

LESSON 13

The Wheel of Faith — God's Rest

Big Idea

God's rest—most clearly expressed in the Sabbath—was established at Creation as a memorial of God's finished work. The Sabbath does not create righteousness; it preserves righteousness by faith by calling us out of self-effort and into trust in what God has already accomplished.

Why This Study Matters:

The previous lessons have focused on the central themes of the gospel: God's love, the cross, repentance, justification, sanctification, and abiding in Christ. Together they answer one great question: How is a sinner restored to fellowship with God?

But another question remains:

If salvation is received by faith and not earned by works, what does a life of trust actually look like?

The Sabbath answers that question. More than a day on the calendar, the Sabbath reveals the experience of resting in God's finished work. It reminds us that creation was God's work, redemption is God's work, sanctification is God's work, and ultimately glorification will be God's work as well.

The Sabbath is not merely a doctrine to be understood. It is a gospel reality to be experienced. It teaches believers to cease striving, trust God's promises, and find their rest in Christ.

1. Rest Before Work

Read: Genesis 2:2–3

Group Discussion:

- What stands out about rest being placed at the beginning of Scripture?
- Why would God invite humanity into rest before giving them work?

Theological Guardrail:

Human life begins with receiving rather than achieving. Before humanity ever worked, God invited them to rest in His finished work. The Sabbath teaches that faith begins by trusting what God has done before attempting anything ourselves.

2. The Sabbath as Sacred Time With God

Read: Genesis 2:2–3

Group Discussion:

- What three things did God do to the seventh day in this passage?
- Why do you think God blessed, sanctified, and rested on the seventh day?

Theological Guardrail:

The Sabbath is more than physical rest. By blessing and sanctifying the seventh day, God created sacred time for fellowship with Him. The Sabbath reminds us that we were created not merely for work, but for relationship, communion, and union with our Creator.

3. The Sabbath Adds Depth to Redemption

Read: Deuteronomy 5:15

Group Discussion:

- What reason does Moses give for keeping the Sabbath in this passage?
- How is this reason different from the one given in Genesis 2 or Exodus 20?

Theological Guardrail:

Redemption did not replace the Sabbath; it deepened its meaning. Creation reminds us that God made us. Redemption reminds us that God rescued us.

4. The Sabbath as a Sign of Sanctification

Read: Ezekiel 20:12

Group Discussion:

- According to Ezekiel 20:12, who is it that sanctifies God's people?
- Why do you think God chose the Sabbath as a sign of sanctification?

Theological Guardrail:

The Sabbath points to more than creation and redemption. It is also a sign of sanctification. In creation, God made us; in redemption, God rescued us; in sanctification, God recreates us. The Sabbath teaches us to trust God's power to do within us what we cannot do for ourselves.

5. The Sabbath as a Promise of Restoration

Read: Isaiah 66:22–23

Group Discussion:

- What future does God promise in this passage?
- Why do you think the Sabbath appears in God's picture of the restored earth?

Theological Guardrail:

The Sabbath points beyond the present world to God's final restoration. In creation God made us, in redemption He rescued us, in sanctification He recreates us, and at Christ's return He will complete His work. Each Sabbath reminds us that God's story is not finished yet.

6. The Sabbath and Righteousness by Faith

Read: Isaiah 56:1–2

Group Discussion:

- What two blessings does God say are about to be revealed in verse 1?
- Why do you think Sabbath keeping is mentioned immediately after salvation and righteousness?

Theological Guardrail:

The Sabbath is not a substitute for grace; it is a response to grace. It reminds us that righteousness is God's gift before it ever becomes our experience. The God who justifies us, sanctifies us, and will ultimately glorify us is the same God who invites us to rest in His finished work.

7. The Sabbath Reveals Where Faith Rests

Read: Mark 2:27

Group Discussion:

- If the Sabbath was made for humanity, what gift was God intending it to provide?
- How does Sabbath observance become an outward expression of trust in God's work rather than our own?

Theological Guardrail:

The Sabbath is more than a day of rest; it is a visible expression of faith. By setting aside our own work, we testify that God is our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and coming King. The Sabbath does not create faith—it reveals where faith already rests.

II. Experiential Reality — Preparing to Enter God's Rest

A 7-Day Journey Toward the Sabbath

In Scripture, the Sabbath was not merely a day to be observed—it was a day to be anticipated. In ancient Israel, the days of the week were known by their relationship to the Sabbath. Each day moved God's people one step closer to sacred time with God.

The Sabbath was never intended to arrive unexpectedly. It was prepared for, anticipated, and welcomed.

This seven-day journey follows the same pattern. Each day invites you to reflect on one aspect of the gospel revealed in the Sabbath so that when the Sabbath arrives, you may enter more fully into God's rest.

Day 1 — Prepare for Sabbath by Remembering Your Creator

Read: Genesis 2:2–3

Reflection:

What would change in my life if I truly believed that my value comes from being created by God rather than from what I accomplish?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to reveal where you have tied your identity to performance, success, or productivity instead of His love and creative power.

Day 2 — Prepare for Sabbath by Making Space for Communion

Read: Genesis 2:3

Reflection:

How much of my week is spent pursuing God Himself rather than merely accomplishing tasks for Him?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to show you what distractions, habits, or priorities may be crowding out meaningful time with Him.

Day 3 — Prepare for Sabbath by Remembering Your Redemption

Read: Deuteronomy 5:15

Reflection:

Where am I still trying to earn what Christ has already provided through His grace?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to reveal any area where you are trusting your own efforts more than Christ's finished work.

Day 4 — Prepare for Sabbath by Trusting God's Power to Transform

Read: Ezekiel 20:12

Reflection:

What area of my life am I trying to change through willpower rather than surrender?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to show you one area where He is inviting you to trust His transforming power instead of your own strength.

Day 5 — Prepare for Sabbath by Looking Forward to Christ's Return

Read: Isaiah 66:22–23

Reflection:

How does the hope of Christ's return affect the way I view today's struggles and disappointments?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to strengthen your hope and remind you that He will finish the work He has begun in you.

Day 6 — Prepare for Sabbath by Trusting God's work

Read: Isaiah 56:1–2

Reflection:

How does setting aside my work for a day become an expression of trust in God's work for me?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to deepen your confidence in what He has accomplished for your salvation and what He continues to do in your life.

Day 7 — Enter the Sabbath as an Expression of Faith

Read: Mark 2:27

Reflection:

What does my approach to the Sabbath reveal about where my faith truly rests?

Prayer Time:

Ask God to help you enter the Sabbath with gratitude, trust, and joy. Thank Him for being your Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and coming King.

Experiential Summary Statement

The Sabbath is more than a day of rest. It is a weekly journey through the gospel. It reminds us that God created us, redeemed us, sanctifies us, and will one day fully restore us. As we prepare for the Sabbath throughout the week, we learn to live each day by faith in His finished work.

