

“Practice my Sabbaths.” We had been unable to face the Creator. We had begged Moses, **“Don’t let the Creator speak to us.”** We had put Moses between us and the Creator. We had a set of commandments written by Moses’s hand, not the Creator’s hand. And Moses was only allowed to see the Lord’s backside. And even when Moses was speaking the Creator’s Word to us, we put a veil over Moses’s face. The law that was being given to us was not complete and whole. It was **veiled** and obscured. It was only the **backside** of the truth. It was **mediated** by a fallen and broken man. And it was being given to us because of the **“hardness of our hearts.”**

And yet even this **veiled** law was still hard to stomach. The Sabbath practices were the most central and important part of the law. The Sabbath rhythm was an extension of the order of the creation. The Creator had made the universe in six days and rested on the seventh. We were supposed to imitate his pattern that he had built into the creation itself. Every seventh day we were supposed to **“stop”**—in fact, that is what the word Sabbath meant. He called us to stop and rest the land, rest our animals, rest our workers, and rest ourselves every seventh day. He promised that there would always be enough on the sixth day to get us through this seventh day of rest.

But the Sabbath didn’t stop there. The Creator also asked us to **“stop”** every seven years. He wanted a Sabbath year where we would stop **all** planting and harvesting. We would rest the land for a whole year, not touching it and not taking anything from it. We were called to let all of the land’s produce return to the land. The Creator promised that the sixth year would produce enough to get us through the seventh. And the Creator told us that our true **“food”** during the seventh year would be our rest. We needed to feed on rest. We needed to stop our endless toiling to give the land a break, to give our animals a break, to give our workers a break, and to give ourselves a break. And this break and rest was also rest from debts. During the seventh year, the Creator commanded us to forgive **all** debts, **every** debt that a person had. Therefore, all slaves were to be released. Every seven years all creatures were to be forgiven their debts and released from slavery so they could rest and be free again.

But the Sabbath didn’t stop there. After every seven sets of seven years, every 49 years, we were supposed to celebrate a Jubilee year. During this 50th year, the land was to be set free from ownership. The Creator said to us, **“The land is mine.”** We were supposed to fairly redistribute the land on this **“Sabbath of Sabbaths”** so that there were no more rich or poor among us. The Creator did not want generational wealth to accumulate. He wanted every generation to start over on equal footing. Everyone was to go back to ground zero and we were called to share **all the land** evenly and equally with every person.

The Sabbath practices were given to us so we would not become like Egypt, like Civilization. The Creator had brought us out of Egypt to live differently, to be **“holy”** and set apart from Civilization. Civilization **never** stopped. Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt never stopped. Civilization was obsessed with non-stop production and economic advancement. Civilization was always trying to figure out how to **work** more, **get** more, and **produce** more. Civilization lived in constant **opposition** to the created order itself. And so the Creator wanted us to **“stop”** living like that. The Creator wanted us to live in **harmony** with the created order. He wanted our lives to be shaped and formed by **Sabbath**. He wanted us to live as free people, not as slaves to **work**, not as slaves to **debts**, not as slaves to **ownership**, generational wealth, and social inequalities. And if we were to live **free** that meant the land, animals, and workers needed to be free as well. If we enslaved the land, we were slaves with it. If we enslaved the animals, we were slaves with them. If we enslaved our workers and servants, we were slaves with them. For any creature to live free, we **all** had to live free. Even the wealthiest Egyptians, including Pharaoh, had been slaves while they were imprisoning us as their slaves.

The Creator told us, **“Practice my Sabbaths”** and if we did so, then he promised that the land would thrive. All creatures would be able to live in harmony with each other. Land, animals, and people would all thrive together. But if we didn’t **“practice the Sabbaths”** then he said, **“The land will vomit you out.”** The land would throw us out and it would finally be able to rest and stop after we were removed from it. The land was going to rest either way. We could either live on the land and allow it to rest while we were there, or we could be thrown out of the land so it could rest on its own. But our hearts were **hard**. We thought this veiled law was **impractical**. How were we to live this way? Releasing slaves would **ruin** our economy. Forgiveness of debts would ruin our businesses. Redistributing the land would never let us achieve the wealth we desired. So as we left the wilderness and entered the **“promised land”** of abundance, we didn’t practice even this veiled law. We lived like Civilization and sure enough, the land failed, its fertility died, it stopped producing an abundance, and it became hot and arid—and we were **vomited out** of the land.

“Practice my Sabbaths.” Moses tells us in the veiled law of the Creator to rest ourselves, our land, our animals, and our workers every seventh day. He tells us to release our slaves every seven years. He tells us to forgive all debts every seven years. He tells us we must redistribute the land evenly to all people every 50 years. This veiled law periodically evens the playing field in order to stop great accumulations of wealth and the development of great inequalities among people. But Christ Jesus comes to us and removes the **veil** of the Creator’s law. Jesus shows us that the Sabbath is not for only special days and years. The Sabbath is for every moment of every day. Jesus calls us to **always** help others find true rest, to **never** take slaves, to **never** hold a debt over another person, and to **always** relinquish all ownership of everything. Jesus tells us that as his Body, as his Church we are **“Lord of the Sabbath.”** We are not slaves of the Sabbath. We have been set free to **“practice the Sabbaths.”** We are empowered to help others find rest and to help them stop practicing the insane, non-stop, and enslaving ways of Civilization.

“Practice my Sabbaths.” Civilization refuses to listen to the Creator. It rejects his Sabbaths. And Civilization is being vomited out of the land as we speak. We see this happening around us every day. Human civilization is being vomited out of the land because in its greed it **never** stops. The earth is rejecting Civilization and it will collapse. But even as this is happening all around us, you and I are called to be different and **“holy.”** Are you living in the holy ways that the Lord has called you to? Are you **“practicing his Sabbaths”**? Are you living a daily pattern of stopping from the ways of Civilization? Are you living a daily pattern of resting? Are you helping the land, animals, and workers around you find rest? Are you forgiving **all** debts? Are you setting free **all** those you have tried to control and dominate? Are you letting go of **all** ownership?

Christ is calling you to **“practice his Sabbaths.”** Christ is calling you to **“stop.”** Stop your endless busyness. Stop your debt and grudge holding. Stop your unforgiveness. Stop your greedy grabbing and accumulating. Stop holding onto your possessions. **“Stop”**—not just every fiftieth year, not just every seventh year, not just every seventh day, **“stop”** every single day and every single moment of your life. Stop your selfish flesh so you can follow the Spirit. Live generously, live a life of sharing, live a life of constant forgiveness, live a life of owning nothing. **“Stop”** being a child of Civilization. Be a free child of the Creator. Do not just live his law every once in a while. Live his law and practice his Sabbaths every moment of every day. Christ has shown you the Way. Christ has set you free. Follow him and **“practice his Sabbaths.” Amen.**