

Sunday, Sabbath And The Lord's Day

Christian Life

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Today, we're going to be looking at a couple of topics that are somewhat related, the topics of Sunday, the sabbath day, and the Lord's day. We're going to ask some questions. We will have some feedback as well. This is not just me talking. I'll try to remember that throughout the presentation. This is also a resource that I hope will help you, you can put this in your file for further study or if this conversation comes up and you want to give some biblical answers, chew on this yourself a little bit. Ultimately, this information, one, I hope will affirm that we are doing what the Bible tells us to do as a church on these things; secondly, I think this information will challenge you in some ways in your personal life to give more thought to some things that are important to think about. So I trust this will be helpful. If I can get done in a timely manner, we can even have some open-ended kind of Q & A at the end if there's something that you're asking about still or are not sure about.

Let's begin with prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank you for this time and I pray that you will give us greater understanding about this topic or these topics in your word. Ultimately, if we present this in the right way, we know that even these topics are going to point us back to our relationship with you and will increase the health of that and our appreciation for you, our dependence upon you, and I pray that we would not walk away with just information but that we would be changed. And so we bow at your feet today. I pray that whatever I say would be according to your word. In your name. Amen.

Okay, so question number 1 is: why do Christians gather for worship and ministry on the Lord's day? Why do we do that? And what would you say? What is your answer? Mara?

[unintelligible]

Okay, so I'm going to talk about that here and let me do it by asking this question: how much of a sabbath day do you think Sunday is for your pastor? And is that a violation for me of that Genesis 1 principle? Do I violate this as a pastor?

[unintelligible]

But that's not the sabbath day nor is it any kind of Christian replacement of the sabbath day. I don't actually see anybody in the New Testament taking Thursday off. I do it. So I'm just saying. I'm just saying. And I do ask some of you to do things on Sunday, right? There are some sitting back there thinking, "You know, pastor, during Frontline we don't get much of a sabbath rest on Sunday." And I know it. I know I'm drawing you into my experience a little bit. We've got people downstairs working with the kids. You're probably getting more of a sabbath right now rest than they are down there. But you put them through it, are you putting them through a violation? Are they violating a biblical principle?

Why do we gather together for worship and ministry? Admittedly, ministry is not very restful usually. Why do we do it and why do we do it on Sunday? Any other answers? Alex?

[unintelligible]

We do.

[unintelligible]

We do. Yes, the Lord resurrected on the first day of the week. Let's go ahead and jump in here and begin with that thought and let me just say that we meet together on the Lord's day for biblical reasons, however there is not one verse that we can point to that tells us to do it, but there is a collection of reasons that together show us that it's the right thing to do and we do it because of these reasons all together. Admittedly, if you take all of the reasons and you just pull one of them out, in any different case none of them are all by themselves a lock-tight kind of command or reason to do this without any question but when you put all the pieces together, you realize we're actually doing a pretty biblical thing and should probably keep it up. I think we're going to see that. Sometimes in the Bible, we like to call ourselves not legalists, we're not legalistic, just because we don't have a command doesn't mean that we're off the hook, right? God really, we're going to see this today, he doesn't want us to be the kind of people who are looking for commands though we should obey the ones we see, he wants us to understand his heart. That is actually the goal and if we're looking for a command, then we don't always find one, well, let's not be legalistic. Is there any reason that's not a command still?

So number one, the first thing that indicates to us that we should be meeting together for worship and for ministry on the Lord's day is, or the first day of the week, is the theological foundation. The theological foundation or reason. Jesus, as Alex mentioned, resurrected on the first day of the week and it is his resurrection that is the central vital fact of Christianity that pulls everything together. I mean, everything that you know of God and God delivering man and his whole saving work in history, all kind of comes to its climax at the resurrection. When Satan is defeated, sin is defeated and Jesus is victorious once and for all. Of course, there are things that are still playing out but even these things point back to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You see, you have this, then, number two, you have this post-resurrection reinforcement. When does Christ appear to his 12 disciples? He doesn't appear to them right away but he does altogether reappear to them after his resurrection on the first day of the week. There's a little bit of a delay for whatever reason. We see in John 20 in a couple of places, they were gathered together on that day. Was it because he resurrected on the first day and they were gathering to commemorate that? I don't know that that's the case but they were gathered on the first day of the following week and Jesus appeared to them collectively on that day. Now the truth is, if that's all we had, I don't know that any of us would be sitting looking at this and saying, "We should probably meet together with our church on the first day of the week because Jesus rose on the first day of the week and the disciples were doing that the next Sunday and Jesus showed up." I don't know that that's where we would go with it but it's the beginning of the thought process that leads us to what we do.

3. The early church example. Let's look at this, Acts 20:6. So this is later on now after the church has begun. Acts 20:6. Paul is in town and he's going to meet with some of the church there and in verse 6 he says, "we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Paul had arrived at Troas, his plan was in passing to stop there and to spend time with the believers, and he was there for several days before the first day of the week. So it's not like the occasion for gathering was Paul was in town. That's not what was going on. Paul arrived, there was a lapse of days, and then when the disciples gathered together, Paul joined them and that's when he spoke to all of them as a group. So what that shows us is that, at this time, churches were accustomed to gathering together on the first day of the week. Paul knew that and that's when he showed up to talk to them. Does that make sense? The event was not, "Paul is in town, let's get together," the event was the first day of the week. Paul then went, like the rest of them, and then he spoke to all of them because they were together. Then, and that's the church in Troas.

4. You see this also hinted at as something that the church is doing in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. Let's turn there. This is another church. This is the church at Corinth. Paul's writing to them, he's preparing them for an offering and as he travels to churches, he's taking the offering that is being gathered by different churches and he's going to take the whole offering together once it's all gathered from all the churches, and he's going to take that money back to Jerusalem to help the church in Jerusalem out because that's where the church started and that's also where the church was suffering the most. So he was going to take an offering from the Gentile churches back to the Jewish church in Jerusalem.

Notice what he says in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." And what did he tell them to do? He's told all the churches the same instructions. "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." So he tells them, "I don't want to show up and have this big hoopla. I don't want to come and have this big offering. When I come, I want to focus on

preaching and ministering to you. I do want to take an offering from you, so when I come, do this, leading up to the day that I come, whenever you get together on the first day of the week, that's when you should collect the funds. When I come, then you can take what you collected and give it to me."

