

A Day to Keep Holy

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 16. This morning we're going to read the first 30 verses of Exodus chapter 16.

! This is God's infallible word. The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the 15th day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt.

In the desert, the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt.

There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. But you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.

Then the Lord said to Moses, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.

[1:01] In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.

And so Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt. And in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him.

Who are we that you should grumble against us? Moses also said, You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening, and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him.

Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord. Then Moses told Aaron, Say to the entire Israelite community, Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.

While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud. The Lord said to Moses, I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites.

[2:11] Tell them, At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God. That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

And when the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, What is it? For they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them, It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded. Each one is to gather as much as he needs.

Take an omer for each person you have in your tent. The Israelites did as they were told. Some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.

Each one gathered as much as he needed. Then Moses said to them, No one is to keep any of it until morning. However, some of them paid no attention to Moses.

[3 : 21] They kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. Each morning, everyone gathered as much as he needed.

And when the sun grew hot, it melted away. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much, two omers for each person. And the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses.

He said to them, This is what the Lord commanded. Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil.

Save whatever is left and keep it until morning. So they saved it until morning as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. Eat it today, Moses said, because today is a Sabbath to the Lord.

You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any. Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none.

[4 : 26] Then the Lord said to Moses, How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath.

That is why on the sixth day, he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day. No one is to go out.

So the people rested on the seventh day. Remember. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

And with that, we've come to the fourth commandment of the ten as we're working our way through them. And I wonder if you've noticed the pattern of the ten commandments.

The first four commandments have to do with our relationship to God. And then the following six have to do with our relationship with one another.

[5 : 25] And so the first things first. And he begins with our relationship to him. So there is no other God. So you are to have no other God. He alone is to be your God.

And then what follows is our duty to this God. What shall we do? Well, we're to worship him. We're to honor his name.

We're to honor him and keep his day. So we find these first four commandments are bound together then by the God-directedness of them.

Now, we refer to the ten commandments. Sadly, today, many would be called nine-commandment believers, nine-commandment Christians.

Though many would recognize that in the Old Testament there were ten commandments, they would say that there really are only nine commandments for Christians in the New Covenant.

[6 : 27] That this fourth commandment was something for Israel to do and to keep, but it does not speak to us as the New Testament church.

Now, to be fair, there are such commandments in the Old Testament, aren't there? You all didn't bring an animal sacrifice this morning. You must believe that those commandments are not for the church age.

And indeed, that's what the Bible teaches us, that Christ is the end of such commandments. His blood has once for all atoned. The fact that we're worshiping in Bremen and not in Jerusalem this morning is another kind of commandment that the Old Testament would have called us to go up to Jerusalem to worship.

And here we are in Bremen. So again, there are such commandments, but I would like to show in our study that the fourth commandment is not such a commandment, that it does have a moral requirement that is resting upon man as man and not just Israelites.

Well, we'll want to see that as we go on. So for this morning, turn to Exodus chapter 20. If you were there in chapter 16, just a bit over to chapter 20, and I want to read the command in its entirety, verses 8 through 11 of Exodus 20.

[7:54] Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.

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. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Now we'll cover many other things in future messages this morning, just three points to make about the Sabbath day. The first is that the Lord made the Sabbath day holy.

And we are to keep holy what he has made holy. So we're beginning with this concept that the Lord made the Sabbath day holy.

[8:57] Those were the last three words of verse 11. He made it holy. Now when did he make the Sabbath day holy?

Finally, this is a critical question. The origin of the Sabbath day. When did it begin? Well, we know it didn't begin in chapter 20 because we just read of it in chapter 16, didn't we?

And the whole business of the manna falling and not falling on the Sabbath day. And so they were put to the test. Will we follow the Sabbath day as it's been taught to us?

Or will we go our own way? And again, we find those that rebelled against the command of God trying God's patience as he says, how long will you break my commands and not follow my instructions?

So we know it didn't begin on Mount Sinai in chapter 20. It was already there in chapter 16. And in fact, the institution of the Sabbath day finds its origin much earlier than Exodus 16.

