

VINEYARD CHURCH DELAWARE COUNTY

*Season of*  
REST

SERMON SERIES  
*Study Guide*



# Introduction:

A few months back, God began to speak to our lead pastor, Michael, about preparing our church for a “season of rest”. As he shared that prophetic prompting with a few staff members, we all assumed it referred to our society’s crazy, busy, never-slow-down pace. Little did we know at the time that the virus of the century was going to strike and have global and personal impacts on our lives. With most of the nation now sheltering-in-place and battling emotions of fear and anxiety, we are unsure of when and if life will return to normal (or maybe a “new” normal). This sermon series and accompanying resource was almost completely created prior to COVID-19 spreading around the world, and yet God was preparing us! Isn’t the sovereignty of our Lord amazing!

The purpose of this series and resource is to help us embrace this forced season of rest, and to enhance our walk with God by encountering the Holy Spirit in this uncertain time. In the Old Testament, the practice of Sabbath required the Israelites to take one day a week to rest (Exodus 20:8-11). Every 7<sup>th</sup> year, a field was to be left unplanted to allow the land a year of rest (Leviticus 25:1-7). But after Jesus’ resurrection, Peter and the disciples were invited to step into a different kind of season of rest... one of learning to rest in the wonder, peace, promises, and power of God!

In the Bible, rest does *not* equate to laziness, but rather intentional dependence on God. Through this study, we will be taking a closer look at this kind of rest as we are invited into the same kind of journey with God.

Each week is divided into four different sections: Read, Respond, Rest, Reflect. Begin by *reading* the scripture and inviting the Holy Spirit to bring new insights to the passage and to your own life. Next, *respond* to the passage by pondering the questions independently, with your family, or virtually online with your small group. Then, complete the *rest* exercise, which is unique to each week. Some of these may be stretching and uncomfortable, but give them a try as they provide an opportunity to possibly encounter the Holy Spirit in new ways. Finally, *reflect* by journaling about the overall experience and consider sharing your thoughts with each other.

May you encounter the many facets of rest in the Holy Spirit through this season!

# Week 1: Rest in Wonder

How does one find rest in a time like this? In a time when things are so chaotic and confusing? When everyday something new is changing and we don't know what the next day will hold?

Just after Jesus' death, the disciples felt a very similar way. They were confused and *wondering* what was going on. Their expectations had not gone as they had planned. The Savior of the World, the Messiah, the King of Kings was dead and they were frightened.

In Luke's gospel, early in the morning on Easter Sunday, some of the women went to Jesus' tomb and were confused to find his body missing. Luke 24:4 says, "While they were *wondering* about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them." These men addressed the women's wondering by declaring the truth: "Jesus is not here. In fact, He has risen!" The ladies quickly head back to tell the disciples, but the disciples cannot fathom what the women are saying... their words only create *more wondering*. Yet, even in the confusion, Peter immediately runs to the tomb to discover it empty for himself, but also leaves the tomb "*wondering* to himself what had happened." (Luke 24:12b)

How can one find rest in a time like the one the followers of Jesus were facing? How can one have *rest* in a time like the one we are currently experiencing?

It is important to notice, that Peter did not immediately get his questions answered. He didn't immediately encounter Jesus at the tomb. However, two disciples did. As they were walking along the road to Emmaus, they encountered a "stranger" who appeared at first seemed to be clueless of all that had happened in Jerusalem the last few days. But as they walked along the road, this "stranger," who was, in fact, the risen Jesus, explained the scriptures to them with such clarity that they found *rest* as their *wondering* and confusion turned into amazing *wonder* and awe!! Their hearts progressively became more burning and alive as they walked along their journey with Jesus.

We can all find *rest in our wondering* when we walk through life with Jesus.

## READ

- Luke 24:13-35

## RESPOND

- How is the dialogue Jesus had with the two disciples surprising or unexpected in this passage?
- How do you think it would have felt to be one of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus?
- If you have, how have you experienced clarity to your wonderings as you have walked alongside Jesus over time?

- What are some areas in life where you are still wondering? What answers are still unclear in your life?
- How are you personally staying near Jesus in this season?

### **REST—Take a Walk with Jesus Exercise**

• When one of the only opportunities right now to get out is to go on a walk, why not take a walk with Jesus? Either alone or with your family, try taking a walk and imagine Jesus is walking along with you. Spend this time talking and listening to Jesus. Imagine you were the unnamed disciple on the road to Emmaus. Share your wonderings, your questions, your fears, doubts, and worries with Jesus. Consider reading - or listening, so you don't trip :) – to the scriptures as you walk. Invite God to reveal Himself and His truth in much the same way that Jesus spoke to the two on the road to Emmaus. If you want to challenge yourself, walk a full 7 miles (the distance from Jerusalem to Emmaus) or just keep it to a short stroll. Take in His beautiful creation and enjoy the comfort and awesome wonder of His presence!

### **REFLECT**

• What was this experience of taking a walk with Jesus like? Did you walk alone or together with others? Did you find it easy or challenging to stay focused in talking with Jesus? Write about your experience below and share it with another.

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