



REST FOR THE WEARY

INTRO: Practicing Sabbath rest means slowing down to be still and rest in God's presence. The world demands that we wear many hats, but God calls us to remember our truest identity: beloved. Author and pastor Tish Harrison Warren writes that "we are marked from our first waking moment by an identity that is given to us by grace: an identity that is deeper and more real than any other identity we will don that day."

1. When you wake up in the morning, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

READ Matthew 12:9-21

1. Consider this story from the perspective of the man with the withered hand. How do you think he experiences the Sabbath?
2. Look at the Pharisees' response to Jesus' healing act. How has their religious culture turned the Sabbath against themselves and others?
3. Another version of this story is found in Luke 6:6-11. Read it and discuss any differences between the two versions. How does each one depict Jesus? Is his tone different?

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. When have you experienced a culture of religion that was more harmful than healing? How did you respond?
2. When have you experienced Christ's redemption in your life? What about your family, community or church?

OUTRO: Like the Pharisees, we are so tempted to busy ourselves with tasks and theologies that deplete us of hope and life. Christ came to restore our identity in him and to redeem our hearts and minds from unhealthy attitudes and behavior, even within the church!

PRAY TOGETHER.

(Be still and ask God to show you how you can rest and heal this week.)