

Patterns of Grace and Gratitude Week 3

Saturday, May 1



Sabbath

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD. Leviticus 23:3

May is designated as “Mental Health Awareness month”. There are many ways to honor this idea of mental health and how that is experienced by every person. But one of our experiences is that God offered us a break in our work to have space to just rest....our bodies, our minds, our spirits. It’s called “Sabbath”. But honestly, when we read the words from Leviticus, we sometimes bristle at the command to take a day off. And yet it is God’s grace at work again.

Often, over time, our culture and our understanding of God, gets tangled up. And one of those tangles was what has been called the “protestant work ethic”. It implied that through works people were rewarded by being saved by God. Even though we would say that we mostly disagree with this...that God’s grace saves us, not our works, nevertheless, we keep working until we drop. We may not believe that our diligent work will “save” us, but we do believe that we are being lazy somehow by not constantly being in motion.

And yet, God graced us with a new pattern. A pattern of working six days and resting on the seventh; the Sabbath. Again, the challenge is being grateful for this gift and living into the gift. The purpose of Sabbath is to rest, worship God, and do things that are enjoyable and uplifting to us. It is important to our mental health to believe that we can rest. That we are a worthwhile person even when we are “being” and not just “doing”.

The grace that we can offer others is the time to give rest to their souls. And the prayer is that each of us can find a way to include this in our lives so that we might find the joy of the Lord, and live lives that are more than just the sum of our work. May it be so.

Note: during the month of May we will hear other stories of how mental health is experienced and how each of us can offer grace to others who are struggling, and be thankful for God’s grace among us.