

Sabbath 06-13-10

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Greetings to you in Jesus' precious name; I am thankful to be gathered with you today. This morning I want to talk a little about sabbath day and what that means to the Christian. First of all, there is a lot of unlearning to do. When I was with the Methodists a few years back (that would have been about 15 years ago already) there was an old man there and whenever we talked about keeping Sunday as sabbath day as they often referred to it, he said that right here in Monett when he was a boy one Sunday he and some of his friends were playing baseball. This man was about 70 years old 15 years ago, so that would be over 80 years by now. The police caught them playing baseball on Sunday and they were fined \$5 per family because the boys were breaking the sabbath day. That gives you a little bit of perspective about what was in people's minds. I think it was John or Charles Wesley who had played on the sabbath day and that is what convicted him and brought him to such terror that he had broken the sabbath day and felt like that was going to send him to hell. He played a game or told a joke, it was something we would think very little about today. I remember only 20-25 years ago they built the Walmart here in Monett, but before that there were only one or two gas stations that were allowed to stay open on Sunday; they rotated between gas stations and drug stores so that they could all be closed on Sunday. They called it the "blue law." It was not until Walmart wanted to be opened 24 hours a day 7 days a week that they repealed that "blue law" here in Monett.

That's the perspective we have that we have been brought up with. I know that growing up in our home we wouldn't have done anything outside of what was required on Sunday. What we've learned and seen as we have studied history and the scriptures is that there is no place in the Bible where God changed Sunday into the sabbath day. For all of these laws that I have talked about to really have any affect on Christians, we would have to be able to look to the Bible to find some support for God changing sabbath - that it would not be sabbath on Saturday anymore but it would be on Sunday. The Bible does make reference about collections being taken the first day of the week in 1 Cor. 16 - let your offerings be gathered on the first day of the week. It also talks about John meditating on the Lord's day, and that's where he got the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:10). But no where does it say God has changed sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. That's one of the things we have to get our minds around before we can even begin to understand, because there is absolutely no basis for that at all.

The first reference I found to keeping Sunday as a sabbath was the Catholics in the year 300. They claim they changed the sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday, but as we look further in history we'll see that from the beginning the earliest Christians we can find came together on the Lord's day. One other point I want to make before we open the scriptures and look is that whenever the Bible talks about the seventh day, or the sabbath day, it never commands the worship to be done on that day. The Bible calls it a day of rest. It had become a sabbath day where everyone gathered in the synagogues and they talked about the word of God - we see that throughout the book of Acts where they met together. Paul preached on the sabbath and often he refers to the sabbath explaining how long he stayed some place; "I stayed there 3 sabbath days". It was just a point of reference that he spent 3 weeks there, but we never find that was a commandment Jesus gave to us.

Colossians 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

What I want to make very clear here is verse 17: all these things were shadows of the things to come. Hebrews 4 talks about entering in to His rest. Ceasing from our own labors and our own inventions of righteousness. I use that word inventions because righteousness is in God's righteousness; we are righteous doing righteous things when we enter into His rest or His obedience and we have ceased from trying to find our own way and we find His way. These things given were a shadow of the things to come. The Bible makes it clear: if one wants to keep one day and another man wants to keep another, let no man judge you in those things. Do not condemn them. If someone wants to keep a sabbath day, I'm not going to condemn them. If they want to keep a Friday or Sunday and they have their day of rest on Sunday, that's just fine. I will not condemn them for that, but if they teach we *have* to keep a certain day and it causes division, strife, wrath and envy, then it is out of order.

There's a religion that started around 150-200 years ago by a woman - Seventh Day Adventists - and they can come and throw a few verses at us that sometimes may cause us to wonder, "Well, maybe we ought to keep the sabbath day (Saturday) as a strict day we do nothing on?" And they give a few arguments and verses, and it makes us wonder sometimes if we should keep that too. But just about like any other religion that will base their ideas on one particular commandment, you don't have to go far to find where they neglect or ignore other commandments. For instance, what do they do about adultery? Just from my own experience they are probably one of the most divorced and remarried group that I have been around as a whole. Seems like many of the people who

pushed keeping sabbath that I've known from my background were almost always divorced and remarried; not just once but several times. They put their focus on keep sabbath day, and as long as they keep this day and meet on saturday, they are peculiar from the rest, so they can feel justified and a little holier than everyone else because they keep this day.

Jesus said, "Work for the night is coming when no man can work." There's nothing wrong with taking some rest once in a while. He said, "Come apart; come out from among them," and He often tried to come out when the multitudes followed Him but they always seemed to find Him every time He tried to seek a little rest. He didn't get a lot of rest once He entered into His Father's kingdom.

I'm going to read a few verses in Exodus

Exodus 20:1 And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Who is He speaking to? "*I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*". He was speaking to the children of Israel, and then He proceeded to give them what we know as the ten commandments. But he was speaking and making a covenant with the children of Israel. Let's go on; we'll find some more.

