

The Ten Words – Rest, Rejoice, Repeat

Exodus 20:8-11

INTRODUCTION

Please turn in your Bible to **Exodus 20:2, 8-11**.

“Remember the Sabbath day.” It seems simple...yet. Let’s begin with some observations on the **Fourth Word**:

1. This is the _____ of the Ten Commandments

2. It is the most difficult to _____ interpret

“Remember the Sabbath day.” It seems like a simple enough command, and yet it raises all sorts of questions for people today, such as: *“Wasn’t the Sabbath just for the Jews? What if I have to work on Sundays? Which day is the Sabbath, Saturday or Sunday? Aren’t we under grace, not law? Why did God put this commandment in the Ten Commandments anyways?”*

As we begin to approach this Commandment, it will help to squarely face **three major difficulties** that confront us. These difficulties are not equal in importance; they in fact function on different levels. But taken together they show us the difficulties we face in arriving at a proper interpretation.

- This is the only Commandment not _____ in the New Testament
- The church has historically worshiped on _____
- We face the fading tradition of Sunday as a _____ or _____ day

3. The Fourth Word remains a source of _____ interest

We live in a society that puts a high value on work. **Chuck Swindoll** once said that *“we have become a generation of people who worship our work . . . who work at our play . . . and who play at our worship.”* As Americans we think we know how to rest. But how many people do you know who are truly rested? How many have found the right balance between worship, work, and rest in their lives? How many of us understand God’s purpose for work & leisure? **The fourth commandment is all about restoring the proper balance to these three areas – worship, work, and rest** – and so it is a commandment that we greatly need today. The point is **simple: rest, rejoice, repeat.**

But if you want more confusion, just ask any pastor about this Commandment. Lo and behold, the preachers don’t even agree. Nor do the scholars or the commentators. For over 2000 years, down to this very day, **three main viewpoints** have existed about the Fourth Commandment and its application to the Christian:

View #1: _____ is the Sabbath
(The Sabbatarian View):

View #2: _____ is the new Sabbath
(The Christian Sabbath View):

View #3: No _____ Sabbath day
(The Abiding Principle View):

So far it would seem as if there is no valid use for the Fourth Commandment today. In fact, it might seem as if we ought instead to talk about the “Nine” Commandments—and drop the Fourth one right off the list. Not so! We’re not about to drop any of the commandments. They all have something to say to us today.

So, let’s get to it...let’s dig in...

I. The _____ of the command (Genesis 2:1-3)

Let’s begin by looking at the basic terms of the command. **There are terms that stand out in the passage.** **First of all**, there is the word “**remember.**” It is a word that means “to recall or bring to mind” or even “to observe.” **Secondly** you have the term “**Sabbath day.**” The word translated Sabbath does not mean “seven or seventh” as some people think, but rather the Sabbath day literally means “a day of ceasing” or “a day of resting.” **Then** you have the word “**holy.**” “*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*” (Exodus 20:8) The word translated “holy” means “set apart, dedicated or consecrated for a holy purpose.” **Next** you have the words “**labor**” and “**work.**” “*Six days you shall labor and do all your work.*” (Exodus 20:9) The word translated “labor” means “to serve or to work at something,” whereas the word translated “work” refers to your occupation or business. **Sixthly**, you have the word “**rest.**” “*For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.*” (Exodus 20:11) The word translated “rest” means “to settle down and rest and be quiet.” And then **finally**, you have the word “**blessed.**” “*Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*” (Exodus 20:11) In context this means that God gave His special favor to the Sabbath day over all the other days of the week. The Sabbath day was set apart by God in a special way as compared to the other days of the week.

So, what is the origin of the Sabbath? The fourth commandment points us all the way back to creation. In **Genesis 2** we read, “*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*” (Genesis 2:1-3)

When God finished His work of creating the world, God rested, and He thus created the week and instituted the Sabbath. This was a pattern for all human beings to follow – six days of work and one day of rest. And so, the Sabbath was not something new that God was revealing with the Ten Commandments but went all the way back to creation. That is part of the reason why the command begins with the word “**remember**” — “*Remember the Sabbath.*”

The origin...next, please note...

II. The _____ of the command

A. The _____ of the command

So how were the people of Israel to obey this command? Well, first of all, they had six days in which to work. (Exodus 20:9, 23:12) **By the way, not only was the Israelite to rest on the Sabbath, but to work during the week.** The Bible tells you to work hard, to work diligently and to support yourself and your family if you are able. Laziness and idleness are condemned in the Bible as vices while hard work is held up as a virtue. And you know what? The harder you work, the more you will value your rest!

Although the Israelites were to set aside six days for work, the intention of the command was not that they must work a full six days, but rather that six days were available for work and labor. This is important for us today where we basically have a five-day work week. There is nothing wrong with working only five days, but we should remember that the

five-day work week is a modern convenience and that many other cultures continue to work six or seven days a week, not just to consume but simply to survive.

So, the Israelites had six days available for work, but the seventh day was set apart as holy. **“The seventh day”** here is very specific. The Israelites did not get to pick which day of the week was their Sabbath. Their Sabbath day was Saturday, the seventh day of the week, clear and simple.

On the seventh day they were to do two things in particular. First of all, they were to rest from all labor. **Exodus 34:21** said, *“Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.”* **Secondly,** they were to worship the Lord. Of course, they were to worship the Lord every day, but the Sabbath day was a special day for worshiping God. We read these instructions in **Number 28:9-10:** *“On the Sabbath day, make an offering of two lambs a year old without defect, together with its drink offering and a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.”* The Sabbath was a special day of public worship when the people gathered together. **Psalm 92** is an example of a psalm that was especially written for the Sabbath day.

And so, on the Sabbath you were supposed to worship God and rest from work. In a sense you could say, on the Sabbath you are supposed to pray and to play! We should also make note from **Exodus 20:10** that the Sabbath command was especially directed towards parents and employers, that is, those in authority, those who could require someone to work or could release them from their obligations for the day.

B. The _____ of the command

What was the purpose of the Sabbath day? Let me share with you five purposes that we find in the Scriptures:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

The starting point and the meaning, next please note...

III. Jesus' _____ towards the Sabbath

A. He _____ the Sabbath as a day of public worship

B. He _____ on the Sabbath day

C. He proclaimed Himself as _____ of the Sabbath

D. He taught that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? So, what are some of the Biblical principles for observing the fourth commandment today? Let me give you some in closing:

1. **Strive for a proper _____ of worship, work and rest in life.**
2. **Set aside time each week for _____ worship.**

3. _____ on the purposes given in Scripture for the fourth commandment.

- a time of rest and refreshment,
- a sign of belonging to God,
- a special day for public worship,
- a way to show your trust in God's provision,
- a reminder of God's redemption in Christ.

4. **Seek and follow the _____ of God's Spirit concerning work and other activities on Sundays.**

5. **Avoid the opposite _____ of "business as usual" or legalistic observance.**

6. **Follow the convictions of your conscience without _____ others.**

The Sabbath is both a gift and a command. May we show our appreciation to God by following His Sabbath command. May we honor Him by enjoying the good gift He has given us of a day off each week for rest and for worship.