[10:05] It takes us right back into the creation week, the first week of creation to the seventh day itself. And this is pointed out, as you see in the fourth commandment.

Notice verse 11 of Exodus 20. Having already told us to remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, telling us we do that by ceasing from our work, he now tells us the reason for doing so.

Why should we keep the day holy? And he's going to tell us because he made it holy. Verse 11. For in six days, this is the reason to keep it holy.

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. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

So the Sabbath day was made holy on the seventh day of creation week. Hold your place here and let's just turn back to that day as we read of it in Genesis chapter 2.

[11:09] Because I believe that we have a direct quote of Genesis and we see what was said earlier about the origin of the Sabbath day.

Here we are. You remember chapter 1 is all about breaking down the days, the six days of creation, and we're told what God created on each day. And then it sums up at the end that God saw all that he had made and it was very good and there was evening and morning the sixth day.

Now verse 1 of chapter 2. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array in six days. By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing.

So on the seventh day, he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Notice several things from this passage. This commandment to Israel at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20 did not have its beginning there, but rather here in Genesis, the book of beginnings.

[12:25] Long before there was ever an Israelite nation, back when there was only God and two people on the planet, Adam and Eve. This is what we're reading about.

And why is it important to see that this institution had its beginning here? It's because we see and learn from that that it was not an institution just for Israel, the Old Testament chosen people of God.

Not just something for them to keep, but it's a day for mankind to keep. Man as he came forth from the creator's hand. And so the day has its foundation in the creation week.

It's why the theologians call it a creation ordinance. It's a creation command, in other words, because it's rooted in the very days of creation.

Those first seven days. It takes us back to the beginning. And here at the beginning is God's original design for man. So before sin is entered, just as man has come from the hand of God, we have certain creation ordinances or rules.

[13:36] There's the ordinance of marriage comes to us. It's a creation ordinance. There's the creation ordinance of procreation that that were to marry and to fill the earth, to multiply and fill the earth.

There's the creation command or ordinance of work. It's there that God put the first man to work and told him to work long before there was sin.

This is God's original design. And it was also there that he put limits on man's work and said, you're to rest on the seventh day. So work six, rest one.

That comes to us rooted in the first day or the first week of creation and is therefore not a command only for the Israelites who will appear on the scene hundreds of years later, but for all men as we come from the hand of God.

Our Lord Jesus, who calls himself the Lord of the Sabbath, the master of this day, said the same thing in Mark chapter two and verse 27.

[14:42] You remember how he was always being carped at by the Pharisees. And we'll look at this text another time because according to them, he was breaking the Sabbath, not because he really was, but he wasn't keeping all their shibboleths and all their additional rules and regulations.

And Jesus puts them right and corrects them and says, no, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. He takes us right back to the beginning of the Sabbath, back to its creation.

When was the Sabbath made? It was made for man, generic man, anthropos, not for Israelites, not for Jews.

It was made for man as man. So keeping the Sabbath is not merely a Jewish thing. It's a mannish thing. It's a human thing. That's the first thing we see here in Genesis two.

And then notice, secondly, it was by resting on the seventh day that God made it holy. God made this day holy by himself resting on this day.

[15:53] The word there for made it holy, perhaps your translation says he sanctified it. He sanctified it. He made it holy. And whenever God makes something holy, he sets it apart from common use for himself.

He sets it apart from its common use for special use for his purposes. Think of the vessels in the temple.

They may have been just an ordinary bull, like the bull, all the other bulls in Israel. But once it was made holy, it no longer served a common use.

You no longer would eat Wheaties out of that bull. You would no longer milk the goat or water the chickens using that bull. Why not? Because once God made it holy, he set it apart from its common use unto a particular holy use for him.

So it's to be used perhaps to carry the blood of the sacrifice in the temple and to pour it out before the Lord. It's to be used for the priest to wash their hands. Something special given to that article because God made it holy.

