

Fresh Oil



June 2009 (reprise June 2015)

Dear Fellow Servants,

With the summer months coming upon us and the opportunity to slow down a little bit in our church activities, I wanted to address the whole theme of sabbath this month. Strictly speaking, the term sabbath is a Hebrew noun that means "intermission." The Lord instituted this observance at creation when He rested on the seventh and final day. Later, in the giving of the Ten Commandments, He declared to His people that they were to keep the sabbath day holy.

The concept of sabbath goes well beyond just the observance of a single day. There is also the sense that a season of sabbath can be observed, as when a professor takes a sabbatical from his teaching duties to write a book or do something else apart from his usual routine. With that in mind, I would like you to consider the summer months as a time of sabbatical. Now don't go and get all silly on me here and think that I am encouraging you to take the summer off, take a 'flesh vacation' and skip church. No, I am talking about spending some extra time in Scriptural meditation, resting, quiet prayer, and solitude. I am encouraging you to deliberately spend some time in activities that put you alone with the Lord (like the ones I suggested in the previous sentence).

To help you with this exercise, might I suggest a few things? Consider Psalm 92. In the New American Standard Bible the subtitle says, "A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath day." The verses of this passage of Scripture deal with reflection on God's attributes, His working in creation, His dealings with the wicked, and His care for those who are His own. AS we do this exercise, we receive fresh perspective on our relationship with God and this in turn strengthens us spiritually. Take a look at Psalm 92:10:

***"But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox;
I have been anointed with fresh oil."***

The horn is a term of strength, and the psalmist is saying that the Lord is the One who gives him that strength. He does it by pouring "fresh oil" (hence the name of my teaching letters to you each month) on us. Oil is a word often used in Scripture to refer to the Holy Spirit. We need the Spirit's refreshing if we are to stay strong in the work of the Lord. However, seasons of busyness can lead to a parched spiritual state, necessitating a season of sabbath in order to recharge. This is so vital yet we still fight the temptation to soldier on in our service to the Lord, not realizing that we are empty vessels needing to be filled.

I want you to take careful consideration of what I am saying to you in this teaching today. We have nothing to offer people if we are not connected to the Father. In order for that to be the case, we must take the time to observe seasons of sabbath. I am suggesting that summer would be one of those times.

So, grab your Bible, a lawn chair and go find a quiet park or backyard. Dive into the Scriptures when you have no deadline to meet or appointment to keep... except the one with God!

Your fellow servant,

Pastor Brian

... I have been anointed with fresh oil

PSALM 92:10



