

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 7th 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 2: Rest in Peace

Rest in peace. This phrase is often associated with death, but what if “rest in peace” is meant to also be a way of life? To experience the peace of God, no matter our circumstances, as we go about each day.

In John 20, Jesus appeared to his disciples multiple times after His resurrection saying three different times “Peace be with you!” Yet Simon Peter doesn’t seem to have any peace...

He gets restless...

He announces he’s going back to fishing. Not fishing as a leisure activity to rest and relax, but fishing as a career... returning to his old way of life *before* following Jesus. Peter seems to lack peace as he is wrestling with the shame in his lack of loyalty to Jesus by denying Him three times (John 18). He has forgotten his calling and purpose, so he decides to go back to what he knows... fishing. The fact that a number of disciples go with him suggests that they are experiencing similar feelings. After catching nothing all night long, the group of disciples decides to take the advice of a “stranger” on the shore and switch the net to the other side of the boat. The timing is beyond impeccable as a miraculous abundance of fish almost burst their nest... and Peter’s eyes are opened!

The “stranger” is no stranger... it’s Jesus!

Peter doesn’t wait a second longer for the boat to make its way to Jesus. He jumps overboard and swims to him. On the shore, Jesus invites them all to *rest* from the long night’s work and eat a meal with him. Jesus then pulls Peter aside and asks him three times “Do you love me?” to which Peter responds that he does. Jesus reminds Peter that he has not been called to be a fisherman, but a fisher-of-men (Mark 1:17).

Jesus is saying to Peter, “*Rest in my peace.*”

READ

- John 21:1-17

RESPOND

- What do you think Jesus wants to teach Peter and the disciples through the miracle of abundant fish in this story?
- What might Peter’s response of jumping and swimming to shore tell us about how he might have been feeling in that moment?
- How do you think being invited to rest, share a meal, and talk with Jesus changed Peter?