Exodus 31:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. 14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Exodus 35:1 And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. 2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

Almost every reference in the Old Testament about the sabbath day you'll find a preface to it and it is directed and talks about the covenant for the children of Israel or to those who were brought out of Egypt. Some say it was not to the Jews because God created the heaven and earth in six days and on the seventh day He rested. He did, and there is nothing wrong with taking a day of rest and resting a little while, but the covenant God made for the sabbath was for the Jews. We have an old covenant and we have a new covenant. We are never commanded in the new covenant - all these other commandments are all specifically listed in the New Testament as sins if we break them - but the sabbath day is never mentioned as a day to be kept through all those lists of things. For instance in Revelation where it says all liars, fornicators, adulterers ... those lists like that never mention sabbath breakers. It was the old covenant that Jesus fulfilled; now we are under a new covenant. That clears so many things up - the New Testament is the new covenant Jesus gave to man sealed in His blood. We are not children of Israel. God does not give us special secret names that we call God. Jesus referred to Him as the Father, and that is good enough. These people who get caught up in all these special secret names that they call God, that are supposed to be unmentionable names, but they seem to mention them pretty regularly. They throw them around pretty proudly, which is against the Father. They think they are a little higher because they can use these sacred names. I don't know how many people who have come up to me and said, "Do you know the name of God?" And if I don't tell them the right thing in the right pronunciation, they say, "Well you don't even know His name so how can you know who He is?" Then they usually go off and have another drink and another smoke or whatever they go do. Fighting against the word of God, but they know His name. Not all of them are that way but many of them I've found are.

Lets go into the New Testament. I'll read several verses here.

Mark 2:23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

What were they doing? If someone just walking by saw men out in the fields gathering grain, what would they think? What would you think of if you saw someone out in their garden as you drove home? Collecting corn or picking green beans – what would you think? You would think they were out working in their garden. Here's Jesus and His disciples going through a field of grain, picking grain on a sabbath day; what do you think the Pharisees thought about that?

Mark 2: 23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to

pluck the ears of corn. 24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? 26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? 27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Often this verse is quoted how the sabbath was made for man and not for sabbath. It's often believed to be given as a commandment, but if you look at the context - Jesus said this day was for man not for man to be a slave to the sabbath. This was the day God provided for man to rest, not be a servant to the day of rest. This was just after He and His disciples were going through the corn field collecting grain. He said, 'Who's the lord here, this day that you are picking out, or man?'

Mark 3:1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Mark 6:1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

I want to bring out here that Jesus began to teach in the synagogues. What was His job? What was He doing in the three years that He was a minister? He was teaching. And here, instead of taking a day of rest, He stood up and taught in the synagogue. I don't know about you, but Sunday is probably one of the hardest days that I have ... teaching. I can't hardly call it a day of rest. Jesus said, "Work for the night is coming." Our day of rest is in heaven. Our day of rest is in eternity. We are so concerned that we are in perfect health and have all the rest we need and everything is just wonderful so that we can live a good, long life on this earth, but our rest is in heaven. Often I think of a saying I have - Lloyd used to say, it's better to wear out or burn out than rust out. It's better to wear out or burn out for the Lord. I've adopted that saying. It's not much fun wearing out but I'd rather be found worn out when He returns than rusted out.

Here is the same account; here they aren't only out plucking or harvesting, but they were preparing the grain.

Luke 6:1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

Luke 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. 12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. 15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Luke 14:1 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. 2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. 3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? 4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; 5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? 6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

John 5:7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. 14 Afterward

Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. 17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

John 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

As we read all those verses, what connotation or thought do you get about the sabbath day and how Jesus responded to it just by reading how He actually dealt with and responded on the sabbath day? Do you get out of these verses that, "Oh, we need to be keeping the sabbath more holy." I don't. I see Jesus could have done this any day of the week – he could have done this on Friday, or healed any one of these people on the next day. This woman had that infirmity 18 years; was it an emergency that he had to do it on the sabbath? Absolutely not. He did it on purpose, right in their face, on the sabbath. He broke it right in front of them. Gather what you will out of it; you don't need to be defiant about it. Jesus went about doing good on the sabbath day. He went about doing good every day. That was His work, and He did not take a day of rest from His doing good. That was His work.

We have a day of rest coming; we have a day when we can lay our burdens down and lay aside what God has set before us. I'm not much for "retired preachers." When God is ready to retire somebody, He'll take them home. We don't have a place where we can just quit doing what He has set us to do, and relax and take it easy ... go off to Florida for the winter and take a vacation from our preaching. The day of rest is coming. There will be rest by and by. There are many other things we could discuss ... Acts 15 when they met together in the council whether they should keep all the laws, they came up with four. Not to eat blood, things strangled, keep from fornication (I cannot remember the other one right now), but nothing about keeping the sabbath day. Watch how Jesus lived. That is how you learn. Learn from Jesus. We can see His examples.

Let no man judge you on keeping a holy day, the feast days, and all these different things. Live for the Lord. May the Lord add His blessings to His words.