

Sermon Notes: June 2, 2024 **Focus:** sabbath and rest

[Proper 4, Track II Readings](#)

Mark 2:27-28 “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

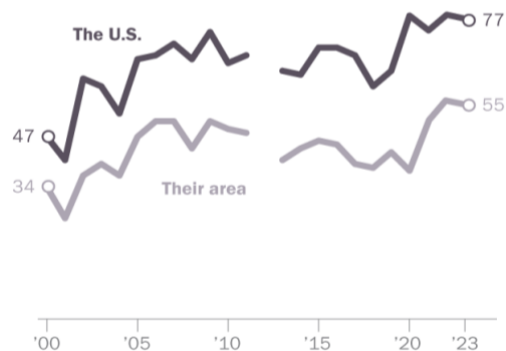
I want to talk about sabbath and rest. Most of us are truly terrible at resting, much less practicing intentional sabbath. If you manage to stop physically moving, is your brain planning, protecting, and predicting what things might happen (usually bad)? The gift of sabbath comes from Jesus, Lord of your brain, and he helps you find rest in body and mind despite your natural tendency.

In the extreme, this tendency is called hypervigilance. Traumatized soldiers returning from combat, are always scanning for danger in Costco when they come back. To a lesser extent you are like that soldier hedging against catastrophe. While it may have helped you avoid something bad in the past, you are not giving yourself a chance for any kind of sabbath now, and it is *very* normal.

Our ancient ancestors living on the African savanna needed to be hypervigilant. The ones who heard a lion in the dark nine times *incorrectly*, but only *once correctly* - survived. We are the product of ancestors who succeeded by being hypervigilant, nervous Nellies.

Americans tend to believe crime is up nationally, less so locally

% of U.S. adults who say there is more crime in ___ than there was a year ago



I want to share a couple of graphs with you. Our nervousness does not work nearly as well when there are no lions ready to attack. Our vigilance is positively counterproductive when we are working on our laptop. I want to use crime as an example, but my point stands regardless of the topic like ‘kids these days,’ inflation, war, etc.

Today, in the US, we live in a world with very few physical threats - so we create threats. Despite the reality that crime has dropping decade over decade, our perception of crime is that it is rising to epidemic levels. (See the graph about that trend on page 2). NextDoor is full of people wondering who

that evil person is walking by their house. Your hypervigilance it likely working overtime to your detriment. You can take the girl out of the African savanna, but you can't take the savanna out of the girl. Maybe that's why it's so hard to take the gift of Sabbath because of our monkey minds.

Take crime as the perfect lens to understand hypervigilance. It affects our election cycles. It makes us feel like the world is on fire in ways that seemingly it wasn't when

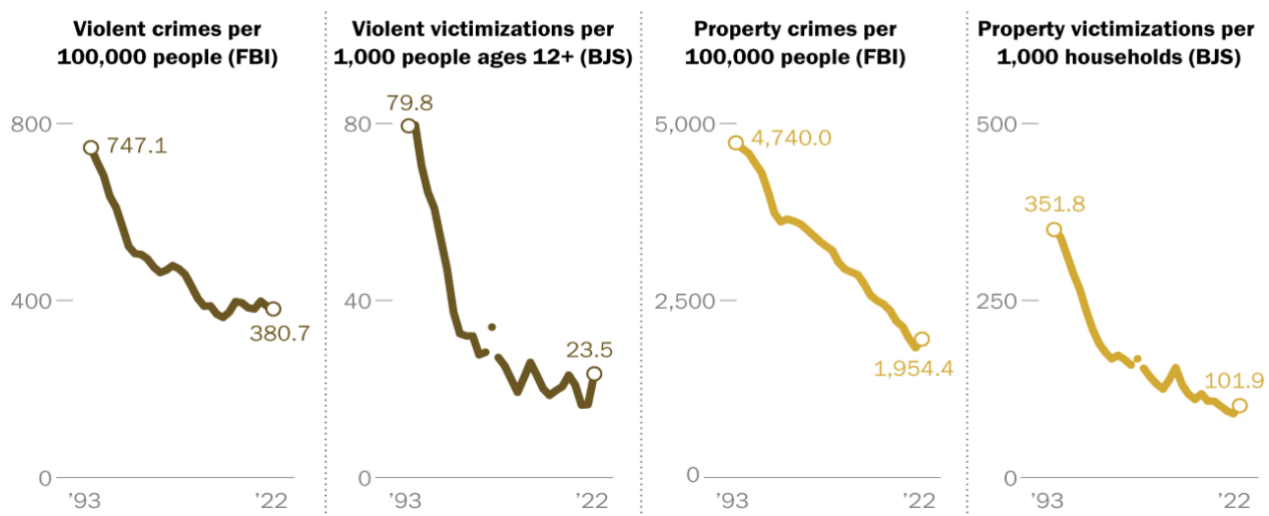
we were younger. You can be 25 or 85 and still feel like that when *you* were young prices were reasonable, politicians were noble, and children respected their elders. It seems that the present has a way of tricking us that our past fear was so much smaller.

For me, my generation loves to talk about how tough we were as latch key kids, staying out until dark, and drinking from the water hose. But I remember the horrors of nuclear drills, Iranian hostages, fuel shortages, “being seen not heard” in those God forsaken smoke-filled rooms. I am not sure I want to hold up absent parenting as the model for the good ol’ days.

I’ve noticed something about all of us; we love to think we live in uniquely bad times. We do not. In fact, I would argue that our inability to really practice sabbath, makes us fragile and unable to see the world as it is. We live in unprecedented peace (locally, not globally). I know that locally, there are some truly apocalyptically, crime ridden parts of the Bay Area, but in aggregate, we live in shockingly peaceful times. The country has experienced a historic drop in crime since the 1990’s. See this Pew Center graph:

U.S. violent and property crime rates have plunged since 1990s, regardless of data source

Trends in U.S. violent and property crime, 1993-2022



So why are we in a state of alarm? We forget that *the sabbath was made for humankind...so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath*. I think we can take Jesus up on his offer to be the Lord of our peace and rest, both when life is abundantly supplied and when it is not.

I leave you with end of Psalm 4

There are many who say, “O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord! You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound. I will both lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety

Todd