



INTRO: When you hear the word Sabbath, what comes to mind? For a lot of people, Sabbath is associated with a long list of Don'ts. However, when you look at Scripture, especially the Gospels, you might be surprised to find that Jesus has a different perspective. Sabbath isn't about depletion. It's about embracing practices that allow us to experience God's love and mercy more fully. Sabbath invites us to lean into our truest identity given to us by Christ.

1. Is the idea of Sabbath new to you? Was it part of your upbringing?

READ Matthew 12:1-8

1. Look at verses 3-5. What is Jesus doing when he asks the Pharisees, "Have you not read?"
2. What does Jesus mean when he says "something greater than the temple is here" in v. 6?
3. In v. 7, Jesus references Hosea 6:6, which says, "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." What are the sacrifices and burnt offerings you make to "be faithful?"

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. Describe a time when you experienced mercy instead of judgment or shame.
2. Why is it so easy to think and act like a Pharisee?
3. Does this passage reshape your understanding of what it means to follow Christ? How?

OUTRO: When we protect time to regularly rest in God's presence, we discover the power and purpose of Sabbath. It strips away our self-righteousness and striving and reminds us that life is about loving, merciful relationships, not rules. 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."

PRAY TOGETHER.

(Pray to let go of any identity or behavior that prevents you from receiving and giving God's love.)