[17:13] Set it apart. Believers, we are made holy. We are sanctified. God has taken us out of the world and he set us apart for himself.

That's the same concept of being sanctified. Made holy. He's taken you and set you apart from sin. Apart from the world. To serve him. You are to serve a special purpose.

Him. And that is the idea of sanctification. And so even so, the Sabbath day was made holy. It was set apart. In other words, and God did that himself.

This day was not just another day to continue the work of creating like he had done on the previous six days. But it was rather a day to rest from his work.

There's a difference. There's special work for this day or activity, we would say, or the cessation of activity on this day that differs from the other days.

[18:15] And so that's what it means for God to make this day holy. He set it apart. He sanctified it. And all of that for us. Just like it says that he blessed the day, so he sanctified and made the day holy.

Those actions were for us. God doesn't need to be blessed. He doesn't bless himself. He's rather blessing the day for us, as we'll come to and see in a moment. But he's also sanctifying it for us.

He's making it holy for us. And that leads us to the third observation from this passage. And it's this, that our duty to keep the Sabbath day holy rests on his example.

And that's the whole point of, of not only this passage in Genesis 2, but as the commandment is given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, you see it so clearly.

You're to keep it holy. Why? Because God made it holy when he rested on the seventh day. He rests, you are to rest on the seventh day. So, as his image bearers, we bear his image.

[19:24] We bear his likeness. We are to imitate God in his work rest cycle of the creation week. You ever seen a son imitating his father?

Maybe it's at the mirror as fathers, if he's got the razor and the shaving cream and the little boy puts the cream all over him and starts to wipe it off. He's imitating dad.

Maybe he's got his little plastic lawnmower out and he's going back and forth in the front yard. His dad's in the backyard. He's imitating his father. That's what man was to do.

He was to imitate his father. Remember how Jesus put it on the Sermon on the Mount? You're to love your enemies because God loves his enemies. You're to be perfect, just like your father in heaven is perfect.

Like father, like sons. That's the whole point of what it means to be holy. It's to be God-like. And part of that God-likeness was to follow the pattern that we see in our father.

[20:28] He worked six days. He rested. We are now to show that same likeness to him in our work rest pattern. And so we learn that our duty to keep the Sabbath day holy rests upon the example of our Heavenly Father.

You know God could have created everything in one day, couldn't it be? Just as easily as he created everything in six days.

He could have just done it in one day. He could have done it in six seconds. He could have done it in one minute, one second. But he didn't. He did it in six days.

Sometimes fathers do things just so that their children will learn from them. And this is what we have at creation. The father is teaching his children, watch me and do as I do.

And then do as I say. As he makes this obligatory to his children to rest on the seventh day, even as he has.

[21 : 36] So we see this pattern in the father being laid down as an example for us that is to structure human life from creation onward in our cycle of work and rest.

His example carries an authoritative power. It carries the force of duty. And so as the Lord of Sabbath, Jesus himself is the one that created, didn't he?

John 1, 3, nothing was made that was made apart from him. Apart from him was nothing made that was made. He was there. He created in six days. And he rested on the seventh.

And as Lord of Sabbath, that's what he commands us to do. Because the Lord made it holy, we are to keep it holy. Now, that's the first point I want you to see.

The Lord made the Sabbath day holy. He set it apart. And we are to follow in suit. Now, the second point this morning is that the Sabbath day is his day. It's his day.

[22 : 40] As the hymn says, he calls the hours his own. He calls the Sabbath his day. But you ask, is not every day of the week his?

And we must answer, yes, he made them all. He made every day of the week. But one day in seven is especially his, such that he marks it out.

He separates it from the other six and puts his name on it. And says, that's mine. There's something uniquely his about this day that's not true of the others.

If he sets it apart from the other six six and calls it my day. I want to give you two verses, one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament.

Isaiah 58 and verse 13. God says, if you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day.

[23 : 41] If you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, well then there's certain promises that follow. But you notice twice, he says, my holy day.

Do you see the possessiveness of that? This is my day. In a special way. In a way that the other days are not. And again, that's his choice of the language. He makes it his.

