

This week, I am going to read scripture to you from Genesis 2, verses 1-3.

*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*

### **GOD COMPLETES WHAT HE BEGINS**

How often do we begin a project, lose interest, and walk away? How many unfinished projects are in your home, your garage, your office even now? I will tell on myself. I am a pioneer. I love beginning new things, getting them set-up, and then handing them off for someone else to maintain. I enjoy the development, the organization, the strategic planning, and the creation of new things. Then I get easily bored with the maintenance. That's my excuse for joining a different gym every year. I have great intentions, but once I get a great routine going, I get bored and find excuse after excuse to stop going. Boredom sets in. Or perhaps it's laziness. Or a case of the "I don't care's." But when I complete a project – when I can take it from beginning to end – now, there's a cause for celebration!

In my more mature years in life, I'm determined to not only finish projects, but also to lean into the ongoing maintenance of the projects. It's an opportunity for growth and to stretch my patience and tolerance, or lack thereof.

In our reading, we read where God finished His work – He completed the work of creation! He worked long and hard for six days – He created and He filled, He strategized, organized, and delegated tasks. He put the world in motion, He set boundaries in the earth, and He separated. He finished what He started – and He didn't get sloppy as the week went past. The first of his work was good. The last of his work was very good! I'm just saying that He had an excellent work ethic. Chuckle.

It is reassuring to me that what God starts, He also finishes. This applies to humanity as well. In Philippians 1:6, we read,

*"I am confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Years ago, I asked God for a miracle in my life. I leaned into Him and prayed for this miracle constantly, until the answer came. His answer was not the miracle I longed for. His answer was one of reassurance that He heard my prayer and was at work, even though I could not see what He was doing. What was that answer? I heard these words in my spirit, and I knew they were from God: **"I will complete the work I have started."**

From those words, I was reminded God was in control and my choice would be to trust Him, that no matter what I saw with my own eyes, I could believe that He was working behind the scenes to bring the answer to my prayer. I also knew that I had no control over what He was doing nor His timing, but I

could believe and rest in the fact that He is trustworthy and when the time was right, I would get my miracle.

What other work did God begin and complete? Do any stories from the Bible come to mind? The greatest one is through the work of Jesus. If you remember the Gospel message, Jesus came to earth as a human and lived a perfect life. His purpose for leaving heaven and coming to earth was to be a living sacrifice for our sins, so we could have forgiveness. As Jesus hung on the cross, taking on the sin, sickness, disease, and weight of the world, He paid the price for the darkness we would be exposed to and walk in – sin, sickness, condemnation, hatred. He provided a way for us to be free. And when the work was done on the cross, He cried out, “IT IS FINISHED.”

And in Revelation 22, we read where God returned the earth to its original state, where sin is gone, the curses placed upon the earth at the fall of man are removed, and God makes His dwelling on earth, among men. He makes all things new. What God began in Genesis 1, that which was damaged by sin, is restored and finished in Revelation 22. He finishes what He starts! For encouragement, read Revelation 21 and 22!

God does not grow bored with His creation. He does not leave a project unfinished. He does not give up on people. He is patient and long suffering with His creation. His love covers us, protects us, and reaches us whether we are on the highest mountain or in the deepest pit. He is always working in our lives, in our circumstances, and He never grows tired or weary. He is always about completing the work in us that He began. Never think that God has given up on you. He always finishes what He has started.

### **GOD RESTS**

God rested after His work was complete. Through this statement, we understand that we also need rest. Let's take a little trip through the Bible and see where this day of Sabbath rest is also mentioned. Turn to Exodus 20:8-11, and see how it is also mentioned in the Ten Commandments given to Moses and the Israelites:

*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

Again, we are reminded that we need rest, and God has provided a day of rest for us! But what is that rest? In our first pass of reading Genesis 1:3, the take away is that we need rest from physical work. And we do, but it goes deeper. As we grow in faith, and as we read further in scripture, we see there's also a spiritual rest. We are told we can enter into God's rest. What is this rest and how do we get it?

Hebrews chapter 3 and 4 break this down for us. I'm not going to read all of these verses – I encourage you to read through these two chapters to glean more spiritual insight. I will point out that fear and unbelief keep us from entering God's rest; fear and unbelief mess with our trust that God can do all things and rather than looking up at God to take care of our needs, disappointments, frustrations, and

worries, we bow down to anxiety, control, manipulation, lying, cheating, and other sinful ways of making things happen. There is rest in trusting and believing that God is Sovereign and trustworthy. There is great unrest in worry and taking matters into our own hands.

When we rest in God, we often have to remind ourselves to return to that rest moment by moment, day by day. We must intentionally rest from physical labor, and it is good to rest. We are refreshed when we rest.

We are also spiritually refreshed when we trust God and believe His promises. Hebrews 4:4 says, *“His work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in these words: ‘And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.’”* And in verse 9, *“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest.”*

Rest is important. Physical rest and Spiritual rest. We can find complete rest through our faith in God, in His promises, in His provision, in having a personal relationship with Him. Unbelief will keep us from entering His rest. And the beauty is, once we enter His rest, we can stay there every day - Our belief in Him, our trust in Him, gives us a heart that stays in the place of His rest seven days a week. Chew on that!

## **GOD SETS APART**

To be set apart means that God has a specific purpose in mind. God set the seventh day apart for holy use. This is the main reason we have church services on Saturday and Sunday. To honor the Sabbath day by keeping it holy and honoring God on that day.

We have discussed in the first chapter of Genesis how God separates – He separated the land from the water, the darkness from the light, the day from the night. We also see, through the setting apart of the Sabbath day, that God sets some things apart because they are holy.

God sets His children apart. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, we become God’s children, and He sets us apart for His purposes. In I Peter 2:9-10, we read: *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.”*

And again, in Romans 8:30

*“And so those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called; he put right with himself, and he shared his glory with them.”*

As Christians, we are set apart to be examples of God’s love. We humble ourselves to His teaching and allow Him to develop our character to be Christlike.

God has been in the practice of setting apart since the creation of the world. But one thing is sure. We shall never be separated from God's love – Listen to these words from Romans 8:35-36.

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No!”*

We are set apart for God and once we commit our lives to Him, it is literally impossible for us to be separated from Him. And it is guaranteed that our lives matter because we represent Him on earth. How seriously do we take our role of being a child of Almighty God? Do we understand that we have been set apart for His purposes? Do we understand that, unless we humble ourselves to Him, we will miss out on our purpose and calling in life? Yeah, I know – all of this from the creation story! There are so many truths hidden in just the first few verses of the book of Genesis!

Well, look at that. Only three verses covered this show --- I must say I'm learning more than probably anyone else in the whole wide world by doing these podcasts. I am continually amazed at how the Bible is one story and how things from the beginning of time are themed throughout scripture and brought to a greater understanding as we read through the Bible.

Today, we see how God finishes what He starts, He rests and provides a way for us to have physical and spiritual rest in Him, and He sets apart things and people for HIS holy use. We have been from Genesis to Revelation in this podcast! What a grand tour we are having of both the Old and New Testaments. Well, that's all the words I have for this show! Remember, the 40 days of prayer can be found on my website, [www.maryetheleckard.com](http://www.maryetheleckard.com) and are also daily posted on my Facebook Page, Mary Ethel Eckard. I encourage to visit the website or Facebook page daily to discover these prayers. Pray them over yourself and your family.