

# Theology of the Sabbath Day

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] So, we come to the end of our study of what I've called Everyday Theology.! And today I want to consider the one day of the week that is not like every other.

! Most of what I've talked about in this series, not everything, but most of what I've talked about has primarily related to Monday through Saturday, a typical weekday. But what about Sunday? We live in a time when the idea of a weekly day of rest and worship feels very out of step with the world around us. Our culture runs on a seven-day-a-week cycle of work and entertainment and busyness. Even among believers, Sunday is often treated as just another day. You know, maybe a church service in the morning, but the rest of the day is filled with errands or sports or catching up on work or whatever it might be. The Sabbath, for many, feels like an Old Testament relic or some burdensome rule that we're just glad to be rid of. But what does the Bible actually say?

Is the fourth commandment still relevant for Christians? And if so, what does it look like under the new covenant in Christ? More specifically, how should we, who I trust, hold to the authority of Scripture and the abiding value of the moral law, understand and observe the Sabbath?

Now, to understand the Sabbath in our day, we have to go all the way back to the beginning, before Israel, before Mount Sinai, before the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath wasn't something God invented just for the Jewish people, just for Israel. It began in the very first week of human history, and that tells us something significant. It's not merely a ceremonial law for a particular nation, but it's a pattern that God wove into creation itself. We read in Genesis chapter 2, at the very start of the chapter, thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. And by the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing. So on that day, he rested from all his work.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on that day, he rested from all the work of creation that he had accomplished. Now, these verses come right on the heel of the creation account.

[ 2 : 5 0 ] After speaking the universe into existence and ordering all things in six days, God did something that perhaps is unexpected for God. He rested. Now, of course, God didn't rest because he's tired.

Isaiah 40, verse 28 reminds us that the Creator does not grow weary. His rest was not about recovery, but about completion. It was about enjoyment of what he created. And then he blessed that day, and he sanctified it. He set it apart from the others as holy. So he establishes this rhythm, six days of work, one day of rest. Now, you'll notice that this seventh day is not introduced here in Genesis 2 as a command. I think it's more accurate to say it's a gift. And we'll come into that.

It was God's idea, obviously, his design for how human life should flow. The pattern wasn't imposed on Adam and Eve like a burden. It's just built right into the structure of their lives. So from the very beginning, man was made to work and to rest in rhythm with our Creator, because we see God modeling this rhythm for us. And Jesus confirmed this later on in Mark 2, 27, when he said, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. That's an important statement. He didn't say the Sabbath was made for the Jews. He didn't say it was made for a specific reason or a specific era of redemptive history. He said it was made for man. That is, all of mankind. It was made for all of humanity. The Sabbath is a blessing for everyone, and it's rooted in creation, not in culture, if you will.

And this becomes even more significant when we remember that Genesis 2 comes before the fall. The Sabbath was not given because of sin. It was just part of God's good design from the beginning.

And that means that it's not merely a remedy for brokenness. It's just how life was meant to be from the start. Now later, when we get to Exodus chapter 20, as we're reading through the Bible and the giving of the Ten Commandments, we see this creation pattern formalized as a moral requirement.

[ 5 : 34 ]     God says, Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

On it you must not do any work. This is verses 8 through 11, by the way, Exodus 20. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested.

Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy. Now there's a lot that could be noticed here, but first, God tells Israel to remember the Sabbath.

And that implies that the Sabbath was not new to them. They knew the Sabbath principle here. They probably had passed it down through oral tradition, from Adam, through Noah, through the patriarchs.

And now it's being written in stone, literally, as part of God's moral law. But the basis for the command is not the Exodus.

[ 6 : 41 ]     It's not this covenant at Sinai. The reason that he explicitly gives points back to creation. God worked six days, he rested on the seventh, and then he blessed that day.

And that's the reason, that's the basis for us doing the exact same thing. So just as the command, do not murder, for instance, is based on the sanctity of life, we were made in God's image.