This is my holy day in which I have special purposes for. Yes, he has purpose. It's his day on Wednesday. It's his. And he has purposes for Wednesday for us.

It's called W-O-R-K. But he has a special day. That's the day and the purpose for six days. But he's got a special purpose for the day that he says, my holy day.

And again, the Lord's holy day. So it belongs to him in a special way for a special purpose. It's for him. Now again, yes, all the other days of the week are for him.

[24 : 48] But he says, this is for me in a special way. And he puts his name on it. Well, we are making the point then here that the Sabbath day is his day.

Turn to Revelation chapter one. We've seen a verse in the Old Testament. I want to show you one in the new. Some people will admit that in the Old Testament, one day and seven belonged especially to God, but would say that this is not so in the New Testament.

Well, Revelation is the new in the New Testament. It is at the end of our Bibles. Christ has already come and lived and died and rose again and ascended into heaven. He has poured out his spirit upon us.

He has established his new covenant in his blood. A whole generation has passed since Christ's ascension into heaven when John is writing this.

And yet, what we find is that there is still a day that he calls his. Verse nine of chapter one of Revelation, John's telling us where he's at.

[25:52] And then he's going to speak of when. But first, where? He was on the island of Patmos, verse nine. Why are you there, John? I was being persecuted because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

And so he's exiled to the island. That's where he is. Now, when did this vision take place? Well, he says in verse 10, on the Lord's day, I was in the spirit and I heard behind me the loud voice like a trumpet.

And he goes on to explain the vision that he saw on the Lord's day. Now, John does not need to explain which day that was, but assumes that his readers would know the answer to that.

The clue is that he doesn't need to explain it. So, he's not writing to keep them in ignorance. He assumes, my readers understand what I mean when I refer to the Lord's day.

And indeed, by then, they did know for under the direction of Christ himself and his apostles, his sent ones, the Sabbath had changed from the seventh day from creation to the first day of the week, the new creation in Jesus' resurrection.

[27:01] And just as the old seventh day Sabbath was meant to remind us of God's rest from creation, so the new covenant day of the first day of the week, the resurrection day, is meant to remind us of Jesus' rest from his redemptive work.

He's finished it. He's risen. His work of atonement is done. And he enters into his rest. Well, a day of such spiritual significance was this day that it forever changed the calendar, the day of rest.

And you have a similar thing that happened in the Old Testament. Exodus chapter 12 and verse 1 tells us that when God redeemed his people out of Egypt, that month in which he redeemed them was not the first month of the year, of their yearly calendar.

But God made it from that point on. He said, this month now, the month in which I redeemed you from Egypt, this is to become your first month of your year, of your annual cycle. Why?

Because of such a glorious, significant thing as redeeming Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Well, that's just a picture of what Jesus has done for us in the resurrection.

[28:18] He has redeemed us from our sins. And that day of resurrection, that day of redemption is to be celebrated henceforth in the church of Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath is now the first day of the week. Our confession of faith says that God has appointed one day in seven to be kept as a holy Sabbath to himself.

One day in seven. That's the binding element upon all men. But from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, that day was the last day of the week.

At the resurrection of Christ, it was changed to the first day of the week called the Lord's Day. And it is to continue until the eternal rest when we enter into heaven our eternal resting place.

So the kernel, the abiding moral requirement is to keep one day in seven. That's the commandment, the fourth commandment. Though the day has changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, there is still a Lord's Day.

[29:27] A Lord's Day. A day that is peculiarly his for our rest and worship. As Hebrews 4, 9 says, there remains therefore a Sabbath for the people of God.

So, this is the day of rest for us. This is why we're here today on Resurrection Day celebrating Jesus' rest from his work of purging us from our sins.

In the New Testament, we have the apostles speaking of the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day. And when it refers to the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day, it uses a word that is only used in the Bible of these two things.

The Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day. It's a strong possessive adjective that's being used to show whose day it is, whose supper it is. It refers to something that's peculiarly his.

