

God urges us to get some rest

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

God has a lot to say about rest in the Bible. The opening lines in the very beginning describe a model of six days of work and one day of rest. It wasn't that God was tired, but, instead, this would be the curriculum for us to learn what our own physical, mental and spiritual balance would require. Our creator knows us intimately and can therefore prescribe what is needed for a full and abundant life.

Not very far into the story we learn that our opportunities for the abounding life are obliterated by the introduction of sin into the previously perfect creation. The issue of sin could not take care of itself and none of us being capable either, the word of God becomes flesh to dwell among men and deal with the penalty of sin once and for all (John 1). The angels told Joseph, "You shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin." They also called him "Emmanuel," which means "God with us."

Jesus made an interesting offer regarding rest. He invited people to come to him and find rest for their souls. I was teaching from Proverbs 3 at our beach service last Sunday night. There it speaks of "sweet sleep" for the one who follows the ways of God. I joked a bit about the pillow top mattress that we have at home; my wife loves it. When we had purchased it at the bed store in Ventura, Shelley and I had agreed it was long overdue. Someone came to me after the teaching to talk about his life. He said, "I do not have sweet sleep." He was referring to the stirring of his soul, not the need for a more comfortable Serta.

It seems that so many reduce Jesus into some form of religion that competes on the world stage with numerous other ideologies. As you read the Scriptures, however, one does not get the impression that he is willing to accept such a designation. His role of king of kings, ultimate judge, son of God, creator, and savior do not allow room for him to be reduced to such base terms as another competitor for religious tradition and fervency. And when Jesus offers rest for the soul, he speaks more deeply than we tend to realize.

So far this summer, my schedule is more full than usual. It has been jam-packed with adventure and fun, mostly in various forms of outreach to the community or in building up Jesus' disciples. Sundays are my busiest days and the most exciting of all. Physically it is not rest, but spiritually it is. Jesus spoke of food that his followers didn't

know about; to do the will of his father. The Bible explains that the priesthood of God always worked very hard on worship days and they were very busy. As a follower of Jesus Christ, a member of the kingdom of priests that he established, we all might find ourselves busier than ever doing his work. We do need to let our bodies rest so we can keep up our stamina for the broader call. And we want to keep our perspective clearly focused on Jesus; the author and finisher of our faith. Do not grow weary doing what is good (Galatians 6:9).

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443
Ojai, CA 93024
(805) 640-9498
www.calvaryojai.org

Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:30am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

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