So he's also indicating that the church in Corinth had the habit of meeting together, when? On the first day of the week. What other churches were doing this? We know Troas did. We know Corinth did. It's also given away here in this verse, verse 1, who else is doing this because he gave the instructions to them too? Who else? The churches of Galatia, all of them, wherever they were, all of them were doing the same thing and he told them too, "When you gather together on the first day of the week, that's what you do." And remember, when he was in town in Troas, he waited until the first day of the week when the church would gather and he met with them there. This was the trend of the early church.

5. Here we have the direct reference by the Apostle Paul. Revelation 1:10. John writes and he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." So here he is worshiping and he's worshiping on the Lord's day. This is not the same Greek expression as the end times phrase, the day of the Lord. It's a different Greek expression. He's not talking about the prophetic day of the Lord. There's plenty said about that throughout the book of Revelation but here he's talking about a day of the week, the Lord's day, and best as we can tell, based upon what churches did and based upon what Jesus did and then his resurrection on the first day, this day had become known by the church as the Lord's day. They would meet together on the first day of the week commemorating the resurrection of Jesus. It was their custom. It was their habit. It was the trend, so much so that it became called the Lord's day, and even when the Apostle John was imprisoned on a remote island without any other believers to congregate with, he still went to worship on the Lord's day in a special way. This is not an argument for not meeting on the Lord's day and worshiping alone at your house. This is actually the opposite. This is an argument for when you don't have believers to meet with, you should still treat this day in a special way if you can.

Now this is where we're challenged a little bit because the fact is nothing that I've shown you is a, what? A command. But it is what the churches have done. This is not an argument based on church history, this is an argument based upon or just tradition, this is an argument based upon clearly observed practice by the early church and it's revealed to us in the inspired word of God.

Does anyone have any questions about this to this point? Mara?

[unintelligible]

Is Sunday? That's a whole other discussion about the whole process of Jesus Christ's death, his burial, his resurrection. He died, he was buried, he was buried for three days, and he rose again on Sunday. There's not a lot of debate about that. There is debate about

when he was buried, was it Thursday or Friday, some of this is debated. But Sunday is widely known as the day that he rose, on the first day.

Okay, so number six, this is not in the Bible but it's always helpful. This is never a main argument but it's helpful. The testimony of the early church fathers, and when we talk about church fathers, we are not talking about apostles, we are not talking about people who wrote with inspiration, we are simply talking about men who were taught by the apostles or who were taught by the ones who were taught by the apostles. We're talking about the years right after the start of the church with direct firsthand or secondhand knowledge of what went on and what was being said by the apostles. This is not an authority, it is only a helpful reference. If they wrote something, you should probably take it seriously. If I want to know something about the history of this church, or if you do, you could ask me or you could call Pastor Lowery. He would probably be a better source if you want to know what happened at the start of the church. Does that make sense, right?

So that's the idea with church fathers, they're helpful. They don't always agree with each other and so you're going to have to look at all of them together and get a feel of what was going on back then, but if you look, both the Epistle of Barnabas, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Eusebius, Tertullian, these people in the early centuries all corroborated, they witnessed the fact that the church continued to meet on the Lord's day, calling it the Lord's day being Sunday, the first day of the week, in respect and remembrance to the resurrection of Jesus and they said that in their writings, "That's what we were doing. That's what was going on. That's what we were taught to do by the apostles." That's not an authority, they're just saying that and there's enough of them that say that, that help us to make sense of what we see happening in the New Testament.

So with all of this in mind, let's turn to Hebrews 10:25. Hebrews is a good book, it's a challenging book for a number of reasons. It is a book written to Jewish believers primarily who are suffering for their faith, who are being persecuted intensely. These are people living under the conditions such as if you are baptized and publicly profess that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you could lose your job, your family may disown you, you may be kicked out of the synagogue, not allowed to participate in synagogue activities, and you might actually be thrown into the Colosseum to be eaten up by wild beasts. I mean, these are people living with intense pressures because of their faith and when that's the case and you know that if I get up on Sunday and I walk my way through the streets and I meet together with Christians, doing that it's a very predictable thing, and if I do that, I could get arrested and bad things could happen to me. We don't have this problem but how would you handle church gathering if that was the threat? Would our crowd be the size that it is today?

Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The closer we get, there's some debate about what the day is. Some people say that it's the day of persecution, like it's at any time you could get hauled off to the Colosseum, that's the day. Other people say that the day is the day of the Lord, the

coming end time prophecies. Whatever the case is, time is marching on and things are not getting better for Christians generally speaking, we're in a perpetual cycle the Bible calls the last days, it rises and falls, it rises and falls. I feel like in the Western world, that's on the falling side right now. This could spin for hundreds of years or this could be the last fall and we could actually go into the later events of Revelation. Whatever the reason or case is, the intensification of pressure on Christians tempts Christians to do, what? To be more secretive and ashamed of what they're doing, and the one thing that the writer of Hebrews says is, "The one thing you should not do is forsake assembling. You should keep doing it."

Now some people have said, and this is common, this verse isn't a command to be in church every time the doors are open, that's not what it's saying because I'm here every day and the doors are open, right? You're not all supposed to be here all the time and, ladies, you're not supposed to show up to men's prayer meeting, right? And there are things that go on, we don't all always have to be here all, all the time, but we know what we're supposed to do and there's a time that the church meets in particular and you shouldn't stay away from that. We live in a world where the Super Bowl is enough reason to stay away sometimes and that's shameful. Dying for your faith is not a good enough reason to not show up, so think about that.

So Hebrews 10, how should we understand this verse? I mean, what should we take from this when we consider the assembling time as we understand it in the Bible and from church history? What kind of approach should we take to this assembling together, in particular on the Lord's day? Is it important to come? Yes. In some ways, it's a way to declare your faith, "No matter how hard it is, I'm coming." Sometimes we just come when it's convenient. That's shameful. Now there are some times that jobs take you away and that I get. When a job takes you away, that is not what I would call forsaking. Does that make sense? Forsaking is deciding not to come for reasons that are uncomfortable, not easy, unfavorable, and what are the reasons that keep us away from gathering together? There's a lot of them and many of them are not good.

Any thoughts along this line?

[unintelligible]

Yeah, look back at Acts 20. We mentioned Acts 20 on the first day of the week, the time that Paul met with the believers as a group because they had gathered at that time. There is a guy here that's mentioned and we won't talk about everything in the world about this guy, but it's a humorous story, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart, and continued his speech until midnight." I am very aware of the clock and sometimes my services go long, my services, I mean, my messages go long, if this service goes long, in some places in the world that would mean nothing. Nothing. "You want to preach further?" In Western culture, it's rude and disrespectful to you if I go long. That's an awkward tension for me. The fact is, if I let a service run from 10 to like, say, 1 o'clock, you would have a problem with that, even the best of you. You would think that I forgot. You would be thinking

about lunch. You'd be thinking, you know, I know another church and they're much better about their time than this one is. I do get tempted sometimes to try it. I should never just try it, it should be the Lord leading, but what I'm saying is, we do have a problem in our Western culture. Here is Paul and he's preaching and how late did he preach? He continued his talking until midnight and it's a speech, and if you study the word, this is not necessarily a polished homily or sermon. He's just talking and telling them what's on his heart. He's running on.