It points right back to creation. It points right back to the way the world was created by God. The command to remember the Sabbath is based on that same pattern that God established from the beginning.

So it's not a ritual law limited to the Old Covenant. It's moral, and it's, for that reason, perpetual. Now, someone might ask, if the Sabbath is part of the moral law, why do so many Christians treat it differently than the other commandments within the Ten Commandments?

And that's a fair question. Here's the thing, no one says, I'm not under the law anymore, so I can steal or commit adultery.

[ 7 : 58 ]     But somehow, when it comes to the fourth commandment, we are very quick to set it aside. Often, people will say it's part of the ceremonial law, like the dietary restrictions or the temple sacrifices.

But there's a problem with that. And that is, the fourth commandment is right there in the middle of the Ten Commandments. God's moral law, given for God's people for all time.

It comes before the laws about the sacrifices and the rituals. It's on the same level here as, you shall not murder, or you shall have no other gods before me.

Of course, we don't want to fall into legalism about this, but we'll come back to that. Now, when we move from Genesis to the rest of the Old Testament, beyond Exodus even, we find that the Sabbath continues to play a very central role in the life of God's people.

It's not only rooted in creation, but it becomes part of Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord. In fact, under the Old Covenant, the Sabbath served as both a sign and a test, if you will.

[ 9 : 12 ] A sign of God's covenant with His people and a test of their trust and obedience in Him. One of the clearest statements of this comes in Exodus 31, where the Lord says, starting with verse 13, Surely you must keep my Sabbaths, for this will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

The Israelites must observe the Sabbath, celebrating it as a perpetual covenant for the generations to come. It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed. So here the Sabbath is explicitly called a sign of the covenant, much like circumcision.

It was a visible, regular reminder that Israel belonged to God and was set apart from all the other nations. Every seventh day they stopped their ordinary work and they remembered that the Lord was their creator and redeemer.

So by observing the Sabbath, they publicly confessed their dependence on Him, their relationship to Him. But it was more than symbolic. The Sabbath also functioned as a way of testing their hearts, their faithfulness.

[ 10 : 43 ] Would they trust God enough to rest? Would they set aside their daily striving to acknowledge that their provision and their peace comes from God alone, not from their own effort, right?

For example, in Exodus 16, even before the Ten Commandments were given, God tested Israel with manna. He told them to gather twice as much on the sixth day and none on the seventh.

Now, some disobeyed, and the Lord rebuked them for refusing to keep His commandments and His law. And the lesson was very simple. Trust and obey.

Trust and obey. Now, over time, the Sabbath became one of the most visible markers of Jewish identity. So while other nations, they worked every day, Israel rested every seventh day.

While others served their own gods with tireless labor, Israel declared by their rest that the Lord was their God and that His ways were good and perfect.

[ 11 : 54 ] And in this way, the Sabbath was both a proclamation of God's lordship and a protection for the people's well-being. Now, the prophets, they frequently addressed how the people treated the Sabbath for good or for evil.

When they neglected to use it, or they used it for selfish gain, perhaps, God took this very seriously. So, for example, in Amos, Amos 8, verse 5, the Lord rebukes the merchants who could hardly wait for the Sabbath to be over so they could get back to, you know, cheating customers and making money.

When will the new moon be over, you say, so that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, so that we may market wheat, skimping the measure, boosting the price, and cheating with dishonest scales.

So, their bodies were at rest on the Sabbath, but obviously their hearts were very far from God and from the very principle of what the Sabbath was supposed to represent.

Well, Isaiah gives us a more positive vision. In chapter 58, verses 13 and 14, the Lord says, If you turn your foot from breaking the Sabbath, from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, then you will delight yourself in the Lord.

- [ 13 : 33 ] That is what the Sabbath was meant to be all along. Not a heavy burden, but a delight, a joy-filled opportunity to draw near to God and to rest and to worship and to delight in His goodness.

Unfortunately, Israel often failed to keep the Sabbath. And over time, they turned it either into a day of legalism or a day of complete indifference.

