

INTRODUCTION

Our Lord Jesus told us to learn from Him, and to teach His disciples to obey all things He has commanded. One of the best places to turn in the scriptures to understand and teach His will is The Ten Commandments. God's law, as expressed in His Ten Commandments, teaches to love Him, and how to love other people. The commandments also show us how badly we have transgressed God's law, failing and refusing to love Him as He deserves, and to love other people as we should. So, it points out our dreadful state as those who have broken God's law and deserve punishment. In doing that, it performs the vital function of sending us to Jesus Christ to be saved from God's wrath.

So, these days we are working our way through The Ten Commandments. Having come to the fourth commandment, regarding work and sabbath keeping, I am spending many sessions with you explaining it from the scriptures in several respects, from several angles, because it is the most complex and mis-understood one of the ten.

Most recently, I have been addressing you by showing from the scriptures what we as Christians do NOT take the sabbath commandment to mean for us. The last two weeks, I have put to you that

When we as Christians seek to obey the fourth commandment,

- we do NOT think that means obedience to the Old Covenant penalties, rules, and precedents;
- we do NOT think that means observing the many sabbaths of the Old Covenant feasts or holidays; and

Today I show you from the word of God that

When we as Christians seek to obey the fourth commandment, we do NOT think that means obedience to man-made rules that other people might illegitimately try to impose on us.

TEXT

Matthew 12:1-14

BODY

When we as Christians seek to obey the fourth commandment, we do NOT think that means obedience to man-made rules that other people might illegitimately try to impose on us.

To understand this, consider:

I. Sources of Man-Made Rules As Unreliable

A. Purity Movements gone wrong

1. of such men as
 - a) Pharisees
 - b) Puritans
 - c) Fundamentalists
 - d) Reformed Baptists
2. nothing wrong with
 - a) terms
 - (1) Spurgeon used "Puritanic" as a descriptor for his congregation
 - b) historic origins
 - c) early stage
3. but any purity movement, as it moves through time, can come to be characterized by an emphasis on man-made rules for holiness, including sabbath keeping
4. within such movements there are the
 - a) hypocritical
 - b) well-meaning

B. Immature consciences

1. people who are immature because
 - a) very young in age
 - b) very new to the faith
2. thoughts on practicing holiness often characterized by
 - a) zeal without knowledge
 - b) unnecessary scruples
 - c) undue radicalness
3. if we are not to work on the sabbath, and if x is any kind of work at all, we must not do x
4. there is some association between x and sinfulness; therefore we must abstain from x
 - a) there is an association between throwing dice or playing with cards and gambling; therefore we must not throw dice or play with cards
 - b) there is an association between dancing and fornication; therefore we must not dance

C. False prophets / heretical teachers

1. such men (or women) want followers for themselves
 - a) for glory/fame/applause
 - b) for power
 - c) for money
2. they paint real biblical Christianity as not holy enough
 - a) this has some plausibility, because it is true that many people who say they are Christians indeed do not live holy
 - b) but, of course, it is not true that real biblical Christianity is not holy enough
 - c) nor is it true that following man-made rules constitutes additional holiness

Consider the sources of man-made sabbath rules as unreliable; and

II. Our Lord Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath

A. On the principle that He is greater than the temple (12:5-6)

1. on the sabbath day, the priests do lots of work, which would be profaning the sabbath; but they are not blamed for it, because the temple requires and allows that work to be done on the sabbath
2. Christ is greater than the temple
 - a) He is the one whom the temple foreshadowed; what the temple stood for is fulfilled in Him; what the temple symbolized in ritual, but could not actually do, is truly accomplished by Him
 - b) when God ordered the tabernacle to be built, then the temple to be built, and when Israel built it, God, who is holy, holy, holy, making a place where sinful man could approach Him and be accepted by Him by the shedding of blood, all of that was merely represented by the temple; but it is truly fulfilled in Jesus Christ
 - c) when the animal blood was shed, and the priest took the blood into the temple, went through the veil, and put the blood on the atonement cover, atonement for our sins was only symbolized as taking place ; but when Jesus Christ died on the cross, atonement for our sins was actually accomplished
 - d) when the priests put twelve loaves of bread on the holy table for a week, then took the loaves away and ate them, fellowship with God was merely symbolized; but when God sent Jesus as the bread from heaven, and we believe in Him; when we eat of Him through faith, fellowship between us and God actually takes place
3. if the priests could work in the temple on the sabbath day and be blameless, because the temple required and allowed that work, and if Christ, the Son of Man, is greater than the temple, then Christ, the Son of Man, has the right to require and allow whatever work He sees fit on the sabbath day

