



Selah

PSALM 46 NKJV

A SERMON BY
REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY



Sunday, December 1, 2019

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

Sermon: Selah

Scripture: Psalm 46:1-11 (NKJV)

**CURRICULUM
GUIDE**



Sermon Summary

Pastor Wesley introduced us to the concept of “Selah” while emphasizing the importance of rest and renewal. We are encouraged to embrace rest for the good of our own well-being and our relationship with God. Pastor also utilized Selah to announce his 2020 Sabbatical. While Pastor Wesley is on sabbatical he encourages the Alfred Street family to do the following:

1. Be Courageous
2. Trust Leadership
3. Be Persistent in your Presence
4. Be Faithful in your Generosity
5. Be Prayerful

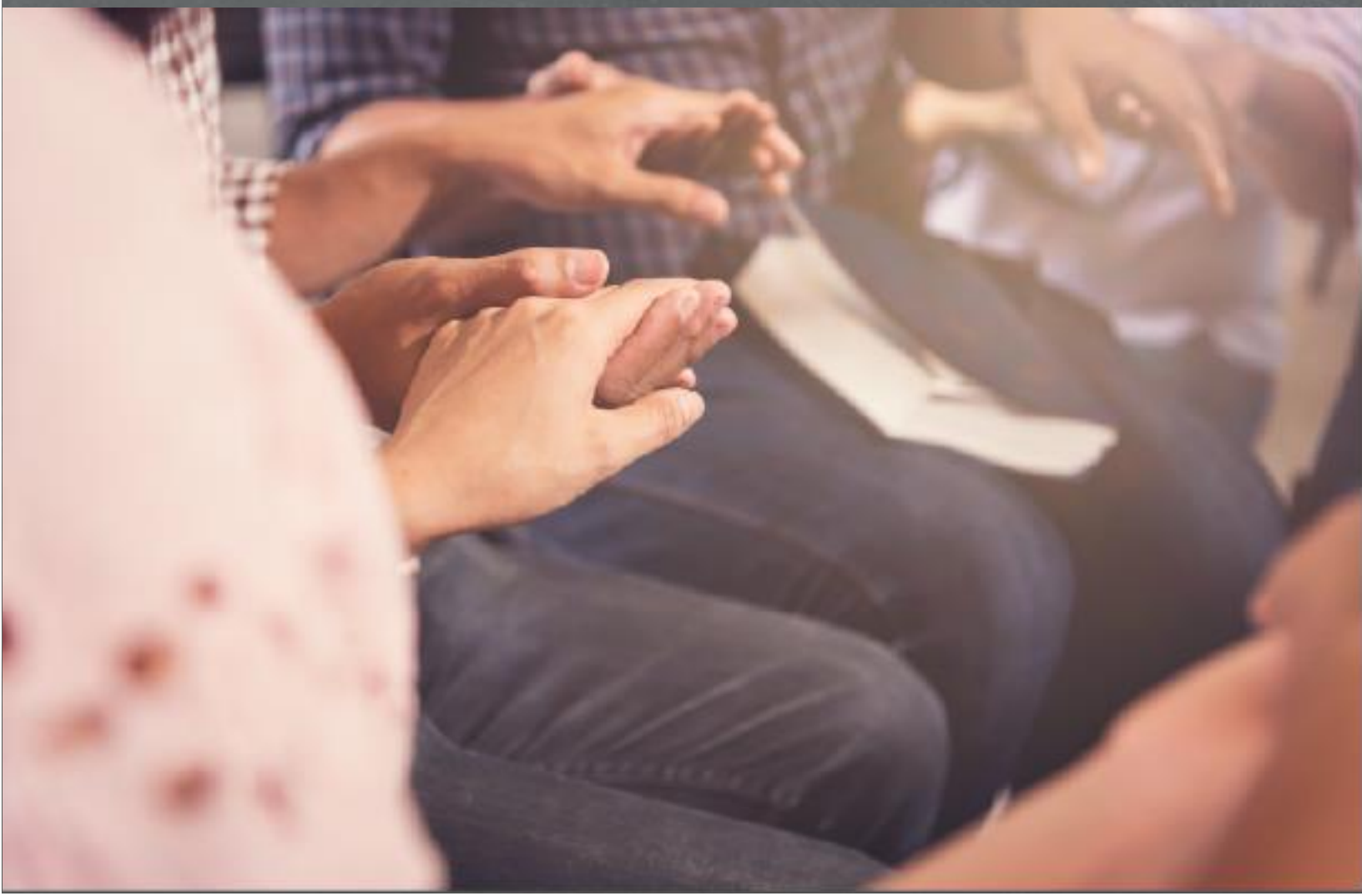
Notes for Facilitators:

Facilitators please be mindful of the following:

1. All Village participants and leaders must take the closing survey this week. At the end of the closing survey Villagers will indicate their desire for the Winter 2020 season. Click here to take the closing survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ASBCVillage2019>
2. As a Village, please decide which service you would like to attend as a group for Village Celebration Weekend. You can choose the 6 pm service on Saturday, December 14th, the 9:30 am service on Sunday, December 15th, or the 11:30 am service on Sunday, December 15th. Please use the link below to submit one RSVP for your entire Village:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/village-celebration-weekend-tickets-78074742657>
3. We strongly encourage you to save time for the activity this week