So that's a problem, and then, "there were many lights in the," ...okay, so there many lights. What kind of lights did they have back then? They were candles, oil lamps, that kind of thing, and they generate, what? Heat. They weren't fluorescent or LED bulbs that are low heat generators. They probably didn't have fans like this. They certainly didn't have an AC like this or a second one like we're going to have and some of us, that's enough to keep us away, hotness, warmness, that kind of thing. Well, you have this.

Then it says "there were many lights in the upper chamber." Where was that? If this was that building, that would be, where? Upstairs. What's the warmest place in the building? It's going to be upstairs. Why? Because hot air rises. You see, all these people packed in all the way to midnight, there's a lot of heat generating lamps up there, that's what it says, where they were gathered together.

So all packed in, "And there sat in a window," bad choice, "a certain young man named Eutychus." Well, he was a young man and if you say the name Eutychus, it indicates he may well have been a slave, so he probably had worked most recently, maybe even earlier that day. He was probably tired but here he is because he's a disciple and he's with the believers on the Lord's day and there's a lot of people. They had been breaking bread, eating. What does that do to you? It actually does not energize you so much on Sunday, it actually makes you tired. You are experiencing that right now just a little bit. We had bagels.

So just imagine all of this. Imagine, though, if I had this gathering upstairs, the ac's were not running, a few of you would be talking to me after the time, I'm pretty sure. "Pastor, it's getting a little warm up there." So he decides to go to a window where there's air coming in, fresh air at night is really a nice thing. So he's sitting in the window and then it says, "being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching," you see, it's funny, "he sunk down with sleep," and then it says, he "fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." That's kind of funny if you're thinking about language, and actually the Bible describes a process that some of us go through when we've been working third shift and when it's hot in the room, and there's a lot of people gathered together, and we just ate bread, and I'm talking for a long time. That's what it's talking about and here's this young guy who tends to have, younger men have some struggles with this more than others sometimes, he's sitting in this window, then he falls asleep, then he slinks down in sleep, and then he falls over. You just read it and if you say even the Greek words, there's this process, each word is a different word and it's the process of falling asleep in church. I'm serious. You say there wasn't any humor in the Bible, read the words. The more you meditate on this passage, you feel sorry for this guy. You're like, "That is unfair."

Then "Paul went down," do you see the words? "Paul went down and fell on him," that is very bad EMT practice. If a guy just fell out of the third floor onto the pavement, you don't run down and throw your body on him. And that's what Paul did. I guess they weren't sophisticated back then. And what do you do when the guy is laying there? What's the rule? Don't move him. Keep him in that position. Tie him to the stretcher in that position.

Paul embraced him which means you've got to get your arms under him, you're going to move his spine around, right? And he just falls on him, embraces him, and then he looks up at all the people who are looking at him, like, "Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. Everything is good here. Don't worry. I'll take care of this."

Then, "When he therefore was come up," do you see the down, down, the up, "again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted," by the way. In case you're wondering, because the next verse goes right back to they ate more bread and then he kept on preaching until the sun rose the next day.

If that had happened here, even the young guy falling out of the window, take that out, if that had happened here at Faith Baptist Church like today, tomorrow I would have several people complaining to me and I don't know who they would be, I'm just saying they probably would and I would be charged by being misunderstanding, I'm not being...just a lot of things. It's Western culture and I have to be aware of that. I'm just saying. Then this guy fell out of the window and it's almost like it wasn't a big issue because they just went back to preaching?

What is this saying? Gathering together to hear the word of God on the Lord's day is what you do as a Christian and all the factors of even the place of worship. It's helpful to think about these things, I don't need to unnecessarily drag you into situations that are hard but we shouldn't complain. We have the word, we have a place, and we should come to it and not try to stay away unless we have no choice. You may have a little crick in your back, we have wooden pews. Do you know what? I don't want to be insensitive, generally I try to be sensitive, but you come and maybe someone can help give you a little padding or something, a footrest, and we will do what we can, but I think we take for granted what we have in the Western world and I think we could stand to meditate on these things.

So why do we do this? Why do we gather together on the first day of the week, the Lord's day? Because of these biblical reasons and then we see what's happening in the church, we see how it's taken importantly, we see that it's actually kind of a mark of genuine faith to do it, to take risks to do it. By the way, I did say that if your job takes you away and if God gave you that job, that is not forsaking, however, I do think it would be appropriate to add to that, don't be comfortable with a job that takes you away. That can become forsaking to just kind of say, "Oh well." Pray about a job change. I think that applies the principle and patiently wait and the rest of the people in the church should never judge where your heart is at on that matter. But don't just settle in and say, "I can't because..."

Pray about a job change. Ask God to do it and if you're on the front end of getting into the work world, do whatever you can to put your foot down and say, "I will not work on Sunday." You may lose your first few jobs, your boss may not be impressed. That's fine, start out on the right foot. God will take care of you and you will earn respect. But if you give in, I'm just telling you, on that first job, you're going to be giving in for the rest of your life. I've never seen it otherwise.

Okay, I've said just too many hard things today already, right? Should we stop? I have a few more things to say. Jennifer?

[unintelligible]

You can read 20 million commentaries, the experts of the language, history and so forth. We don't know. We don't know if this guy was resurrected and was just considered dead wrongfully, like they were wrong, or that he actually died and he resurrected. We really don't know and that's kind of the point. It doesn't really matter because this guy was not the point, the point was what they were doing as a church, the preaching. There are enough factors given to us we feel very sorry for this guy, and then it's like, but you shouldn't because that wasn't the issue. This guy had a bad day and the church kept eating and listening to preaching and do you know what? In Western culture, that church would probably close the next weekend and everyone would go and find another more respectable church. But actually that's the church everyone should be going to because that's the church that's starting to get it. That's radical. That's weird but that's in the Bible.

