Summary

In this sermon, Pastor Ryan explores the concept of finding gratitude through rest and reflection, centered on the biblical practice of the Sabbath. Drawing from Deuteronomy 5, Matthew 11, and the Psalms, he challenges the congregation to stop striving, remember what God has done, and express genuine thankfulness. The message is especially timely as Thanksgiving approaches, calling people to slow down so they can actually see the blessings around them rather than rushing past them. Pastor Ryan outlines three practical steps: stop (cease striving and trust God), remember (reflect on what God has brought you through), and sing (express gratitude through praise). He shares personal stories, including how his own teenage daughters came to cherish their family Sabbath, to illustrate that even the busiest people are hungry for rest. The call to action is to establish a Sabbath rhythm before Thanksgiving so that gratitude becomes a way of life rather than just a holiday feeling.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to truly rest in You, we ask that You quiet the noise in our minds and the busyness in our hearts. Help us to be open to whatever You want to speak to each of us today. May this time together draw us closer to You and to one another. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one thing you always seem to find time for no matter how busy life gets, and why do you think that is?

Key Verses

- Deuteronomy 5:12-15
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Psalm 92:1-4
- Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7
- Colossians 3:15-17

Questions

- Pastor Ryan described how we carry many invisible weights throughout the week, such as worry, pressure, and to-do lists. What kinds of things do you find yourself carrying most often, and how do those weights affect your attitude and relationships?
- The Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5 applies to everyone in the household, even the animals. What do you think God is communicating about the importance of rest by making it such a broad and inclusive command?
- Pastor Ryan said that rest is really an act of trust, meaning that when we stop working, we are saying we trust that God holds things together. How easy or difficult is it for you to actually trust God in that way, and what makes it hard?
- In Deuteronomy 5:15, Moses connects the Sabbath to the Israelites' rescue from slavery in Egypt. What is your personal 'Egypt,' a place or season that God brought you out of, and how does remembering that shape your gratitude today?
- Pastor Ryan said that forgetfulness is the enemy of gratitude. Can you think of a time when you forgot what God had done for you and it affected your perspective? What helped you remember again?
- Psalm 92 describes bookending each day with thanks, declaring God's love in the morning and His faithfulness at night. What would it look like practically for you to build that kind of morning and evening rhythm of gratitude into your daily life?
- Pastor Ryan shared how his teenage daughters, after just a few weeks of practicing a family Sabbath, were the ones asking to make sure it still happened. What does that story tell you about what people, even busy or distracted ones, are really hungry for deep down?
- Colossians 3:15-17 describes a life where peace, the Word of God, singing, and giving thanks all flow together into everything we do. What is one area of your life where you would like to see that kind of thankfulness become more natural and consistent?

Life Application

This week, set aside a specific block of time, even just a couple of hours, as a personal Sabbath. Put it on your calendar like any other important commitment. During that time, put down your phone and your to-do list, and do three things: stop striving and rest in God's presence, write down or pray through specific things God has brought you through, and express your gratitude through worship, whether that means reading Psalm 92 aloud, praying a prayer of thanks, or singing along to a worship song you love. Then carry that gratitude into Thanksgiving so that

when someone asks what you are thankful for, you already have something real and specific to say.

Key Takeaways

- Stopping is the first step toward gratitude. The Sabbath is God's built-in invitation to cease striving, trust Him, and create space to notice what He has done. If we never slow down, we will never see the blessings around us.
- Rest is an act of trust. When we stop working and striving, we are declaring with our lives that God holds everything together, not us. Chick-fil-A's success on six days a week is a modern example of this principle in action.
- Remembering is where gratitude begins. Forgetfulness is the enemy of gratitude. Just as Moses reminded Israel of their rescue from Egypt, we need to regularly recall what God has brought us through so we do not start believing we did it all ourselves.
- Singing and praise are powerful tools for gratitude. Music sticks in our hearts and memories in ways that ordinary speech cannot. Psalm 92, written specifically for the Sabbath, shows that expressing thanks through song is a time-honored and spiritually meaningful practice.
- Gratitude should be a rhythm, not just a holiday feeling. Paul's words in Colossians 3:15-17 paint a picture of a life where peace, the Word of God, and thankfulness flow into everything we do, not just one Thursday a year.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the reminder that You have designed us for rest. Forgive us for the times we have been too busy to stop, too distracted to remember, and too rushed to give thanks. As we head into this Thanksgiving week, help us to slow down and actually see the gifts You have placed in our lives. May gratitude become a rhythm in each of our hearts, not just a holiday feeling. We trust You to hold together the things we are tempted to carry on our own. We love You, and we are grateful for Your steadfast love in the morning and Your faithfulness at night. In Jesus' name, Amen.