:
 - 1) It restores our soul and makes us wise (v. 7)
 - 2) It rejoices our heart and enlightens our eyes (v. 8)

2. We let Him be our Guide.

- a. Jesus is the good Shepherd (John 10:14)
- b. As His sheep, we hear His voice and follow Him.
- c. Why? He will only lead us down righteous paths.

3. We “spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.”

- a. This is what Jesus often did with His Father (Luke 5:16).

“But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray”
(Luke 5:16, NASB95).
- b. On one occasion, He spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12).

4. Hebrews 4:16 invites us to speak with Him through our prayers and seek His blessings.

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16, NASB95)

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B. “MAKE FRIENDS OF GOD’S CHILDREN”

1. We need time with one another — time to be instructed, encouraged, admonished.
2. This is what the early Christians in Jerusalem did, they were “continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).
3. You and I are to encourage one another each and every day, “so that none of [us] will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).
4. Peter said that “as each [of us] has received a gift, we [must] use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10, ESV).

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III. The Benefits Of Our Taking Time To Be Holy

A. WE WILL BECOME LIKE OUR LORD

1. This is what it means to be a disciple.
2. A disciple’s goal is to eventually become like his or her teacher.

“A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

3. Through our conduct, others will see His likeness.
4. This was true of Peter and John (Acts 4:13).

“Now as they [rulers of the Jews] observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they

were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13, NASB95)

5. In his letter to the Christians in Galatia, Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me . . .” (Galatians 2:20).

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B. WE WILL FIND OURSELVES FITTED FOR SERVICE ABOVE

1. In His parable of The Talents, Jesus told of the response of the master to his two servants who took the monies he entrusted to them and earned more (Matthew 25:21, 23).

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’” (Matthew 25:21, NASB95)

2. To serve the One who alone is Sovereign over all creation is the greatest privilege we can know.
3. Such a privilege comes from taking the time to be holy while we are still living in this world.

Conclusion

1. As the world continues to rush on by, will you take the time to be holy, to set yourself apart for God’s purposes?
2. There are many pursuits to which you and I may give yourselves, but none will satisfy, none will feed our souls as will time spent with God.
3. If you haven’t been feeding upon His Word, please start doing so today.
4. If you haven’t spent time alone with God in secret, now is a good time to start.
5. Let Him mold you and make you according to His will.

6. If you aren't a Christian, please know there is a great difference Christ can and will make in your life if you will surrender your life to Him.
7. Won't you decide today to follow Jesus?