If you disagree, if you think I've overstated anything, before you disagree study it and see if you still disagree. In fact, you go back to Hebrews 10, it says not forsaking the assembling together as the manner of some is, so some were doing it, and he didn't name them and that was polite of him, but exhorting one another and so much the more, what does that mean? The more difficult it gets, the more you should amp it up, the more serious you should be about it. So we pray for our parking lot here and I think we should keep doing that but the more of a challenge it becomes, the more serious we should be about it. Remember a business meeting I mentioned, I think we need to take getting here on time a little more seriously? That means you might have to get up and eat your breakfast a little bit earlier and get here a little earlier. I'm just saying it's worth thinking about if we want to do due respect to the Lord's day. We have about 100 people here worshipping by the time our service is over, but when we pray at the beginning, about 9:40-9:45 we usually have about 10 people. And I get it. I don't expect that we'll have 100 people, maybe I'm in unbelief myself, but we should think about it because it's one of the most powerful ways we have to declare our faith, and if persecution on Christians increases, are we actually fooling ourselves to think we're going to do better? I'm just saying and you can think about it yourself.

Let me talk about one more thing on this topic and then we're going to move on to the sabbath and how it is or is not related to the Lord's day. This is brought out a lot by Seventh-Day Adventists and other people as well. JW's, I think, bring this up, Jehovah's Witnesses. How does the decree of Constantine in 321 AD relate to our practice of

Sunday worship? Here's what Constantine said. I've got it on the slide for you as well. Constantine, of course, was a Roman emperor in the 300s and he converted to Christianity. What that means we really don't know, that his testimony is very obscure and hard to make out fully. He saw a vision of a cross on a battlefield one day and he converted to Christianity. I don't know what that means. The Roman Catholic Church really points back a lot to that time. What it means, really, is that "Christianity" became the official religion of the Roman Empire which means it was no longer persecuted. It was accepted. That's actually a dangerous thing because once you become accepted and culturally in, it gets too easy and then what Christianity really is becomes very fuzzy. That's kind of a very simple way of saying some bigger things.

But he said this as a result of his conversion, whatever that was, "On the venerable day of the sun, let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest and let all workshops be closed." That's not because he feared God, it's because he changed systems. And we do not meet on the Lord's day on Sunday because it's the venerable day of the sun. We don't meet on the first day of the week because of a pagan solar calendar. And we don't meet on the first day of the week because of this decree in 321 by Constantine. At the same time, let me also say we don't have 66 books in our Bible because of a Catholic Church council. When the Catholic Church or Constantine or these figures made these decisions, that has nothing to do with what we're doing except for this: they looked at what churches were already doing or what they already said was the Bible and they simply put their stamp on it and said, "Okay, this is official," which means absolutely nothing to us. Whether they did that or not, we would keep doing it, we would keep using this Bible and meeting on Sunday. That's all.

So if someone tells you, you just do that because of a pagan practice of the sun and all these kind of things, and Constantine, this Roman emperor... No, no. All he did was buy into it and make it official and we don't even know if he was even converted. That has nothing to do with why we're doing what we're doing. Does that make sense?

Any questions about that? It's not related. We meet on this day because it's tied to the day that the Lord resurrected. He didn't resurrect on the first day because it was the day of the sun either. That's what he did, that's his choice, he's God.

Okay, so let's move to the next question, then. Thinking about what we do one day a week being the first day of the week, are Christians obligated to remember the sabbath day as stated in the 10 Commandments? Are we commanded and expected, obligated to remember the sabbath day? Okay, number one: what is this command in the 10 Commandments? First, it was a law given to the nation of Israel. It was a law given to the nation of Israel. Abraham did not have this law. Would we agree with that? Nobody before Moses had this law. There was no law before Moses. That's a very clear case.

Exodus 20:8-11 is the first time sabbath keeping is commanded. I think Exodus 16, the Lord tells the Israelites something about the manna and keeping the first day set apart for the manna. You gather two or the seventh day gathering two gatherings of manna on Friday so that you don't have to gather it on the seventh day. That's not a command. In

Exodus 20 is the first time this command is given. It's also repeated, then, in Deuteronomy 5:12 and 15 to the nation of Israel exclusively.

2. Sabbath keeping, observing the seventh day of the week as a day of rest, that's what we're talking about, Saturday, will be a practice for the future kingdom of Israel as well. They're going to observe this in the future kingdom whether that be the tribulation period or the subsequent millennial kingdom, the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ. You can study some in Isaiah, Matthew mentions this, Ezekiel gives a lot of time to it in the millennial kingdom passages that there will be a restoration of sabbath observance, a seventh day rest in the future kingdom for the nation of Israel. By the way, there will be a reinstatement of the sacrificial system in the millennial kingdom as well. There will be animal sacrifices in the millennial kingdom but just as in the Old Testament, they will not save. They never have saved, and that's another discussion, but a lot of the Old Testament practices with some modifications will return in the future one thousand reign of Jesus Christ, but, again, regarding the kingdom of Israel.

3. This as well as every other command in the law, every command in the law big or small, large or little, major or minor, has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Matthew 5:17, Jesus says, "Think not," so it would be wrong thinking to think this way, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy them, but to fulfil them." Observing the seventh day is not a bad thing, it's a part of the law that God gave to Israel and every law that God gave was a good law and Jesus did not come to destroy it, to throw it in the trash can and to dishonor or disrespect it in any way. He came to honor it by actually fulfilling it.

Jesus fulfilled the law and by doing so ended our obligation to observe it in a legalistic manner. We do not have a legal obligation to do no work on Saturday, okay? We also have no legal obligation for any other law given to Moses.

Brother Thomas?

[unintelligible]

His death on the cross, yes. He hadn't done it yet at this point, he's saying here, "I came to do it." Eventually he would do it when he died on the cross. What is it, Colossians says he nailed the ordinances and all these things with it. When he died, he fulfilled all the law.

[unintelligible]

There are other reasons we're going to talk about too, but I think if you just seriously look at these plain statements, you have to say it's not an obligation because it's a law and he fulfilled all of the law, and all of the law means every law. We'll come back to some of this in just a second.

4. Having said that we do not have a legalistic or a technical obligation to observe a Saturday...I mean, how many of you do this? How many of you take Saturday and don't work on Saturday at all? Even my day off each week, Thursday as pastor because Sunday is certainly not that for me, is not a full day of rest, it's just a different kind of a day. I run some errands. I do some things and I do try to make sure I rest a little bit in a way that I can't do on other days, and I'll explain why.

The sabbath observance idea continues, though, to be a timeless principle for all people. It is a timeless principle for all people. It's not a law that we are obligated to obey, though. Consider the underlying reasons for the command given in Exodus 20. In Exodus 20, let's turn there. I think you'll see this better if we just look at it. Exodus 20:8 and following, "Remember," or observe, "the sabbath day, to keep it holy," different, set apart. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day," Saturday, "is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son," and so on and so forth. Very strict. "In six days," here's the reason, "the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." So that's the reason for the command, what God did in the creational week. Now if you study Genesis 1 and 2, you don't see a command, you just see what God did. Then you have a command given in Exodus 20 and it points back to that as the underlying reason for the command.

