

Sunday Morning Message

July 15, 2018

Remember The Sabbath

Text – Exodus 20:8 - 11

Congregational Reading – Exodus 20:8 - 11

Introduction

Genesis 2:1 – 3; Exodus 31:12 – 17 – Observance the Sabbath day was a custom mandated by God in the Jewish Law. The Sabbath was the last day of the week, or Saturday. Resting on the Sabbath day was intended so that men and women could take a break from their labors and to refresh themselves physically. Eventually, it evolved into a day where people not only rested from their labors but also spent time in the synagogues worshipping God and learning from the rabbis. However, the religious leaders also attached many strict rules to the Sabbath day, which made it a very cumbersome burden to the people, instead of a day that they could enjoy.

Illustrate – Dave Shive asked to push the button on the smoke detector in Lakewood because the man who lived in the house could not do so because it was the Sabbath.

Mark 2: 23 – 3:6 (see also verses below from Matthew 12)

"And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." (Matthew 12:11-12)

It is important for us to realize that Jesus did not abolish the principle of the Sabbath, He just set it free from all of its legalistic rules.

The principle of resting one day out of seven is still just as valid and beneficial to man today as it was six thousand years ago. We need rest:

Mark 6:30 – 32; 1 Kings 19:4 - 8 – Elijah calls down fire from Heaven in 1 Kings 18, and then slays all of the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the grove. He prays for rain, and God answers with a great storm. He runs to Jezreel, which was seventeen miles away. He then runs away from Jezebel to Beersheba, which is 100 miles away. He leaves his servant at Beersheba, and then travels another day's journey into the wilderness. He asks God to kill him. His problem was that he was physically exhausted – emotionally drained. Elijah needed a sabbath.

Today, we do not observe the Jewish Saturday Sabbath. The day before the resurrection of Christ, we see the disciples resting on the Sabbath day; but after the resurrection we see the church is assembling together on the first day of the week, which is Sunday:

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (John 20:19)

*"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
(Acts 20:7)*

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:2)

The only mention of the Saturday Sabbath in connection to New Testament believers is when they went into the synagogues on the Sabbath days in order to preach the gospel to the Jews. Some early Jewish believers may have continued to observe the Saturday Sabbath because of tradition, which they were free to do, but they also assembled together with Christians on Sunday.

Remember – Jesus did not abolish the principle of a sabbath rest, it just set the Sabbath free of all of its crazy restrictions; but, He still wants us to rest.

William Biloxi observed that “the Sabbath is God’s special present to the working man. And one of its chief objects is to prolong his life. The savings bank of human existence is a weekly Sabbath.”¹

Why do you and I need to *Remember the Sabbath*?

I A Sabbath Provides Rhythm

Everything that God created has rhythm. The tides come in and go out. The sun comes up and goes down. The seasons change – in Spring and Summer, everything is growing feverishly, but in Winter, the land lies dormant and many animals hibernate.

God has established a daily rhythm that we all keep. We get up in the morning, we work, we eat, and we rest.

God also established a weekly rhythm – we work six days – we should work hard. We should be putting 100% effort into whatever God has given us to do.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

However, after working hard all week, God has given us a day where we can take a break from those labors.

This principle makes sense – the batteries on our cell phones need to be recharged; our cars need to go in for maintenance. Our bodies are not designed to go continuously.

¹ Farrar, Steve. *Overcoming Overload: Seven Ways to Find Rest in Your Chaotic World* (p. 48). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

God has set up a system, where we can actually take a day completely off from our work, and yet accomplish more in six days than the guy who neglects his sabbath and works seven days straight without resting.

Illustrate – A double portion of manna was provided on Fridays, so that God’s people would not have to gather it on the Sabbath.

Christian companies have figured this out. Hobby Lobby and Chic fil A do more weekly business than most of their competitors, and they are closed on Sundays.

Spurgeon said:

Look at the mower in the summer’s day. With so much to cut down before the sun sets, he pauses in his labor. Is he a sluggard? He looks for a stone and begins to draw it up and down his scythe, rink a tink, rink a tink, rink a tink. He’s sharpening his blade. Is that idle music? Is he wasting precious moments? How much he might have mown while he was ringing out those notes on his blade. But he is sharpening his tool. And he will do far more, when once again he gives his strength to those long sweeps which lay the grass prostrate in rows before him. Even thus a little pause prepares the mind for greater service in a good cause.

Fishermen must mend their nets and we must, every now and then, repair our mental states and set our machinery in order for future service. It is wisdom to take occasional furloughs. In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less.²

II A Sabbath Provides for Rest and Recreation

The body needs rest, and the mind needs recreation – a break from the monotony. Get an afternoon nap. Go for a walk. Shoot some hoops. Spend time with family and friends.

One Jewish rabbi was asked how the Jewish people had managed to preserve the observance of the Sabbath day for thousands of years. His reply was that the Jews did not preserve the Sabbath day, but rather the Sabbath day preserved the Jews.

Illustrate – the Amish observe Sundays a little differently than we do. Every other Sunday, they don’t go to church. Instead, they travel to see somewhat distant friends and family members.

Illustrate – Family Dinner

III A Sabbath Provides Time for Reverence

Sunday is a perfect day for gathering together with other believers to worship the Lord. In years past in America, people often gathered for morning services, and then ate a meal together, and then got back together to sing and hear the word preached.

Hebrews 10:22 – 25 – It is important that Christians all strive to gather together on the same day. It is not always possible in today’s crazy culture, but for centuries, Americans were given the opportunity to observe Sunday as a day of rest.

² Ibid, p. 55

Conclusion

Remember, we are not under Law to keep a sabbath. We don't have to observe a sabbath, but a sabbath is a gift from God for our good. Jesus said, "*the Sabbath was made for man.*" It was provided by God for man's benefit.

Practical Tips

- 1 Try to get all day off on Sundays if possible.
- 2 Prepare for Sunday on Saturday – Saturday is our preparation day.

Get your clothes ready for church on Saturday.

Try not to have a bunch of things to do on Sunday – get them done on Saturday.

Prepare your meals ahead so you don't have to cook on Sunday.

Try to go to bed early on Saturday – don't stay out late.

Pray for the Sunday services.

- 3 Get up early enough on Sunday to spend some time with the Lord. Read and pray.
- 4 Go to Sunday School and church.
- 5 Eat dinner together as a family. If you don't have a family, get together with some others in the church and spend the afternoon with them.

Illustrate – Julie and Keith take Mrs. Bull home every Sunday.

- 6 Try to relax and enjoy each other in the afternoon. Spend time together as a family. Talk together, play together, rest together.
- 7 Go back to church together on Sunday evening.
- 8 Have some friends back to the house – or go over somebody else's house. Play basketball with the guys, but bring your whole family with you.
- 9 Make Sunday a special day – a day that is set apart from the rest of the week. Enjoy it. Don't feel guilty. It is a gift from God.