So, the Lord's Supper is not an ordinary meal, is it? We don't come on our Lord's Supper celebrations and just have what we're going to have today down at the other end. That's just an ordinary meal, as we would say.

[30:41] No, it's different, isn't it? It's set apart for special use, a holy use, special for the Lord himself in which we remember him. And so is the Lord's Day.

That is not an ordinary day. It's set apart, especially for him. It's especially his. And so, in the Lord's Supper, we have a memorial to Christ's death and in the Lord's Day, a memorial to Christ's resurrection.

And those are the two pillars on which Christianity stands. The death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, if this day is peculiarly his, then in this commandment, God's making a claim on our time, isn't he?

He's making a claim on our time. He's exerting his lordship over our use of time. As Lord, he has the right to tell us how to use our time and what is to be given to work and to rest, to worship.

If in the tithe, God requires one dollar out of every ten dollars of my income, I should not complain but thankfully recognize it's all his, it's all from him and gladly return the tenth for his special use considering it my best spent money.

[32:03] so in the Sabbath, God has required that I give him one day and every seventh that I receive from him. I should not complain but thankfully recognize every day is his and from him and gladly give him the seventh for the purposes for which he has set it aside.

we keep the Sabbath day holy because it is his and his to tell us what he wants to do with it. His to be used for his special purpose of rest and worship.

So that's the second point this morning. Number one, the Sabbath was made holy by God. Number two, the Sabbath day is his day.

And then thirdly, the Lord made the Sabbath day a blessing for man. If you have your Bibles open to Genesis 2 or to the quoting of it from Exodus 20, we see that God says that by resting on the seventh day, the Lord did two things.

The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and he sanctified it, made it holy. And so we've seen what it means to make it holy. Now we're going to consider that the Lord blessed the Sabbath day.

[33:20] What does it mean when he says that he blessed the Sabbath day? Well, he blessed this day for man. To bless the day means that he made it a conduit of blessing.

He made it a channel of benefit for man to bring good to man. Notice God's design for this day. His original intent for this day is to enrich man.

Man receives good gifts from his creator on every day of the week. We just sang that morning by morning new mercies I find. And I don't just find them on the Lord's day.

I find them every day. However, there are special blessings bound up for us on this day. That's why he set it aside and blessed it to make it a channel of blessing for man.

man. Doesn't mean the other six days are cursed. Doesn't mean that the other six days we receive no blessing from God. But here he himself places a blessing on the seventh day that was clearly not on the other six.

[34:34] He sets it apart. We didn't do that. He did that. So he marked out this day for blessing in a special way. Now this blessing making the day a blessing for man follows the pattern of all God's commandments.

First John five and verse three his commandments are not burdensome. That's not true of all commands of men is it?

Some men's commands are very burdensome but here's something that's true of God's commands. They are not burdensome. They're not grievous is another way it could be translated.

His commands are not grievous. They don't bring us grief. They bring us gladness. They bring us blessing. Romans 7 12 his commandment is not only holy and righteous it is good.

It's good for us. And all of those statements about it not being burdensome not grievous good for us. That's true of the fourth commandment as well.

[35:46] It's not burdensome but good. It's a bringer of blessing to man. Not cursing. Special blessing. And that should at once set a right attitude in our hearts toward this day.

This is a day of blessing. This is a day of God making a channel from heaven to my heart and dumping it on me. This is a conduit of blessing for man.

In fact God's blessing of the day has made the Sabbath a delight not a drudgery. You noticed it as we read Isaiah 53 or 58 13 and 14.

He says we're to call the Sabbath a delight. Well would God tell us to call something a delight if it really wasn't a delight.

That wouldn't be honest would it. I know it's drudgery but call it delight. No if God commands us to call the Sabbath day a delight it's because it is a delight. And if we call the Sabbath day a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable we'll find our joy in the Lord.