If you look in Mark 2:27, you have to ask the question, for instance, you know, why did God rest? God did not rest on the seventh day because he needed to take a break. You look at Psalm 121:4 and we see that God does not slumber or sleep. He doesn't need any rest. Then if you look at Mark 2:27, you actually have Jesus' disciples, this is actually before he even died on the cross, they're walking through a cornfield and they eat some pieces of corn and they're munching on the corn and they broke one of the rabbi's definitions of work, they actually pulled the shucks off the corn and that's work, and they ate the corn, harvesting corn. And they said, "You worked!" And they said, "Look, don't you understand the commandment? The commandment was made for you, not for God."

So there's something in God resting that teaches us something that we should take seriously. We're going to talk about that. However, if you study Genesis, and I think I said Exodus 20, it actually should be where it says Exodus 20 in that last paragraph on page 3, it should be Genesis 2:1-2 when you study this. Sabbath in the creation, he does not necessarily tell you all the ways to observe the sabbath day, he just rests and sets it apart, but you don't see anywhere until Exodus 20 where it's observed in any legalistic way. There's no list of things to do, what work is. I mean, that is kind of the question of the day, isn't it, what is work? Is work brushing your teeth? Well, the technical definition of work is any expenditure of calories, right? I mean, anything that you do that uses energy is work. Would you agree with that? So what is work? Can I just sit there? I mean, breathing, technically, is work. And this is where the Pharisees, the rabbis put together lists of definitions of work of all the things that are work, like you could walk from your home one mile but you couldn't walk any further because more than a mile was work. Or you could heal somebody if their life was in danger but if their life was not in danger like they broke their leg, they can be in pain until the end of the sabbath day and you fix them

up the next day because that was unnecessary. This is the kind of thing that they would say and you study the law, there's a lot of things that are described as work. They even went farther and made up new things. The idea of picking a corn off of a stalk of corn was not in the Bible, like don't ever take that. That's not in the Bible, that's one of their laws that they made up to keep work kind of clarified in their minds.

Why do we have this? 5. The sabbath, that seventh day principle, the one in seven principle is a reminder of our need to rely on God. Deuteronomy 5:15, the restatement of the command, is also helpful. Deuteronomy 5:15, "remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt." Well, if you go back to verse 12, he says, "Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day," it's the same thing as Exodus 20. But then he gives a different reason than he did in Exodus 20. Fascinating. He uses a different reason, "remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out of there through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day." In Egypt, they were required to work all the time. All the time. Evidently, they did not have a sabbath day in Egypt because they were made to work whenever the Pharaoh said work, and it might be seven days a week. And he said, "Going into the Promised Land, I want you to do it differently. I want you to set apart the seventh day now and not carry over that practice. As a nation, you will behave differently."

Why is that significant? Because they were moving into a place that did not even have a Nile River. They had a Jordan but that wasn't the same thing. They were an agriculturally based society. The only way to get crops to grow was to work hard at it and to get rain. So when he said rest on the seventh day, that's hard to do when you're a farmer when you feel like you could get some more out of your crops by putting in that seventh day. Then you add to that the observance of, what was it, every seven years you had to take a year off, and then every 49 years an extra year off. I mean, 1, 2 years sometimes at a time of no work in your fields, like not working at all. That's really rough on an agricultural society. That's awkward. And what God was saying is, "No, I will, if you're doing right, I will give you such a harvest that you can set it aside and you're going to be just fine. But if you're not doing right, you're not going to have any crops."

I think it's true in our Western society, again, that there's this compulsion to have to work, work, work until we drop. It's really hard to make any day of the week different from the rest. Even as your pastor, boy, there are things I could do. Some of you want me to meet with you and I really want to get with all of you. There are things I could do seven days a week. I still end up making one phone call or sometimes a visit on Thursday. I try to guard against that. But I could work seven days a week and you know that experience, you know what that's like. There's something about refusing to treat all days the same. Sometimes the income is not quite as much, not as much gets done, and it's just kind of this quiet reminder that there's a God that is bigger than all this. My life does not depend on the work that I do, it depends on the God that I serve. Does that make sense?

I think it's very helpful to consider Matthew 5:17-48. We're going back to that Christ fulfilled the law. Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Then he goes through a series of five cycles where he repeats a phrase and then he gives a different example. He says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, But I say unto you." In all five examples, he cites an Old Testament command from the law. He's actually citing Old Testament law, not some secular rabbi.

He, of course, mentions murder because isn't that one of the thoughts we have? How many of you have had this thought when I told you that all of the Exodus 20, all 10 Commandments are no longer binding to us, and what thoughts do you have? "You mean murder is no longer....?" That's the kind of thing that people would have been thinking. They're afraid. "Oh no, you say that, you know, fulfilling the law kind of ending the law, what does that mean, there are some very important things?" He says, "No, no, no, let's go in the right direction with this. I didn't come to destroy that command don't murder because it's a good law, but if you need a law to understand that, you have a problem. In fact, I say unto you, if you say any off-color, not just foul language, just off-color or demeaning things about another human being, you've committed murder in your heart." That is not where they thought he was going to go with this conversation and that's not legalism, that's grace. Grace goes deeper. It doesn't throw away morality, it gets very deep.

He does the same thing with adultery. Like, "Oh, you mean, you know, we can just not worry about adultery now?" "No, no, in fact, actually now because I've fulfilled the law, I expect all of it from you. In fact, if you even lust in your heart at all and like spend time thinking about another woman, that's adultery." Whoa.

Divorce, the same thing. We need to be more careful. Swearing oaths, more careful. Justice and revenge, more merciful. And I think this is not an exhaustive list, right? Because there are certainly many other laws in the Old Testament, this is not all of the 10 Commandments. Some of these are 10 Commandments, some of these are other commandments not in the 10. So this is intended to represent all of the law, technically there's 613 laws in the Old Testament big and small, but Jesus actually says if you're teaching people not to observe the little ones like these are bad laws kind of thing, don't pay attention to them. You actually have the wrong idea. But what if he said, "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, honor the sabbath day and keep it holy and on the seventh day do no work, but I say unto you," what would be the "I say unto you" for the sabbath command? And I think that's the question we have to ask because I'm not telling us the Bible says we should disregard the sabbath principle. We actually should take it more seriously and how? What's the deeper deeper issue and implications?

