

Saturday Night Fever was a popular movie released in 1977 starring Jon Travolta who plays Tony Manero who lives at a dead-end job working at a paint store who lives for the weekends where he dances with his friends at the clubs and eventually enters a dance competition and then falls in love with his dance partner.

Now, this is the title of our sermon and perhaps we can relate to this kind of lifestyle, not dancing exactly, but the eagerness for it to be the weekend. Thank God It's Friday—TGIF—as we look at our text today, there's a connection. Jesus was at the synagogue, exorcising a demon, and then immediately after He heals Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. He heals the sick and those with demons at sundown. It's important for us to understand it was a Saturday. Jesus was in a frenzy as He cared for those who came in from out and about to be whole again, to be healed: Saturday night fever.

I think we can perhaps relate to the craziness of life. Jesus' life and ministry was very busy. Once His ministry started, people couldn't get enough of Him. It often seems like we're in short supply as well. Monday through Friday we're working a job. We wake up. We take our kids to school. We go to work. We pick up our kids from work. We have dinner, somehow. Maybe we have a little bit of time for activities, then we go to bed. Rinse. Wash. Repeat.

By the time Friday rolls around, we're excited to have some "me" time. Saturday and Sunday means catching up on chores, running errands, doing something fun. We work so hard during the week, we're in this fever throughout the week that Saturday rolls around and we can relate to the Saturday Night Fever. We want to do something fun Saturday night. We want to drown out the feeling that things are left undone, and that life is stressful. I am so busy. How am I going to make ends meet?

I think we can relate to Jesus' situation. If we understand that it was the Sabbath day, it makes sense as to why people came at sundown. Understand that the Jewish Sabbath began Friday night and ended Saturday night. As soon as the sun set you could go back to work. In a sense, this is Jesus' Monday morning, weekend was over, bang, all sorts of people needed His help. We read, "**And the whole city was gathered together at the door.**"

There had to have been a lot of stress and anxiety. All this makes us wonder, why couldn't Jesus heal everyone with the flip of a switch or the wave of a hand. Why did He have to do it on a one-by-one basis?

I think that question resonates with us. Wouldn't it be nice if my cancer was healed without having to go through chemotherapy. Wouldn't it be nice if I was suddenly 30 again and happy as a clam and healthy as a gazelle? Wouldn't it be nice if all my work was done by Monday night instead of having to stay in late on Friday? I would like to have my degree with all the accompanying knowledge

without the late nights studying or the thousands of dollars in debt. Wouldn't it be nice if I didn't have so many activities to take my kids to?

This we wonder. And often we find unhelpful coping strategies. The way we cope with stress with school or work or family is through Saturday night fever. We stay up later at night. Maybe it's a party with friends or we just engage in our hobby more vigorously leaving more vigorous trips. If only I had just a little bit more fun time, then we end up putting off what we need to be doing in the process. How do we cure Saturday night fever?

We see pretty clearly from our text that there is a cure. The cure to Saturday night fever is Sunday morning Sabbath. It's perhaps no coincidence that Jesus takes Sunday morning, and He escapes to a desolate place to pray. Jesus takes time to pray. Jesus who is true God, who really, according to His divinity did not need to rest, took time away from healing people, away from preaching, away from casting out demons, to rest in the Father.

The Third Commandment is "Remember the Sabbath Day by Keeping it Holy." It certainly is a command, but it isn't just about going to church on Sunday, but it is understanding that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. He is the Lord of rest. Remembering the Sabbath day by keeping it holy happens as we take and make time to go to church regularly where we hear for a change the message that in Christ, you are complete. In Christ, all things have been accomplished. He has said, "It is finished" from the cross. And so it is that you come here as a beloved child of God, baptized, welcomed into His family, and loved. A forgiven child of God who receives forgiveness through His baptism who receives from the words of the pastor. Who receives forgiveness from the Lord's Supper. You can be at peace and be equipped and encouraged to go out into the world to help others.

But this doesn't just happen on a Sunday morning, this true rest as we hear God's Word read on a regular basis in our Bibles, as we pray throughout the week, as we encourage one another as Christian brothers and sisters.

I know that it is tempting to view this third commandment as chore. However, God is giving us a blessing that you can rest in Him. It is a blessing to have your peace in Jesus Christ. Because there are going to come those disciples who break your spell, and break that time of peace. We read, "**And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you."**" Where are you Jesus, right? You're letting us down? How can we get all these sick people healed without you? How can we do your job without you? We need you!

Isn't that true, though? You are needed. And sometimes you can feel guilty making time to rest in Jesus. You might get weird looks from your friends when it's 10 o'clock and you say, "I have to go to bed for church tomorrow. I can't go to the next bar." Your boss at work going to love you when you say, "I can't work on

Saturday because I got to get stuff done on Saturday, so I can go to church on Sunday.” Your coach is going to love you when you say, “I can’t play basketball on Sunday. I can’t go to the baseball game. Church is more important.” The Saturday Night Fever is going to press in on you and although it’s okay to dance. It’s okay to celebrate. It’s okay to have a party. We need to understand that anything that pulls us away from God endangers our salvation. It endangers our true rest. The cure to the Saturday night fever is Sunday morning rest. The cure to the Monday through Friday grind is knowing that Christ goes with you.

One pastor gave the advice that when we leave the office for home, touch the things on your desk and commend them to the Father, and let God take care of those things left undone at the end of the day. I invite you to commend your work to God in prayer and trust that God will take care of you even as He took care of those people who came to Jesus for help. He will take care of you.

Why didn’t Jesus just heal everybody? I think those two things are tied together, commending to God what’s left undone and doing what we can within the time God has given us fit hand in glove. Because there is always going to be something left undone. There were people in Capernaum who Jesus didn’t heal.

But God leaves things undone for two reasons: 1. To help us understand that there is good work that we are doing, and it is important work. It is work that invites others to participate. As we consider the work of the Church, I’m not a one-man team. There’s plenty of opportunities to serve in this place. Jesus said, **“Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”** Jesus did the best He could given the limited time He had on this earth, and He asks us to do the same.

The second thing is, even with the best congregation ever, there are going to be things left undone, and that’s an article of faith. To know that just as Jesus left that Saturday night and went to bed, to overcome that Saturday night fever. He left commending the others to the Father knowing that one day it would be complete.

There will be the last term paper. There will be the last widget to make or the last house to build. There will be the last criminal arrested. There will be a last cancer patient because Jesus is coming back. He make all things right. He makes all things new. When He comes back, it’s not that He forgot those who weren’t healed. Those sheep of His He has not forgotten. He is going to come back, and He is going to raise the faithful departed to be perfect, and He is preparing a place for me and for you. A place without sin. A place without frenzy. A place without fever where we will live with Him forever.

And that’s why Jesus came. Not only to heal the ones He came into contact with and proclaim the coming kingdom, but then to instill in people that this coming kingdom is actually coming. This is just a foretaste of what is to come until we entrust to God the things left undone knowing that in Him it is finished. Amen.