By the time of their exile into Babylon, Sabbath breaking was one of the reasons God sent judgment upon the nation. In Nehemiah's day, even after the return from exile, people were still treating the Sabbath like it was any other day.

Nehemiah sees merchants selling goods in Jerusalem on the Sabbath, and he responds with righteous anger, saying, this is Nehemiah 13, 17, What is this wicked thing you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day?

Did not your fathers do the same so that our God brought all this disaster upon us? Now, as we turn to the New Testament, we find Jesus entering into a world where the Sabbath was still very much a central part of religious life in Israel, but its meaning had been distorted.

- [ 15 : 02 ] The Jewish leaders of his day, particularly the Pharisees, had built a long list of detailed rules around Sabbath observance, rules that went far beyond anything God ever commanded.

So what began as a holy gift from the Lord had become this tremendous burden on people. So when Jesus spoke and he acted regarding the Sabbath, it sparked, unsurprisingly, immediate controversy.

But what we see in his teaching and his actions is not a rejection of the Sabbath, but a restoration of it, of its true purpose.

He doesn't do away with the fourth commandment. He clarifies it. He fulfills it. And he shows us how to live it out with joy, really.

One of the clearest examples of this comes in Mark chapter 2. Jesus and his disciples, they're walking through the grain field, or walking by a grain field anyway, on the Sabbath.

- [ 16 : 14 ] And as they go, the disciples begin to pluck heads of grain to eat. And the Pharisees see this, and they immediately object. Look, they say, Why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

Now, technically, what the disciples were doing was not forbidden in the law. God allowed hungry travelers to pluck grain from a neighbor's field for this very purpose, in case you get hungry as you're walking along.

Look back at Deuteronomy 23, 25. You'll see it. But the Pharisees, they had added their own traditions, and to them, this simple act counted as, quote-unquote, harvesting, work that was prohibited.

Well, Jesus responds with a lesson from the Old Testament, and a lesson about himself. First, he reminds them of what David and his men did when they were hungry.

They entered the house of God, and they ate the bread of the presence, which was normally reserved for the priests. And his point here was that human need takes precedent over ceremonial regulations.

- [ 17 : 32 ] God desires mercy, not sacrifice, right? And then Jesus adds this remarkable statement. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. So first of all, Jesus is saying that the Sabbath was given to benefit mankind.

It's not a burden to bear. It's a blessing to enjoy, Isaiah said. It's a delight. God didn't create man to keep Sabbath rules, if you will.

He gave the Sabbath to serve man's good. And even more than that, Jesus claims to be the Lord of the Sabbath, meaning he's got authority over it.

As the Messiah and as the Son of God, he determines its meaning and purpose. And he doesn't abolish it. Do you see that? He fulfills it. Right after that, in Mark 3, Jesus enters the synagogue and he heals a man with a withered hand.

[ 18 : 37 ] And guess what day it was? The Sabbath day. And the Pharisees, still watching very closely, they hope to catch him breaking some rules. And Jesus turns the table on them.

And he asks, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm? To save life or to kill? And when they refuse to answer, he looks around at them with grief and anger, at their hard hearts, and then he heals the man.

And the Pharisees, ironically enough, they go out and they begin plotting to kill him on the Sabbath. Now that moment says a lot, doesn't it?

Jesus shows us that doing good is not a violation of the Sabbath. In fact, it's the heart of the Sabbath. The day is not meant to be this day of rigid observance, but a day for mercy, a day for healing, a day for restoration.

Works of necessity and mercy have always been appropriate on the Sabbath. Jesus is simply bringing that back into focus. In fact, his healing on the Sabbath illustrates the kind of rest the Sabbath points to and always has.

[ 19 : 59 ] Wholeness, restoration in body and soul. And we see this pattern repeated throughout the Gospels. Jesus often, often healed on the Sabbath.

And he's not doing this to just provoke religious leaders, but he's really showing us what this day is all about. Now there's more to it than that even, but he's certainly showing us what the Sabbath is all about.