Let me give you some examples of things that you should probably reflect on. Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is a spiritual rest beyond the physical rest that we need, and I'll tell you, if I am not right with the Lord in my spirit and in my heart, Sundays are hard because I work hard. This is actually hard work for me. When I sit down at the end of the day,

teachers would understand this, and sit in my chair at the end of a day, that's a bad thing to do because I don't feel like getting up then. I'm exhausted. But if I learn that in the course of my work I can draw from the rest that Jesus Christ gives and I find that he was laboring alongside of me throughout the day... I'll tell you, last weekend I was very nervous for myself because I had a wedding rehearsal Friday night, I had a full day of wedding events and then doing a wedding, and I was cleaning up until midnight. Many other people were helping me but then I got home at midnight, reviewing my sermon, I had it all prepared already. Sunday, I'm preaching and I'm teaching and I'm counseling. I actually did get a little lunch upstairs that day. When I went home, I felt great and I step back from times like that and I say, "Do you know what? That's the rest of the Lord." And when you find things are more spiritually demanding and you have to trust in the Lord even more, the solution sometimes is not to back away but to actually get more involved so long as you understand the rest of the Lord, how to trust him and let him carry the burden with you. Does that make sense? That's where we should be going.

Then you have Hebrews 4:9-11, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Just because you sit around your house and don't do your job on Saturday, if that's what you do, doesn't mean you're resting in God. You could just be lazy. A person who works seven days a week because they have to for whatever reason but does so depending on Jesus Christ for all of his strength is observing the sabbath more than the guy who does nothing and doesn't even read his Bible or pray once. Does that make sense? This is where grace goes, it challenges our thinking.

6. The actual observance of how this one in seven days thing works out is a matter of conscience for the church. It's a matter of conscience. We're all going to end up observing this technically in different ways. I'll give you a little feel of how I do it and it might be how you do it or not. Paul makes it very clear that the calendar observances that God required of the nation of Israel, and I would say that's even the seventh day observance, are not required for the church today. Galatians 4:10-11, we will read these verses. Galatians 4:10-11. He says, okay, you're saved, on and on but, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." He's talking about Jewish things. "You observe these things and I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Like, "What did I not tell you because you don't have to do that?" That's what he's talking about, you don't have to observe these calendar observances that are in the Old Testament law. They do not make you righteous. Jesus Christ makes you righteous and I'm getting nervous here because it's like you're forgetting that.

Then Romans 14:4-5. You say, "Well, then nobody should ever observe any Jewish festivals or holidays," right? Not so fast. Verses 4 and 5, Romans 14, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Verse 5, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike." And this could or could not be Jewish holidays, it could be any kind of a holiday, okay? Now there are some that are admittedly very bad, Halloween is one of those kind of things. Okay, we're not talking about

celebrating skulls and death. Different story, I think, entirely. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord," and so other things as well.

Some of us may find it very helpful to not work on Saturday, like that actually makes sense to us and that's the way we're going to observe this but we're going to keep a spiritual focus. It's not going to be legalistic but we find it very helpful and wise. Others just find that all too legalistic. They know they would be legalistic by doing it so they observe rest in a different way. Some might celebrate other Jewish holidays, for instance, because they understand the truth of them and what they're designed to remind us about and they find it very helpful. They are instructive, very edifying. Others says, "I don't need that." But in either case, it's not a requirement to do it or not to do it. Does that make sense? You know, a church like this, all of our calendars are going to be a little different because of so many cultures going on, but there is sometimes a Christian significance to what we're doing. Here's the bottom line: you can't say, "Oh, whatever," you have to know what you think is right and biblical and then stick to it, do it, and do it to the Lord and then don't judge the other person for what they're doing. Does that make sense? Rest in the Lord. It is not wrong for a Christian to observe a day of rest on Saturday nor is it wrong to choose otherwise, Colossians 2:16, however there is zero scriptural evidence that worship and ministry on the Lord's day is, indeed, a Christian alternative to sabbath day observance. It's actually a different conversation.

So, I think, here are some questions then I'll take questions too here at the end. 1. How do you apply the sabbath principle in life? Like you can't say it has nothing to do with me. Treating one day differently in the week whether it's Saturday or whatever it may be, it might be Sunday for you, is probably wise. From a creative order, if you don't get a regular once a week on a different day, stress will rise. You're not going to function very well. Now when you have to do it, you certainly must be able to trust in the Lord for the rest that you need and he'll get you through it but there's something to be said for treating one day differently. That's why I, as pastor, I treat Thursday differently because I don't want to blow my health. I have to be effective for you guys and my family needs to know there's at least a day that I have, and I look at the one in seven principle and I don't want to be legalistic about it. It can't be Saturday for me and it can't be Sunday so I make it Thursday. It's the one in seven principle. I see it in creation. I need it. I get up a little later on that day. I eat my breakfast a little slower and I know you all are working, but at the end of the day I try to get my errands done, try to rest a little bit, do something with my family, deliberately try to breathe real deep. Sometimes you try to call me, leave a voice message. I'll listen to it later and decide if it's worth me picking up because if I don't do that, I'm answering calls all the time on Thursday too and it's not any different. And I need that, but in doing so, I have to trust in the Lord ultimately.

Now the Lord's day is a different story. It's the day of the Lord or the Lord's day is the day we worship the Lord we serve. So I try to do things, I get my laundry done, that's one of my jobs at the house, I get that done during the week. I don't do it on Sunday. I want to think about the Lord. I'm generally not going to go to a baseball game on Sunday. Why? I

don't know, to me it doesn't feel like a Lord's day thing, like it's the Lord's day, not a baseball game. I'll probably check the score but I'm not going to go to the game. Now I sound legalistic. But I'm working things out in my own conscience. I'm not blowing it off. Does that make sense?

And that's what I'm challenging you to do. Some of you might say, "I can go to a game." That's fine, just make sure you're at church when the church is at church and you can go to a game later in the day if that's between you and the Lord, seriously. Some of you might say, "Pastor, you check the score on Sunday?" I do it after church. I do not do it. My phone is actually on airplane mode, I assure you, okay? That's me. You may say you can't even look at it. Fine, be fully persuaded in your mind. That's where I am at and I might change in five years. We have to give each other that space because the Bible gives us that space but you'd better do something with that space. Does that make sense?

So how do you observe the principle of the sabbath and how do you handle the Lord's day, and then ultimately are you truly resting in Christ no matter what you do with the principle? Are you truly resting in Christ or are you perpetually experiencing the stress of self-reliance? You can go to baseball games and have picnics and parties and sleep in all the seventh days that you want but that's not going to take away the spiritual stress that comes from not relying on the Lord.

