



5 Daily Devotionals (From September 27th Sermon)

Day 1 — God's Gift of Rest

Key Verse:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." — Matthew 11:28

Reflection:

God knows how easily we carry yesterday's burdens into today—and then carry today's burdens into tomorrow. That is why the Sabbath was given as a gift. It was a day to stop, breathe, and remember that life does not ultimately depend upon us.

The Sabbath was meant to be a time to get right with God, with ourselves, and with others. Most importantly, it was a time to receive from God: His forgiveness, His strength, His peace, and His promises.

We are remarkably good at forgetting. We forget that God loves us. We forget that He forgives us. We forget that He is working even when we cannot see what He is doing.

That is why we need regular reminders. When we come before God, we don't come primarily to prove what we can do for Him. We come because we need what He gives.

Today, slow down and remember: **God has you. You are forgiven. You are His.**

Prayer:

Father, thank You for giving me rest when I am weary. Forgive me for trying to carry what belongs in Your hands. Remind me today that You love me, that You are with me, and that I belong to You. Amen.

Day 2 — What Are You Carrying?

Key Verse:

“Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” — 1 Peter 5:7

Reflection:

We carry a lot.

We worry about our children. We worry about our marriages. We worry about our jobs, finances, health, relationships, and the future. Sometimes we carry those concerns for so long that we forget what it feels like to set them down.

But God never intended for us to live as though everything depends on us.

The Sabbath reminds us to unload our burdens before Him. We can come honestly and say, “God, I need Your help with my family. I need Your wisdom in this relationship. I need strength for this conversation. I don't know what to do with this situation, so I'm putting it in Your hands.”

That doesn't mean we stop caring or stop acting responsibly. It means we recognize that **God is God—and we are not.**

There is freedom in letting Him be in charge.

Whatever you are carrying today, bring it to Him. You may not see an immediate solution, but you can trust the One who sees the entire picture.

Application:

Take five quiet minutes today. Name three things you are carrying and consciously place each one in God's hands through prayer.

Day 3 — Mercy Over Performance

Key Verse:

“And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.” — Matthew 12:7

Reflection:

The Pharisees had turned the Sabbath into a complicated system of rules. In doing so, they missed the very heart of God's gift.

Jesus reminded them that God desires mercy.

That same warning can reach us today. It is possible to become so focused on doing Christianity correctly that we lose sight of the people standing right in front of us. We can become more concerned about rules, appearances, winning arguments, or being right than about loving our neighbor.

But Jesus doesn't call us merely to perform religious activities. He changes us through His Word and forgiveness so that we can love and serve others.

This doesn't mean pretending sin doesn't matter. True mercy does not call evil good. Instead, Christian compassion sees the person, cares about his or her eternal well-being, and points toward Jesus, repentance, forgiveness, and life.

Jesus demonstrated this perfectly. He had compassion on sinners like us, but He didn't ignore sin. He took our sin upon Himself and paid its price at the cross.

Because we have received mercy, we can become people who extend mercy.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, forgive me when I care more about being right than loving people. Give me eyes to see those who are hurting and a heart that reflects Your mercy. Help me point others toward Your forgiveness and life. Amen.

Day 4 — See the Person

Key Verse:

“How much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” — Matthew 12:12

Reflection:

The Pharisees saw a man with a withered hand. Jesus saw a person who needed compassion.

That difference matters.

It is easy to become so focused on our disagreements, frustrations, or judgments that we stop seeing the person in front of us. Once we stop seeing people as people, it becomes much easier to dismiss them, criticize them, or treat them as though they don't matter.

Jesus does the opposite.

He sees us in our weakness. He sees our fears, grief, struggles, failures, and pain. He doesn't turn away. He comes to us with compassion, forgiveness, healing, strength, and hope.

And then He calls us to see other people the same way.

There may be someone in your life today who is struggling behind a smile. Someone who is lonely. Someone who is making destructive choices. Someone who needs to hear about Jesus. Someone who simply needs another person to care enough to notice.

Don't let inconvenience become an excuse for indifference.

God has placed people around you for a reason. Ask Him to help you see them.

Application:

Think of one person God has placed in your life who may be hurting or spiritually lost. Pray for that person today, then look for one practical way to show them Christ's love.

Day 5 — Hope in Jesus

Key Verse:

“And in his name the Gentiles will hope.” — Matthew 12:21

Reflection:

Everything Jesus did points toward this: **hope**.

Jesus didn't come simply to make our lives easier. He came to rescue sinners. He fulfilled the righteousness of God's Law for us. He took our punishment upon Himself at the cross so that God could justly forgive us.

Then Jesus rose from the dead.

His resurrection secured what we could never secure for ourselves: forgiveness, freedom, and the promise of eternal life. The cross tells us that our sin has been paid for. The empty tomb tells us that death does not have the final word.