[36:55] I told you it's a conduit of blessing. It's a day that's designed for our happiness for our joy in the Lord for our delight. And Jesus underscores this very intention of this day when the Pharisees with all their added prohibitions had missed the very spirit of the fourth commandment that of it being a blessing.

They made it a curse. You can only walk so many steps. You can only do this. You can't do that. You can't do that. And they had lists and lists numbering into the hundreds of things you can't do.

You can't do. They had made it a drudgery and Jesus takes them to task on it and says the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath.

He doesn't exist for its well-being. It exists for his well-being. A dative of advantage. It exists for man. It was made. It was created for his good for his benefit for his advantage to be a blessing not a curse.

Yes that command or that command of the fourth day or the fourth commandment is for God's honor. We worship him on this day and we'll get into that more in the future but but it's to honor God but it's also for the good of man.

[38:18] It was made for man as well. Doesn't that speak volumes about the heart of God that even what is for his own glory is wed to our good to our blessing?

Isn't he a good God? He's not going to be glorified in a way that obliterates us and that harms us. No. He will be glorified as he does us good.

What a king whose laws are all good for us. What a father whose rules not only serve his honor but our good. So that if we have a negative attitude towards the Lord's day.

Something's wrong with us isn't it? Because if we rightly understand it we will delight in this day. We will treasure its weekly arrival more than winning the lottery.

Satan works overtime to make God's commandments look burdensome. You know that he wants he wants followers of Jesus running around with hang dog appearances like woe is me.

[39 : 19] What a drudgery. I've got to go to church today. I can't do this. I can't do that. Why does he want us that boy? Well he's wanting to slander God. Remember we bear his name.

And how we treat the day that has his name on it bears upon our God. And he wants the world to think you know if you become a Christian you will become the saddest poor loser of a man or a woman.

When in reality all of God's commands are for our good. And this command is specially designed for our delight and for our joy. it's a channel of rich blessing and it brings to us benefits both to the body and the soul.

Think with me of the benefits it brings to the body. As a culture we're hurrying ourselves to death. The stress of work is literally killing us. I read last month of a 31 year old Japanese broadcast journalist who died of congestive heart failure.

It was found that she had clocked 159 hours of overtime in one month which puts her overtime hours just about equal with her regular working hours.

[40 : 31] And the Japanese government blamed her death on over working. Over working. Now technology was supposed to fix this problem of over working by enabling us to do things so much faster.

In fact I read recently in 1967 futurists told a senate subcommittee that by 1985 thanks to technological advances Americans would be working just 22 hours a week.

Wait a minute. And only 27 weeks a year. And the average American worker would retire at age 38. And they were warning that we would have too much time on our hands.

Well 1985 has come and gone. What are you doing with all that leisure time on your hands? Well what happened?

Technology has indeed enabled us to do some things faster. But greed has pushed us to get more and more things done.

[41 : 35] Yes we're able to do things in half the time but now we're pushed to do twice the work. The harder you work the more work you are given to do. Technology has not created more leisure but demanded greater productivity and the result is more stress making rest even more rare.

The Lord knew better than those futuristic dreamers. So from the beginning he said I want everyone to take one day off for every six days worked.

Every seventh day I want you to rest. He knows the tendency of man to find his identity in his work. This is who I am and when that's true we just we throw ourselves into it because after all I am the measure of what I produce.

And we make idols out of work. And greed. God knows the greed that drives us to sacrifice health and the family on the altar of more money.

Greed of owners who demand more and more work from employees and refuse them rest. And so God just commands a day off. No work.

[42 : 44] What a blessing. What a benefit to the body. By this day we are saved from the slavery to work from workaholism from restless stress. We're given a day to rest from our work to catch our breath to recuperate to be refreshed to unwind the mind to unravel the body from the stress of the work week.

Exodus 23 12 six days do your work but on the seventh day do not work so that your ox and donkey may rest and the slave born in your household and the alien as well may be refreshed.

This is a day for resting and refreshment. What a what a God. That after a day then of rest and refreshment we might come back to our work with greater energy greater creativity greater productivity the Lord is no slave driver.