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. Pastor Wesley said, "If you can't rest from it, you are ultimately a slave to it." In a moment of candor, share with your Village one thing you've been a slave to. What are some of the things you tell yourself to justify not taking a break (whether it is work, family responsibilities, relationships, community service, etc.)?
2. Pastor Wesley taught us that the word Selah is used as a musical directive to pause or stop. If you were conducting the music of your life, what musical directive do you hear God giving you in this season?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. Pastor Wesley briefly shared the story of Jacob wrestling with God (Genesis 32:22-32). God touched Jacob's hip, which changed his walk, both physically and spiritually. In what ways has God touched you that led to a physical and/or spiritual change?
2. In Luke 10:38-42, we learn of the story of Martha and Mary. When Jesus comes to visit their home, Martha is *busy* with household tasks of serving, while Mary simply sits and listens to Jesus. When Martha becomes angry that Mary is just sitting, Jesus says to Martha "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." How does this passage relate to *Selah*?

Life Application Questions:

1. Scripture emphasizes that Jesus is the head of the church and not any man or woman.
 - a) In what ways do we sometimes forget to demonstrate this reality?
 - b) How do we grow our Christian maturity to detach our understanding of God from attraction to human personality?
 - c) What do we miss during worship, when we focus on the person and not the message?
2. Who in your life needs a "Selah" moment? What are some signs that someone needs a break? Pastor mentioned that many of us fear taking a break, how can you support and encourage them?
3. Sometimes we fall prey to the idea that to be busy is to be important. There are moments in life when God just wants us to be *still*.
 - a) What is one area in your life where you intentionally remain busy?
 - b) What steps can you take today to actively work on being still?
4. Pastor Wesley spoke about choosing to do things that he truly enjoys. What are the things in your life that you truly enjoy? How do you protect time for this?
5. Pastor Wesley stated that every pastor fights the demons of narcissism and arrogance. Society often pushes us all to think we are the only ones who can do what we do.
 - a) In what ways have you felt the pressure to be all things to all people?
 - b) How has your belief that "you are the only one" fed this pressure? How can you combat this?



"Can I Push It?"

1. What is your greatest fear if you decide to Selah? Who will be upset? What relationships will be impacted? What will you lose? *But*, what will you gain?
2. Pastoral sabbatical is a much more common practice in white churches. What would you consider to be the roots of opposition to pastoral sabbatical and rest in the black church? How do we work through these psychological and historical pressures to make Selah an acceptable and celebrated practice in church and in our personal lives?
3. Pastor Wesley shared that pastoral sabbaticals are rarely taken in black churches because often there is a fear of whether the church can survive without the pastor.
 - a) When Pastor announced his sabbatical, how did that make you feel?
 - b) If fearful, how can we use pastor's 5 charges (Be Courageous, Trust Leadership, Be Persistent in your Presence, Be Faithful in your Generosity, Be Prayerful) to combat our fear?
 - c) If hopeful, how can you spread your hope to other church members?

Spirit Work:

Pastor Wesley shared that he feels "tired in his soul and distant from God," but he laid out several goals for renewing his spiritual health. As we prepare for a Selah, it is important that we set some goals for what we hope to accomplish during the period of pause. On a sheet of paper, make a chart of four columns: Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, and Professional. This week, spend some time to reflect, pray and write out some goals in each column. Identify scriptures to strengthen you as you enter a Selah or period of rest, and scriptures to combat your fear of taking a break.



Activity:

"Let's Take a Selah"

There is no prescribed amount of time for a Selah. Sometimes a Selah could be in the form of a 20-minute walk during the work-day, a three-day fast to reconnect with God, or a 4-month sabbatical. Carve out 5 minutes in your Village meeting (either at the beginning or the end) and spend that time as a group to sit in pure silence/meditation. You may close your eyes or put your head down (whatever puts you in a comfortable position). After the group Selah moment, have a member close out the activity in prayer.

Additional Question for Married Couples Villages:

1. Think of some ways that you have felt the pressure of not getting enough rest and share with your spouse. What are some commitments that you can make as a couple to rest together as well as individually?
2. What are some things you need from your spouse to embrace a spirit of Selah? What are some ways that you can help your spouse Selah?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

1. As you work to build your life and work goals, what are some ways that you have neglected Selah? What are some ways you can change this and still reach your goals?
2. In a time where social media governs almost everything we do, how can we take our understanding of Selah and put it into practice in our social media presence? Why is a social media Selah important?

Additional Questions for Parents' Villages:

1. As a parent, why is it important for you to take time to rest? In what ways can you teach your children the importance of rest?
2. Pastor Wesley is providing an example of Selah or an intentional period of rest after recognizing a need for restoration. Discuss how you have been able to demonstrate a similar example of healthy Christian living and/or how you would like to strengthen this area in order to leave a roadmap of self-care for your children to follow.

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

1. Being a "superwoman" is a common expectation in our society. How can you use this period of Selah to adjust unrealistic expectations of being all things to all people at your expense?
2. What toxic habits (people, places, or activities) do you need to Selah, or stop, in order to enjoy the rest God wants for you? What has prevented your Selah from these things? Describe what kinds of healthy friendships and ways of relating you would like to nurture with God, yourself, and others.
3. Discuss what restores your soul, energy, mental health, physical health, and overall well-being. Discuss how you can create more time for these things and some initial steps to accomplish at least one of them.