Do you have any questions? Yes, Mrs. R.?

[unintelligible]

Do you want to read it out loud?

[unintelligible]

He is the Lord of the sabbath. What that means is, if he says it's okay to take your corn from off the cornstalk and eat it, that is more of an authority than what the rabbis say is work. You see, the rabbis had a list of like 27 or 34 things that were work, kneading dough was one of them, healing a person that was not deathly ill was one of them, one of them was harvesting grain. They had this list. The Bible doesn't have that list. They made it up and they said, "Don't do any of these things because then you're working."

Now the principle is don't work for the Jews and that was the law. They added this list and when his disciples and him took ears of corn and ate them because they were hungry doing ministry, he says, "Look, I'm the Lord of the sabbath, not the rabbis and their lists. I never said that." Now it's probably a good thing not to, by default, harvest grain on the sabbath if you're a Jew but if you have to do it, do it. Then he points back to David and he says, "Look, even David did it once." Well, that's kind of getting touchy because David is one of their respected guys and he even did it once and he wasn't called into sin for that.

Yeah, go ahead.

[unintelligible]

The Jews did it because the Old Testament commanded them to do it beginning in Exodus 20 so that they did observe the principle and God was very specific about them with that because without a command they weren't going to do it, and so they did on the seventh day on Saturday. We have the Lord's day today. They didn't have that. Jesus hadn't resurrected and all of this. They didn't have that precedent but there is no biblical teaching that Sunday replaces the sabbath. It's just not there.

Now if it is the day that makes that sense for you to treat differently and to rest, like for me that can't work. I can't. That's not my day. I can't do that. And honestly, you're here all day listening to me, I mean, you go home a little tired too. So I do try to be careful not to overload too many Saturdays in case some of you need to take a little time on Saturday that you need to split half a Sunday and half a Saturday. You do what you've got to do but in the Jewish culture, the sabbath is Saturday and the whole thing means a whole lot more. We just have to line up with Paul where he says to feel like you have to observe all these days on the calendar that the Jewish law lays out, that's not necessary. However, for those many who are saved out of Judaism that find a great value in that, if they're doing that to the Lord, that's a very good thing and they should do it with conviction and confidence. And for those that don't have that background or are able to see that as not necessary, do that and observe this principle however you need to but do it with conviction and confidence. But I think it is clear that we don't carry over the Jewish holidays by requirement in any legal calendar fashion. Does that make sense? That's how we have to give each other all the space to grow and apply these things.

Brother George?

[unintelligible]

If they're unsaved but if they are born-again Christians, there is great significance in these holidays because they see Christology, they see pictures and images of Christ all over the place. All these things teach about Jesus so they actually can do it with great meaning, it's just not a requirement.

[unintelligible]

The secular culture, yes. Yes.

[unintelligible]

There are even things, for instance, in the Passover observance that Jews do today, some of those things come out of the intertestamental period, or other times in Jewish history. Some of the things are not even in the Old Testament but they're a part of the Passover observance today. And you can even do those as long as you see edification and value in that. I'm thinking of there's, what is the bread that you hide or something like this, you hide it and then someone goes and finds it. If I'm correct, that comes out of the captivity

during the intertestamental period and it's not in the Old Testament, not even required, but they do it. But it's very helpful if you see it the right way. Do you see what I'm saying? We can do that or we can not do it as long as it's to the Lord and it's not compulsory.

Brother Ty?

[unintelligible]

He obeyed it completely in a way that no other person could and by doing so the authority of the law on us ended, because the idea is that in order to please God, you have to be perfect. The whole Sermon on the Mount, that section of the Sermon on the Mount ends with this statement, "Be therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Well, only until Jesus, that was never possible. He was perfect and so we must go to him to find that. The law has no authority over us anymore which is why we don't have to observe the days anymore but the reason why those days were given were to teach us, like the sacrifices were given to teach us certain things. Those things that they were designed to teach us we must still continue to learn and practice in a much more deep way. Does that make sense?

A couple more questions and then we'll probably close. Jennifer?

[unintelligible]

I think what I would do is try to be as biblical as I can in the flow of revelation and I would point them to what Paul said, you can or cannot observe the calendar days. In the New Testament, it doesn't say Jews should and Gentiles should not, it just says you have the choice. And when you look at that, you understand that right now he is not dealing with the nation of Israel in a national way, in a covenant way. He's just not. He's working through the church. But there's coming a point in time when the kingdom of Israel will resume as God's focus and his platform for working in the world, and at that point, sabbath observance will return. It will be a legal requirement, in fact, not for salvation because it never was anyway but it will be expected. Sacrifices will also return. Temple worship will also return. The covenant will resume exactly as it says, and those who are faithful will do exactly what he says with the right understanding, even into the millennial kingdom it will continue. Does that make sense? You have to convince them of the significance of the New Testament.

[unintelligible]

Dispensational theology has something to do with that but dispensational theology is not my authority in any way. I tend to be more dispensational because of what the Bible tells me. That's just me being accurate as a teacher. I don't know if that made sense to you. Dispensationalism is a set of beliefs that I generally agree with, the difference between the church and Israel is one of those things, but sometimes dispensationalists also say

things that are not in the Bible and I don't agree with those things either but that's another discussion.

Jose?

[unintelligible]

A person will be judged by whatever they knew. For some, it's creation and that's enough. Creation is enough to leave you without an excuse. If you also had the law, you will be judged at a higher level because to whom much is given, much is required. Remember the teaching on parables a couple of weeks ago? Why did God withhold truth from those who didn't care? Because it would be unmerciful to give them more truth, to be judged according to, when the truth they already knew they were rejecting. So he taught in parables. So the simple answer is whatever you know and you have available to you, by that you will be judged and there's not a person in the world that doesn't have enough to be judged by, it's just some have more.

Brother Philip?

[unintelligible]

It's a very good question and I think we are safe to probably say this: we do not have a command, we have a very strong precedent. The daily meeting is an Acts 2 thing. The closest you come to it later is Paul in Acts 20 saying, "I met with you daily from house to house." If there are circumstances, like you're saying, that occur in culture, generally speaking, like in Israel, I probably still am going to encourage them to consider meeting on Sunday because of this strong precedent. It's much stronger than the Acts 2 everyday one time mention. But if for very legitimate reasons they're meeting on a Friday night every week in the face of persecution or whatever, it's hard to argue with that. Does that make sense?

Brother Victor?