That changes today.

Whatever storm you are facing, Jesus sees you. Whatever burden you are carrying, He cares. Whatever sin is weighing on your conscience, He offers forgiveness. Whatever uncertainty lies ahead, your eternity is secure in Him.

You don't have to pretend everything is okay. You don't have to have all the answers. You don't have to carry everything yourself.

You have Jesus.

And because you have Jesus, you have hope—not merely that tomorrow might be better, but that **He will carry you all the way home**.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for taking my sin and punishment upon Yourself and rising again for my salvation. Give me peace today, strength to keep going, and confidence in the hope You have secured for me. Remind me that I am forgiven, that I belong to You, and that my future is in Your hands. Amen.

Small Group Discussion

Matthew 12:1–14

Opening Question

When you think about a truly restful day, what helps you slow down, recharge, and reconnect with what matters most?

Read Together

Matthew 12:1–14

“For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.” — Matthew 12:8

The Sabbath Is God’s Gift

God gave His people the Sabbath as a gift—not merely as another rule to obey. After six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day and established a pattern of work and rest. The Sabbath was intended to refresh God’s people and turn their attention back toward Him.

The sermon described the Sabbath as a “get right day”: a time to get right with God, with ourselves, and with others. Most importantly, we come before God **to receive**. We receive His Word, forgiveness, strength, peace, and the reminder that He has not abandoned us.

That is an important way to think about worship. We do not come to church primarily to impress God with what we do for Him. We come because we need what **He does for us**. In Christ, God gives forgiveness and reconciliation as gifts.

Supporting Verses:

- Psalm 46:10 — “Be still, and know that I am God.”
- Matthew 11:28 — “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
- Hebrews 10:24–25 — Encourage one another and continue gathering together.

Mercy Is at the Heart of the Sabbath

The Pharisees had become focused on rules surrounding the Sabbath. Jesus redirected their attention to God’s heart: **“I desire mercy, and not sacrifice”** (Matthew 12:7).

Jesus demonstrated this by caring for hungry disciples and healing a man with a withered hand. He made it clear that **“it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath”** (Matthew 12:12).

The problem was not that God's Law was bad. The problem was that human traditions had obscured God's purpose. The Sabbath was never meant to prevent people from receiving mercy or showing love to their neighbor.

For Christians, compassion does not mean pretending sin is acceptable. Biblical compassion takes people seriously—including the reality of sin—and seeks their true good. We can love people while also speaking honestly about sin and pointing them toward repentance, forgiveness, and Jesus.

Jesus Is Our True Rest

The greatest comfort in this passage is not simply that God gives us a day of rest. It is that **Jesus Himself gives us rest.**

We cannot make ourselves right with God through our efforts. We have sinned and fallen short. But Jesus took our place, bore the punishment for our sin on the cross, and rose again. Through Him we receive forgiveness, freedom, and the sure hope of eternal life.

The Christian life therefore begins not with **“What can I do for God?”** but with **“What has God done for me?”**

We gather around God's Word and His gifts because we need Him. And having received His mercy, we are sent back into the world to show mercy to others.

Discussion Questions

1. **What stood out to you most from Matthew 12:1–14? Why?**
2. The sermon described the Sabbath as a “get right day”—with God, ourselves, and others. **Which of those areas is easiest for you to neglect?**
3. **Why is it important to remember that worship is primarily about receiving God's gifts rather than performing for God?**
4. The Pharisees were focused on rules, while Jesus emphasized mercy. **How can religious activity sometimes cause us to lose sight of people?**
5. Jesus said, **“It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”** What are some practical ways we can show Christ's compassion to people who are hurting?
6. **How can we show genuine compassion without excusing or redefining sin?**
7. Think about the people God has placed around you. **Is there someone you may be overlooking because their needs are inconvenient, difficult, or frustrating?**
8. **What is one burden, relationship, or worry that you need to entrust to God this week?**

Take It With You

Jesus does not call us to earn His love. He calls us to receive His mercy—and then share that mercy with others.

This week, intentionally set aside time to stop, receive God's Word, confess your sins, remember His forgiveness, and ask Him to show you someone who needs the compassion of Christ.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for giving us Your Word and for reminding us that we do not have to carry our burdens alone. Forgive us when we become focused on our own works, our own worries, or our own rules instead of receiving the gifts You freely give us.

Thank You especially for Jesus, who fulfilled Your Law for us, took our punishment upon the cross, and rose again so that we might have forgiveness, peace, and the hope of eternal life.

Give us compassionate hearts. Help us see the people around us who are hurting, lonely, or struggling. Give us wisdom to show mercy without excusing sin, and courage to point others toward Jesus and His forgiveness.

Help us rest in Your promises this week and trust that You are with us in every circumstance.

In Jesus' name, Amen.