

December 11, 2022 AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Nehemiah 13:15-22 – “Restore the Sabbath Rest”

- A. When we look at the state of the church in America & in our community, what is it that we need for a spiritual revival?
1. Some look to the church growth movement for answers.
 2. If you would have asked Nehemiah what was needed for spiritual revival, he would have answered, “religious reform— especially concerning keeping the sabbath day holy.”
- B. Nehemiah was more than a wall-builder. He was a governor after God’s own heart. He was a man who loved God & endeavored to lead the people in what was right & holy.

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| You are to endeavor to restore the Sabbath rest. | I. FORBIDDEN WORK ON THE SABBATH II. THE SABBATH REST IS FOR TODAY |
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I. **FORBIDDEN WORK ON THE SABBATH** –

- A. “Sabbath” in Hebrew is pronounced more like “Sabbat.” This word can be translated as “rest”
1. **Gen: 2:2** “By the 7th day God completed His work which He had done, & He rested [sabbathed] on the 7th day from all His work which He had done.”
 2. **Ex 20:10-11** “the 7th day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in 6 days the Lord made the heavens & the earth, the sea & all that is in them, & rested on the 7th day; therefore the Lord blessed the 7th day & made it holy.”
- B. There were different sorts of forbidden labor in Judah that Nehemiah was rightly upset about:
1. In **v15**, he mentioned making wine: “**In those days I saw in Judah some who were treading wine presses on the sabbath,...**”
 2. Others were hauling, buying, & selling goods.
 - a. Jews were transporting & selling food. → **v15**
 - b. Gentiles also brought in & sold food & other merchandise. → **v16**
- C. Nehemiah opposed this practice by teaching that such transgressions of the 4th commandment were sin. → **v17**
1. It was evil & profane.
 2. The Hebrew word used for “**profaning**” could also be translated as “**defiling**.” When something is defiled, it goes from being pure & pleasing to a state of being spoiled.
 - a. Jesus said, “**The Sabbath was made for man, & not man for the Sabbath**” (**Mk 2:27**).
 - b. We desperately need a day to lay down the burdens of life so that we can come to God’s house to worship the King of Glory.
 - c. God ought to be worshipped in private & especially by the gathering of His people.
 - d. When unnecessary work or activity gets in the way of your doing that, it profanes or defiles the day & the purpose for why He gave you this holy day.
- D. Nehemiah recalled the historical consequences of profaning the Sabbath. → **v18**
- E. In **vv19-22**, Nehemiah took action to prevent this sin in Jerusalem. → **vv19-22**.¹

¹ For further reading concerning “blue laws,” go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_laws_in_the_United_States.

II. THE SABBATH REST IS FOR TODAY –

A. On Friday December 9th, 2022, an American Family Radio (AFR) talk show opposed Christians saying that breaking the 4th commandment was a sin.

1. The passage they cited to oppose an ongoing Christian Sabbath was **Heb 4:8-11**. Turn there.
 - a. Joshua was a type of Christ to come. He led the Israelites into the promised land wherein they were given a degree of rest for a time.
 - b. The hosts of the AFR show said that, “Jesus Christ is our sabbath day of rest.”²
 - c. Of course eternal, true rest would only come through Jesus Christ; however, AFR was in error to say that the Sabbath was only to typify or prefigure the eternal rest or even rest from our works that would come from Christ.
2. **Heb 10:24-25** gives us some of the answer. **“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love & good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; & all the more as you see the day drawing near.”**
 - a. On what basis does the author of Hebrews tell us it is wrong to forsake **“our own assembling together”**? Our answer is that it is a violation of the 1st & 2nd commandments; however, it is especially & directly a transgression of the 4th commandment.
 - b. This is because the Sabbath is part of the moral law which was written on stone because God intended for it to abide forever.

B. Turn to p 972 in the back of your Psalter Hymnals. Look at WSC 59-62

1. Consider the man on the street who claims to be a “good person.” You could ask him, “How are you keeping the sabbath day holy to the Lord.” Mention **Heb 10:24-25**.
2. Especially when we read the WLC on this commandment, even the best of Christians would have to admit we don’t keep this beautiful day holy without some sin at least in thought, word, or deed.
 - a. None of us are saved by keeping this law or any other commandment perfectly.
 - b. We are saved only by the perfect work of Christ yet He saved us for the purpose of **“good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph 2:10)**. Your worship of God with sincerity of heart is pleasing in His sight.
3. Our Session here pleads with you to keep **Heb 10:25** by not **“forsaking our own assembling together.”** We have 2 worship services because we believe it is the Lord’s Day & not only the Lord’s morning. As WSC #60 told us— we should be “spending the whole time in the public & private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity & mercy.”

Review, further application, & conclusion:

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHY4vXUavRw&t=499s>