[unintelligible]

The Bible doesn't really tell us, it just tells us that it happens but I'll tell you what I think is the reason and you can study it yourself. Why was there a sacrificial system in the Old Testament? It did not take away sins. It was to teach, to foreshadow, to prepare, to help understand the significance of what Jesus was going to come to do. By the time you get to the millennial kingdom, tribulation period, it just seems to me like by that time...you see, I have to remind us every time we take the Lord's Table of the significance of it. It can become so trite. I'm thankful we get to do it this way but when you get to that point, just like the Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed and looked ahead, the millennial sacrifices which are admittedly slightly different, they're a little different but they're still animal sacrifices, will remind us in case it's gotten old of the significance of what Jesus did because that will be a long time from when Jesus died. And I could probably tell you

that if we started doing animal sacrifices here at church with a biblical reason, okay, if I had biblical teaching that told me to do it and I started doing it, you all would get sober pretty fast about what Jesus did for you, especially you city people.

Where's Sam? Is Sam here? Sam has chickens now. A few are for eggs, a few are for cooking. I told myself we should get some of our city kids down there one of these days to watch you kill a chicken. It's good for us to understand how this works. We would understand pretty fast. I think some of us would walk away crying saying, "He did that for me? I can't take this. That thing did not deserve to die," so on and so forth. I think by the time you get to the millennial kingdom and into it, we're so far removed God knows we need the reminder. That's just my thinking. I couldn't tell you except for that was the purpose of them in the Old Testament.

We have to rely on the spiritual presence of the Lord right now at the Lord's Table. That's why I go through the things that I say and if the word is enough to remind us, praise the Lord for it. Sometimes I'm not sure we're getting it.

Pastor Thomas Overmiller, FBC

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Sunday, The Sabbath and the Lord's Day

Why do Christians gather for worship and ministry on the Lord's Day?

The answer to this question does not come from a single verse or command in Scripture. Instead, it comes from a series of biblical observations, followed by a helpful historical observation.

1. The _____ Foundation

The resurrection of Christ, the central vital fact of Christianity, occurred on the first day of the week (Mt. 28, Mk. 16, Lk. 24, Jn. 20).

2. The Post-Resurrection _____

Christ appeared to the 12 disciples after his resurrection, on the first day of the week (Jn. 20:19ff, 20:26ff).

3. The Early Church _____

The church at Troas gathered to break bread and hear Paul preach on the first day of the week. Paul had been in Troas for the entire preceding week, yet Scripture gives no indication that they assembled as a church until the first day of the week (Acts 20:6ff).

4. The _____ of the Apostle Paul

He told the church at Corinthian to set aside offerings on the first day of the week, which indicates that they already gathered together on Sunday (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

5. The _____ by the Apostle John

This reference to “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10) is a unique Greek expression, different from the prophetic expression “the day of the Lord.” It refers to the Christian day of worship, observed by John, the last living apostle. Notice that John observed the Lord’s Day, even when he was imprisoned and alone, unable to assemble with a congregation.

6. The Testimony of the _____

Church leaders immediately following the apostles spoke about the church gathering together on the first day of the week. You will find this in the following written testimonies from the early 100s-200s.

- The Epistle of Barnabas (15)
- Ignatius to the Magnesians (9)
- Justin Martyr’s Apology (I.67)
- Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History (IV.23)
- Tertullian’s De Oratio (23), etc.

How should we understand a verse like Hebrews 10:25 that strongly encourages gathering together with your church for worship and ministry?

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

How does the decree of Constantine in 321 A.D. relate to our practice of Sunday worship?

“On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.”

Are Christians obligated to “remember the Sabbath day”?

1. It was a _____ given to the nation of Israel.

Sabbath keeping is first commanded in Exodus 20:8-11 and repeated in Deuteronomy 5:12-15, and in both cases is assigned exclusively to the nation of Israel.

2. It will be a _____ for the future kingdom of Israel.

During the Tribulation period and the subsequent Millennial Kingdom, there appears to be a return to observance of Sabbath days, in keeping with a restoration of national Israel to kingdom authority (Isaiah 66:23, Matthew 24:20, Ezekiel 44:24, 45:17, 46:1, 3-4, 12).

3. It has been _____ by Jesus Christ.

Matthew 5:17 teaches that Jesus Christ fulfilled every command in the law. By doing this, He did not destroy the law. Instead, He ended our obligation to observe the law in a legalistic manner. At the same time, He enables us to observe the law in a more complete and meaningful manner.

4. It continues to be a _____ _____ for all people.

Consider the underlying reason given for the command when it was issued in Exodus 20:11. God featured a seventh day of rest in the cycle of Creation, distinguishing it by rest rather than creative work (Genesis 2:2). We know that God does not need to rest (Psalm 121:4). So a seventh day of rest in the cycle of life in this world is given for the benefit of people, not God (Mark 2:27).

Note that until Exodus 20, God does not detail the way that mankind should observe a seventh day Sabbath. He only establishes a precedent that the seventh day should be different from the previous six days, characterized by rest and not the kind of work that occurred throughout the week.

5. It is a _____ of our need to rely on God.

Consider the underlying reason given for the command when it was issued in Deuteronomy 5:15. The world system enslaved Israel with forced labor without rest. In the Promised Land of Palestine, however, God would require them to abstain from labor on the seventh day of each week to remind them perpetually that they trusted in God.

Note that God also required of them several other Sabbath rests, such as a full year of rest every seven years, and two years of rest every 49 years.

You should consider the Sabbath commandment in light of how Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:17-48.

Matthew 5:17 – “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

“Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time...But I say unto you...”

- Murder (vv. 21-22)
- Adultery (vv. 27-28)
- Divorce (vv. 31-32)
- Oaths (vv. 33-34)
- Justice & Revenge (vv.38-39)

What about the Sabbath? How would you apply the paradigm that Jesus teaches to the “old time” command of Sabbath observance? Does Matthew 11:28-30 or Hebrews 4:1-11 help us understand the Sabbath rest principle in a deeper, more significant way than day on a weekly calendar?

Matthew 11:28 – “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Hebrews 4:9-11 – “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

6. It is a matter of _____ for the church.

Paul makes it very clear that the calendar observances that God required of the nation of Israel are *not* required for the church today (Galatians 4:10-11; Romans 14:4-5).

It is not wrong for a Christian to observe a day of rest on Saturday, nor is it wrong for a Christian to choose otherwise (Colossians 2:16).

Furthermore, there is zero Scriptural evidence that worship and ministry on the Lord's Day is a Christian alternative to Sabbath Day observance.

Questions for Personal Reflection & Application

1. How do you apply the Sabbath principle _____?

2. Are you resting in Christ, or experiencing the stress of _____?