

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 3: Rest in Promise

Rest in promise. Jesus is not dead... He is alive! He has appeared to the disciples over a 40 day time period on many different occasions.

Peter and the disciples have eaten meals with Jesus. He has comforted Mary Magdalene as she wept. Thomas is no longer full of doubts and has touched Jesus' wounds. Two of the disciples have taken a stroll with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Jesus has continued to be with His followers and teach them about the kingdom of God.

But now it's time for Him to go. The last words Jesus tells his followers is to "Wait... wait here for what the Father has promised!" Yet the disciples were confused. They want to know if Jesus is going to restore the kingdom of Israel now.

Jesus promises two things. First, He promises that they won't know the time of His second coming.

Second, He promises them power... power to be Jesus' witnesses to those near and far, to those in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth.

And at that moment, Jesus is lifted up, hidden by the clouds, and ascends to heaven. Staring up at the sky, two men in white suddenly appear and say, "Why are you looking at the sky?" and they make the disciples a third promise. Jesus will come back the same way he left!

The promises of Jesus always come true... Nothing can stop God's kingdom from expanding in the world. So we can know with confidence that we can always *rest* in the promises of Jesus.

### READ

- Acts 1:1-11

### RESPOND

- What initially jumps out to you in this passage?
- What does this passage tell us Jesus' followers were waiting for?
- What might "restoring the kingdom of Israel" have meant to the disciples?
- What do the promises in this passage tell you about God and His character?
- When, if any, was a time you *rested* in the promises of God and later saw that promise fulfilled?
- What, if any, promises you are still *resting* in and waiting to see fulfilled?

### REST—Five Minutes of Silence Exercise