He who said to his disciples come away and rest a while. Says to all of us. Rest one day in seven.

What a blessing is the Sabbath day we ignore it to our own peril all sorts of physical mental emotional problems stem from a neglect of rest. Tests have shown that all work and no rest not only does harm to the body but also lowers the productivity of workers.

[44 : 10] Should we be surprised when we see such tests discovering such things that the God who made us knows the limits of our body. And so from the very beginning has built into each week cycle a day of rest.

He never meant for us. He never created us with the energy to work seven days out of seven. He only made us with the energies to work six days. And so from the get go. Work six.

Rest one. Isn't his commandment good for us? Isn't he good to us? Three hundred years ago the leaders of the atheistic French Revolution sought to remove all religious elements from their national and social life.

And that included changing their calendar. Abandoning the Bible's seven day week for a new ten day week. I can see you're getting excited about that.

It was disastrous. Now instead of one day of rest every seven days it's one day of rest every ten days. And it simply proved to be not enough rest. And so the French revolutionary calendar came and went.

[45 : 17] It was soon abandoned and they returned to God's seven day week even though they hated to acknowledge that that was the case. God is the author of the seven day week. And it's very presence is testimony to this creation ordinance.

God knew what he was doing when he blessed man with a day off in seven. And that men would complain of the Sabbath day simply proves the folly of sin.

That we would war against our own good. That we would fight against our own blessings. We're our own worst enemies when we reject God's good gifts to us.

When we call it bondage. When in fact it's the perfect law that gives freedom. But you know the blessings of the Sabbath day are not just physical. They're also blessings of the soul.

Last Sunday Robert Elliot told us about the soul of man. Didn't he? That part of us that was made for God. That part of us that that can't be satisfied except in God.

[46 : 20] what some have called that God shaped blank that only he can fill. We're more than body. And it was a healthy reminder to us all. That we have an eternal soul.

To be fed just as much as our bodies need rest and to be fed. Well this gift of the Sabbath day is a rich blessing to the soul as well as to the body.

The Puritans used to call it the Sabbath day the Lord's day the market day for the soul. Market day for soul. What did someone do in that day on market day?

They took their money and they went and they bought all kinds of good things for their bodies. Clothes to to dress themselves. The food to feed it. Drink to enjoy. Whatever it was they would make heyday on market day.

And so the Sabbath is a market day for the soul. The richest affair for our souls. Here's a day set apart each week to enrich the soul.

[47 : 24] To tend to the health of the spiritual part of you. That soul part of you that's made for relationship with God. A day to join with God's people in the public worship as we're going to see every Sabbath day was a day of sacred assembly for worship.

And as we come and give worship and praise to God what do we find? We find our souls are supremely blessed and we say this is what I was made for. I was made to worship him and our souls are feeding on Christ and they they draw nourishment from him and we find that we thrive best in our souls in the atmosphere of worship in God's spiritual presence.

So here's a day to nurture your relationship with God. How many times during the week do we feel rushed in our devotional meeting with God? Oh yes we read the Bible but but we don't do a lot of meditating on it.

That takes more time and focus and thought. And yes we pray to him and talk to him but it's it's hurried prayer with little adoration little confession little petition a little thanksgiving and all because as we say we just don't have enough time got to get to work got to do this got to do that.

And so God says in the fourth commandment here's an extra day each week for that to nourish your soul. The fast pace of life wars against contemplation it wars against extended thought we can feel like the gerbil on that little exercise wheel the faster we run the faster the wheel goes day after day the same and then the Lord comes to weary Christians and he says take the day off and we say what?

[49 : 11] That's right I want you to take that come down from there and just walk with me for a day. Let's rest from your labor. And commune with the one that our soul loves draw near to him.

A whole day to tend to the most important thing of all God himself without the usual distractions that keep us from. Slower.

Contemplative thought and fellowship with the Lord. The busyness of life and work has a tendency to make us forget God and unseen spiritual things.

