

Sermon Topic: Sabbath: God is in Control by Rev Dr Maggie Low

Sermon Text: Genesis 1:31 – 2:3

Trinity Theological College (TTC) Sunday

This year, TTC is celebrating its 70th Anniversary. TTC’s roots go back to the Japanese Occupation during the Second World War (WWII) when the Japanese rounded up Christian missionaries and interned them at Changi Prison. While in prison, these Christians across different denominations decided to worship together and support one another in the spirit of Christian unity. After the war ended, the pre-war Methodist seminary re-opened in 1947. A year later, the Anglican and Presbyterian churches joined and TTC was formed. The Lutheran Church later became part of TTC.

It was out of the chaos of WWII that God raised up TTC. Even when things seemed hopeless, God was in control.

Sabbath Lifestyle & The Creation Story

To understand what Sabbath is, consider the Creation Story and the order in which God created everything. First, He created the Habitat (Days 1 – 3) and then the Inhabitants (Days 4 – 6). Days 1 – 3 parallels Days 4 – 6.

HABITAT		INHABITANTS	
Day 1	Light	Day 4	Sun, Moon, Stars
Day 2	Sky & Seas	Day 5	Sea creatures & Birds
Day 3	Land & Plants	Day 6	Animals & Humans
Day 7: Sabbath			

Sabbath (Day 7) was the climax/grand finale of God’s creation. It is the most important part of Creation.

A non-Israelite belief around the time of the early Old Testament was that Baal, god of Storm (fertility) had to battle against Yam, god of Sea (chaos). Baal won, and all the other gods made him king.

The Old Testament tells of only one God, who created everything by the power of His word. He did not fight anyone to become King. A similarity with story of Baal is that God had to deal with chaos (the void and darkness that preceded Creation) and put order in His creation. This shows God’s kingship and control over chaos and over all of creation.

Day 7 has not ended – God is still King and His kingship has never ended. Sabbath lifestyle is to acknowledge God’s Kingship and to trust Him.

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested [shabath = ceased] on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

Shabath (Hebrew for ‘rest’) suggests that God finished with creation and is now King.

In Jewish law, breaking the Sabbath is serious and carries a death penalty – for not recognizing God as King.

In the New Testament, Jesus declared Himself to be ‘Lord of the Sabbath’. He came to bring wholeness and life, to establish order over the chaos of our world.

Three lessons to draw:

1. God is in control over Creation, so trust Him

Genesis 1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold [hinneh], it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Hinneh – helps us enter into God’s emotion at His work ... Very Good!

Genesis 2:3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested (ceased) from all the work of creating [bara] that he had done.

Only God can ‘bara’ and it is beyond human ability or understanding.

When we look at nature/creation, we see that He is in control and can be trusted. He knows even the number of hairs on our head.

2. God is in control over the chaos of the world, so trust Him

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested [shabbath = ceased] on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

God was a King greater than Pharaoh in delivering His people out of Egypt.

When Jesus rose on Sunday, the day after Sabbath, He re-created and gave us new life.

Whatever the world’s political leaders may think about their power over their countries and the world, God is the real King over all.

3. God is in control over the chaos of your life, so trust Him

Genesis 2:3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating [bara] that he had done.

When God blessed the Sabbath, He demonstrated His power to give fullness to life. He made it holy, i.e. to be set apart for God.

Story of American pioneers traveling westward in their horse-drawn wagons who wanted to reach their destination before winter time. There was a group of Christians who wanted to stop on the Sabbath days and rest. The others did not want to stop at all and this group kept going everyday. In the end, the Christians arrived earlier. Not stopping on the Sabbath led to their horses getting tired out, the people getting sick, etc.

Shows that when you trust God, He will bless and take care of you.

A pastor’s testimony about his member’s mother. The member asked the pastor to visit her mother who was very ill and share the gospel before she passed on. When he spoke to the mother, she was so hard of hearing that all she said was “Hah?” Seeing that his words were not getting through, the pastor gave up and asked the daughter to come over to pray with him for her mother. The member was disappointed but joined him in prayer.

A few days later, she heard her mother humming a hymn. Surprised, she asked where her mother learned it. Her mother told her that the night before a man in white had appeared in her dreams and taught her the song. She immediately called her pastor, who came over. This time, the old lady could hear all he said and when asked if she wanted to receive Christ, she accepted. A few days later, she passed away. God was in control even when it seemed things were not going well.

Sabbath lifestyle is NOT about not working. Rather, it is trusting that God is in control. The Sabbath is a day to remember God is still in control – over your work, finances, health, and whatever situation/struggles you may be going through – and that everything is in His hands.

Coming together each Sunday, we acknowledge and celebrate God's Kingship as well as seek His blessing for whatever we are going through.

The Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24-25)

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:

The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look at creation this week and every week. What is one thing you appreciate about nature? What is God saying to you about Himself?
2. If you trust God as King in your studies, work, or ministry, how would you feel and what would you do differently?
3. If you belong to a ministry or serve with a committee in AMC, does its plans and programs focus on exalting the Lord as King? Describe.