

MAKING TIME UNCOVERS TIMELESSNESS

We begin this third week of Lent with the commands of the Lord found in the Book of Exodus. These words of God are to help guide us and direct our lives according to the greatness of God's plan for us. These commands have been memorized and reflected upon for generations. They invite us to return to the joy of the Creator and the gift of creation and God's hope for us to return to that breath of His that brought everything into being. Found in these commands is the foundation of our relationship with the gift of time and entering a relationship with God who is beyond time. In Exodus, we hear the *"Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it Holy."* He is giving us a doorway to find Him. The Sabbath is a day marked in time, to be set aside to contemplate and reflect on God who is eternal, timeless, who has no beginning and end. Those are our words and our God is beyond words. The magnitude of the Sabbath and our entering into it is to reconnect and always keep in front of us the embrace of the eternity of our relationship with God.

One of the books I keep by my bedside is among the most fascinating reads of my life. I often reread certain pages that I have marked up within it. For me, it is a treasure that speaks to my soul. "The Sabbath" by Abraham Joshua Heschel is an introduction to timelessness being captured in time where the edges of words only serve to trap and describe but never hold the reality of God. He has opened my thinking to explore the sacredness of time. We seem to be always running out of time to get everything done. We seem to never have any time. Yet if we keep the Sabbath as a day of resting in the contemplation of God, we will find holiness and connect with all that is eternal and timeless. The power of holiness is found in this day and even when we mess it up, even when we just check off boxes as if it were like all the other days, its holiness remains because the Lord has blessed it, even if we have not. The power of the Sabbath resides in God and in God alone. That is powerful. In the week we are to seek the eternal in time and space even though it cannot be contained in time and space because it is of God and beyond our constrictions. Can we get to that place where every thought of ours is constricting because God is not limited by our words, thoughts or actions? To sit in time and contemplate timelessness we magnify the Creator. It will be this relationship that can begin to uncover and even deepen the reality of this perfect love who sent Jesus to us to be born in time to suffer and die for our sins. The magnitude of this majestic act can be lifted to an even more meaningful place in our lives when we sit in the holiness of the Sabbath and embrace it as it was meant to be. Our search for holiness is to be rooted in where God told us the holiness could be found, on the Sabbath. God did not rest on the Sabbath because He was tired out and exhausted in the six previous days of creation. We are not to rest on the Sabbath because we are tired from all the work of the week. The holiness of the Sabbath is found in the joy of running into the loving embrace of all that the Creator has invited us to find in this time marked out for us to transcend time. The holiness of the Sabbath is a dedicated time of this world to reflect on the timelessness and eternity of God.

If we do it well, we can sing with God who has created all things and created us in His image. This is not easy and is hard work. Society has long left the Sabbath to be a day to catch up instead of a day to be drawn in. Heschel writes *"Creation is the language of God, Time is His song, and the things of space the consonants in the song. To sanctify time is to sing the vowels in unison with Him."* Who doesn't want to sing with God? Who doesn't want to be in harmony with God?

Keep Holy the Sabbath and the door will open...



Father John Ouper