

Weekly Encouragement

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Shabbat Shalom

By Rev. Peter Eng



Have you ever experienced a fitful night and wakened up tired? You rested, but it was poor quality rest. At other times, a sore body and comfortable bed add up to a deep sleep that refreshes and prepares you for a new day. There is a rest that does not satisfy, and there is a rest that satisfies.

Jesus says, "I am Lord of the Sabbath." ([Matt 12:8](#); [Mk 2:28](#); [Lk 6:5](#)). Jesus is Lord of Sabbath rest, not just the Sabbath day. While the Pharisees were fixated on what makes up Sabbath day rest, Jesus is declaring that he is the Lord of Sabbath rest. Up to that point in time, the Sabbath day is only a foretaste of the Sabbath rest found in Jesus. The true rest for the soul has come. It is Jesus himself.

The author of Hebrews explains, "Now if Joshua had succeeded in giving them this rest, God would not have spoken about another day of rest still to come. So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world." ([Heb 4:8-10](#), NLT).

Before Jesus, the rest we get is like a fitful sleep. When Jesus comes, we get a deep sleep rest. It is the rest of completion, the rest of satisfaction, and the rest of faith.

When God finished creating the world, he rested ([Gen 2:2](#)). Another way of saying it is that he stopped creating. That stoppage persists to this day. He stopped creating because there is nothing more he wants to add to his creation.

When Jesus died on the cross, and the work of providing forgiveness of sin is completed, he said, "It is finished." ([John 19:30](#)). There is nothing more to add to the work of Jesus. Justice is fully satisfied. The price of sin is paid in full. The author of Hebrews reminds us not to add to the death of Christ. Some Christians mistakenly think they should perform little sacrifices, either as rituals of the bread and cup, or punishment (penance) by way of some suffering, so that their sins can be forgiven.

To add to the work of Christ is to take away from it. If we add our own work to obtain forgiveness, we are saying the work of Christ is not finished, even though he declared "It is finished."

This is an awesome truth. We must grasp the fullness of the death of Christ. We must understand the enormous price he paid and the full-sufficiency of it. Then we come to the cross of Christ and humbly receive forgiveness of sin, not because we deserve it but because Jesus has already paid the price.

Rest in completed work is the antithesis of anxiety. We are anxious when there is incomplete work or some unknown but fearsome possibility ahead of us. When we see God's rest from the work of creation, and Jesus' rest from

the work of salvation, we need to register a truth that has profound impact on our lives. It is the truth that God himself gives us the clear pattern of doing a work, completing it, and resting from it.

God completed his work of creating and there is nothing we can do to add to it. We move God's creation around like we might arrange and rearrange the furniture; but it is God who builds the house and provides the furniture. While God continues in his work of providence, he rested from his work of creation.

In Christ, our deepest needs are satisfied.

The Apostle Paul expresses it as our sufficiency in Christ. "And you are complete in him" ([Col 2:10](#)), he tells us. In a profound sense, all we need is in Christ, the creator of all universe, the Giver of life, true God of true God, who says his creation is very good. The rest of completion is tied to the rest of satisfaction. A piece of shoddy work declared complete is not satisfactory and not truly complete. God's creation is complete because it is very good.

When Jesus hung on the cross and was about to die, he proclaimed, "It is finished." This is the declaration of completed work that satisfies the demands of justice. The redemptive work is done. At this death, Jesus satisfied all there is to satisfy. It is full satisfaction so no other sacrifice is needed. Jesus' death as sacrifice on the cross is completed work for the remission of sin. There is nothing more to do because it fulfilled all there is to fulfil ([Hebrews 10](#)).

The author of Hebrews explains to us that Joshua was the bringer of rest for the Israelites by leading them into the Promised Land. They rested from their wilderness wandering. But they were not complete in their rest. God was reserving a special rest for his people – the rest in the completed work of Christ that satisfies all requirements for acceptance to God. The Promised Land was only a temporary resting place. The footsore wandering of the nation calls attention to the restless soul that has not found full forgiveness. They had a mechanism of repeated cleansing, but no solution to a complete and permanent cleansing from sin. Holiness was now-you-have-it-now-you-don't.

In Christ we become holy. In Christ, Paul affirms believers every time he writes to them calling

them saints (holy people). We forget we are holy. We forget to rest in that sanctity. We forget the protection we have in Christ because he has given us rest from our sin.

The rest of faith is when a work is completed and we leave it alone. When God finished creating the world there was nothing more to do. God did not need to tinker with creation. Jesus did not need to tinker with the work on the cross. The work is complete. There is no need for repeated sacrifices for sin.

Jews greet each other "Shabbat Shalom" (Sabbath peace). They may be declaring a truth deeper than they realize. There is a peace in Sabbath rest that is found only in Christ. It is the unburdening of our life at the cross of Christ. It is to find in Jesus all we need for peace.

Note: The ESV is used unless indicated otherwise.

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Rev. Peter Eng is an ordained minister from the Reformed Tradition, but he is truly global in perspective. He served the Lord in various capacities starting from his teenage years in the 70s. His undergrad studies were done in Singapore, his grad studies in the USA, and post-grad studies in the United Kingdom, with additional post-grad research in Germany.