



# SILENCIO

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## SABBATH

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In the letter to the Hebrews it is stated that a promise of rest remains in the New Covenant. The writer was so concerned that these Hebrew Christians would miss this rest that he wrote: "... let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it" (Hebrews 4:1 ESV). Apparently they were in jeopardy of doing so, as Israel had failed to enter the Sabbath rest time and again.

God's intention of rest for his covenant people involved inhabiting the last day of the week in a way that was beyond the definition and constraints of their labors. Abraham Heschel explains from a Jewish perspective: "Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul." Since such is true for those under the Law, what of those who literally have the seed-life of the Spirit implanted in them? Should we not also fear lest we come short of cultivating what is within?

When Jesus called out, "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest" (Mt. 11: 28) he was inviting all would-be disciples into a Sabbath life in which all carnal and worldly aspirations might be shed. He was beckoning his followers into a way of being present to others that did not involve asserting their own self-importance over those around them. Much labor is expended on getting ahead or at least at not getting left behind. Conditions in life are thorny and people seem contrary or threatening. Consequently we work at asserting ourselves and our own interests, trying to secure a self-styled place of significance or purpose.

Jesus' invitation, however, is to enter his Sabbath way of being in the world. "Learn from me" he said. "I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." In a relentless push and pull world, where

self-protection and self-assertion appear to be the only way of survival, Jesus opens another way. It is his way of living at rest within, and at peace with all around him, secure in the calm assurance of the love of his Father.

This way of keeping Sabbath with Jesus will free up inner emotional resources that might have otherwise been used selfishly. Now those energies will be available for much more fruitful and loving ends. It requires that the disciple heed more completely the ways and promptings of that Spirit life within, preferring his leading over against the rush of the fleshly impulse.

There will then certainly be rest for the soul. It will have the quality of inner peace, the peace that only Jesus can give.

*"God created us in his image. He is a God who works and then rests. When we rest, we honor the way God made us. Rest can be a spiritual act -- a truly human act of submission to and dependence on God who watches over all things as we rest."*

*—Spiritual Disciplines Handbook, Adele Calhoun*

*"Sabbath is time sanctified, time betrothed, time we perceive and receive and approach differently from all other time. Sabbath time is unlike every and any other time on the clock and the calendar. We are more intimate with it. We are more thankful for it. We are more protective of it and generous with it. We become more ourselves in the presence of Sabbath; more vulnerable, less afraid. More ready to confess, to be silent, to be small, to be valiant."*

*—Mark Buchanan, The Rest of God*

# JESUS, I AM RESTING, RESTING

A HYMN BY JEAN PIGOTT - 1876

Refrain: Jesus, I am resting, resting, in the joy of what Thou art,  
I am finding out the greatness, of Thy loving heart.  
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, and Thy beauty fills my soul, For  
by Thy transforming power Thou hast made me whole.

O, how great Thy loving kindness, Vaster, broader than the sea!  
O, how marvelous Thy goodness, Lavished all on me!  
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved, Know what wealth of grace is Thine,  
Know Thy certainty of promise, And have made it mine.

Refrain: Jesus, I am resting, resting, in the joy of what Thou art,  
I am finding out the greatness, of Thy loving heart.  
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, and Thy beauty fills my soul, For  
by Thy transforming power Thou hast made me whole.

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art,  
And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, Satisfies my heart; Satisfies its  
deepest longings, Meets, supplies its every need, Compasseth me  
round with blessings: Thine is love indeed!

Refrain: Jesus, I am resting, resting, in the joy of what Thou art,  
I am finding out the greatness, of Thy loving heart.  
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, and Thy beauty fills my soul, For  
by Thy transforming power Thou hast made me whole.

Ever lift Thy face upon me As I work and wait for Thee;  
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth's dark shadows flee.  
Brightness of my Father's glory, Sunshine of my Father's face,  
Keep me ever trusting, resting, Fill me with Thy grace.

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

- Cease from that which is necessary and embrace that which gives life (from Buchanan's Rest of God).
- Take a nap. Brew a pot of tea. Enjoy a leisure walk through the woods. Listen to refreshing music.
- Spend a day without the use of any technology (phone, computer, television, etc).
- Offer thanksgiving and gratitude for the gifts present in your life.
- Light a candle to signify this sacred, set-apart time for the re-creation of your soul.
- Spend time in attentive, listening prayer. Ask God to renew your mind and body.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- In what ways do you labor to get ahead or strive towards not getting behind?
- How might a false sense of identity be prohibiting you from truly resting and walking away from your labor?
- In what areas of life do you see yourself exerting energy in self-assertion?
- In a world of relentless grasping, self-pre-occupation and endless productivity, how will you embrace Jesus' invitation into a restful, calm and joy-filled way of life?
- What are some daily, weekly, monthly, and annual rhythms that would foster deeper rest and renewal for your body and soul?

### Book of Common Prayer, "For the Good Use of Leisure"

*God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## SUGGESTED SPIRITUAL FORMATION RESOURCES

*The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* by Mark Buchanan  
*Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* by Marva Dawn  
*Catch Your Breath: God's Invitation to Sabbath Rest* by Don Postema



Additional Spiritual Formation Resources are available online at [www.spiritualformationstore.com](http://www.spiritualformationstore.com)