B. As recognized in observing the sabbath on the day He rose from the dead

C. As recognized in calling the church's sabbath "the Lord's Day"

1. by the time the apostle John was given the book of Revelation, the first day of the week was being referred to as "the Lord's Day"
2. that was the day the apostle Paul and the congregation met for worship
3. that was the day he ordered that the offering be collected

Consider

the sources of man-made sabbath rules as unreliable;
our Lord Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath; and

III. The Three Types of Work Our Lord Recognizes as Lawful on the Sabbath

A. Necessity - 12:1-4

1. no mere positive law can be thought to apply where man is in need
2. since one of our most basic needs is food, that example comes up repeatedly

B. Worship - 12:5

1. the priests in the temple worked on the sabbath day
2. I am working today
3. you are working today

C. Mercy - 12:9-13

1. toward both man and beast
2. No laws of God should be applied by men in ways that do not recognize these
3. No rule should be made by men that does not recognize these

Consider

the sources of man-made sabbath rules as unreliable;

our Lord Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath;

the three types of work our Lord recognizes as lawful on the sabbath; and

IV. Different Kinds of Sabbath Rules As Legitimate and Illegitimate

A. Not all rules for sabbath keeping are man made; some are derived from the scriptures; take care to observe the difference between man-made rules that govern outward actions, but which are not in keeping with God's actual commandment; and expositions of the sabbath commandment that are in keeping with God's actual commandment, being rightly derived from the scriptures

1. the first we reject; the second we accept
2. men cannot rightly make themselves lords over others, to issue additional rules for religion, that the Lord Jesus has not issued
3. but men can rightly make observation to others, to exhort them to live in accordance with the rules that the Lord Jesus has issued
4. principle: when God commands regarding actions, His commands apply also to our words and thoughts
5. we take care not to confuse these two things, so that we neither accept nor reject one of these for the reasons that apply to the other one

B. There are people who do not have the right to impose sabbath-keeping rules on you; and there are people who do have the right to impose sabbath-keeping rules on you

1. the pastors in a congregation do not have
 - a) a pastor has the right to teach you rightly from the scriptures regarding sabbath keeping, but does not have the right to make rules for your sabbath keeping
2. other people in the congregation do not have
3. relatives outside your own household do not have
4. the head of a household does have
 - a) the husband and father for the whole household
 - b) the father and mother for the children
5. examples
 - a) use of the computer or television or radio

CONCLUSION

Let us not have our obedience to the fourth commandment marred or ruined by confusion of what we DO mean by that with what we do NOT mean by it. When we as Christians seek to obey the fourth commandment,

- we do NOT think that means obedience to the Old Covenant penalties, rules, and precedents;
- we do NOT think that means observing the many sabbaths of the Old Covenant feasts or holidays; and

So, considering

the sources of man-made sabbath rules as unreliable;

our Lord Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath; and

the three types of work our Lord recognizes as lawful on the sabbath

the different kinds of sabbath rules as legitimate or illegitimate

- we do NOT think that means obedience to man-made rules that other people might illegitimately try to impose on us

Rita or Haven - Prelude

Angie - Trinity 421 "Rock of Ages" - ~~Alvin~~ lead

Angie - Trinity 714 "With Harps and with Vials"

Rita - sheet "He Will Hold Me Fast" - ~~Alex~~ lead

Jeremiah - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2

Willie - Scripture Reading - Leviticus 24:1-9

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - 1 Cor 1:23-24