You know a basketball we're getting ready to start basketball season aren't we in a basketball team can get winded by playing barn ball just running and gunning back and forth and they can get short on breath such that they grow they grow forgetful of the very basics of the game of basketball and forget what the coaches taught them and so what does the coach do?

He sees them rattled. He calls a timeout. He gives them a chance to catch their breath. To get a drink and then he gathers them around and he reminds them of the game plan.

[50 : 23] He reminds them and encourages them to put their whole heart into it. Well one day in seven we have a time out. Rest from work unto worship a day to catch our breath to be refreshed spiritually as well as spirits physically.

And in this day we're reminded of the game plan. We're reminded who we are, whose we are, why we're here, whom we serve, where we're going, what's important, what is a priority, what is eternal.

Reminded of all the motivations of the gospel and all the provisions that are ours in Christ, the encouragements in God's word to live for him. It's a day to be still.

A day to be still and to know that he is God. Just step back and regain our bearings. Get perspective. Remember again that God is on his throne and we get to travel to heaven on this day as we hear his word and we hear his thought and we see the world differently up here.

It's like the control tower in the airport. We see down on the runway and we see, oh, I see now the big picture. We get to do that as God draws us aside to spend the day with him.

[51 : 43] Remember how Asaph was all messed up. He was all confused so much so that he was starting to grow envious of the wicked. That poor man was a messed up believer. What did he need?

He says, until I entered the sanctuary and then I saw their end. Well, you see, we come, we come into the sanctuary, we come and worship God in his presence under his word, his spirit, illumined preaching.

And what happens? We start to see the end. And now, yeah, the wealth and the health, that all is nothing. Be near to God. That's everything. So you see the blessing that this day is to our souls.

To learn to live like we were dying, which we are. To be reminded that God is in control of the events of my life. It's not spinning out of control. To fix my eyes on him, who he is, what he's done, what he's promised.

That sight of him that leaves nothing the same then when I go back on Monday morning to my work. You go to your work. It's a day to make mid-course adjustments in our lives.

[52 : 53] It's like our cars. The steering is constantly getting knocked out of alignment as we go from one pothole to the next in life. And every seventh day I come into the mechanics bay and he aligns my mind with his mind and my affections with his affections and my will with his will.

Now I'm ready to go out and drive through this world again another week. I've had everything related to him. I've seen it all now in relationship to him. I've had his gospel thrill my soul and motivate a whole new way of living.

I'm ready to go back with purpose and direction and encouragement and focus and strength and hope and joy and peace. And by the next Lord's day, I find I'm in need of another time out.

And God gives it to me. God gives it to me. The Scots minister Donald McDonald said we firmly believe that no other means is of more importance or calculated to confer such blessing on man as the Lord's day.

I can add my amen to that by experience. I know of no other means of grace that God has used more consistently in my life to realign my life and my heart with his than the Lord's day.

[54 : 19] Then let's treasure it for the good gift that it is. Let's call it a delight. Let's call it the day of all the days, the best and valuing it. Let's protect it. Let's keep it. Let's see that we make the most of it each week and let us love him who gives it to us and waits to meet us in it.

And to teach us to rejoice in the Lord. Our time is gone. I will not sing our closing hymn.

But let me just challenge you. Are you still on that little wheel running and trying to save yourself? Are you still working to earn your salvation?

The gospel calls you to rest in Jesus Christ and what he has done, his perfect obedience, his death. And salvation comes to those who do not work for their salvation, but for those who rest their soul and body on what Jesus has done for sinners.

He is the one that says. Come to me, all you who are weary, heavy laden, burdened. Come to me and I will give you rest.

[55 : 26] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. Where do you find that? Nowhere but in Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for bearing your good heart toward us, even in this fourth commandment. Thank you for the blessing that you have made it to us.

Thank you for every good thing that we have received as we've found rest in Christ and rested on this day from our labors and come together to worship you.

Make each such Sabbath day a delight to us. Forgive us of all the ways we have treated it as a common thing. Teach us that it's yours and to be used in your way and so to keep what you have made holy.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.