In Luke 13, he heals a woman who has been crippled for 18 years. And the synagogue rulers, they object, saying there are six days to work.

And people should come for healing on those days, not on the Sabbath. And Jesus replies in verse 15, Obviously, Jesus is highlighting the hypocrisy here.

They would care for their animals on the Sabbath, wouldn't they? Of course they did. That's an act of mercy. It's an act of necessity. But they object when God in the flesh shows mercy to a suffering fellow human being.

[ 21 : 27 ] The Sabbath is for life, not for legalism. It's a day to experience God's compassion and His grace, not just to follow some man-made rules, especially as arbitrarily applied as the Pharisees applied them.

But there's something deeper going on in all of this. Jesus isn't just correcting the bad theology of the Pharisees. All the while, He's pointing to Himself. The Sabbath was always meant to point beyond itself, beyond the day itself.

It was a shadow of something greater. The true rest that only God can give. In Matthew 11, right before a Sabbath controversy, Jesus says, I don't think that's a coincidence.

He's offering the very rest the Sabbath symbolizes. Rest for the soul. Rest from striving. Ultimately, rest in Him.

In Jesus, we find the fulfillment of everything the Sabbath points to. He is our rest.

[ 22 : 50 ] He is the one who sets us free from slavery to sin and calls us to rest in His finished work. Now, that doesn't mean we no longer set aside one day of the week to rest.

That was established at creation, before the fall, before the ceremonial law. Now, Jesus obviously doesn't erase that rhythm. He fulfills its purpose, and He ultimately transforms its focus.

As the Lord of the Sabbath, He strips away the legalistic additions, and He restores its original meaning, filling it with gospel joy.

He shows that the Sabbath is a gift. It's not some sort of test. It's a day for doing good, not just avoiding work. It's a day for worship, and rest, and mercy.

A day that helps us look back to creation, but also forward to glory, and ultimately upward to Christ. And when we think about how to observe the Lord's Day, I think that's where we have to start.

[ 23 : 59 ] We start with Christ Himself. He is our Lord, and He is our rest. Now, one of the most common questions Christians ask about the Sabbath is, if the fourth commandment calls us to rest on the seventh day, why do we gather and recognize the first day of the week, Sunday, instead of Saturday?

Did the early church make this change merely for convenience? Is there a deeper biblical reason for the shift?

And I'll be brief about this, but to answer that, we need to consider what happened on the first day of the week. The Gospels, all four of them, make it very clear that Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday, the first day of the week.

Very early, for instance, Mark 16, 2. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they went to the tomb, and that's where they found it empty. That was the day everything changed.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the dawn of a new creation. The old was gone, the new had come, so it makes perfect sense that this new reality would be marked by a new day.

[ 25 : 17 ] We also see this pattern of first day worship, first day gathering in the early church. In Acts 20, the believers came together on the first day of the week.

In 1 Corinthians 16, Paul instructs the church to set aside their offerings on the first day of every week. And in Revelation, by the time John writes Revelation, toward the end of the first century, he describes being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

And that phrase, the Lord's Day, became the early church's way of referring to Sunday, the day that belongs to our risen Lord. So the day changed, but the principle did not.

One day in seven is still to be set apart as holy to the Lord. Now to be clear, Christians are not required to observe the Sabbath in exactly the same way ancient Israel did.

We don't live under the Mosaic civil or ceremonial law, and we're not bound by those shadows that pointed forward to Christ, but we also don't want to swing in the opposite direction to the other extreme and treat the fourth commandment as though it's moot.

[ 26 : 43 ] It no longer applies. It has no bearing on us whatsoever. The question is, how does the Sabbath continue under the new covenant? And I think the answer lies in understanding the Sabbath as both moral and positive law.

That's how you'll often hear it described. That's how the Reformed tradition has consistently understood it. It's how the Baptist confession we hold to describes it.

In chapter 22, paragraph 7, it says, It is the law of nature that in general a proportion of time set apart for the worship of God is required of all men, so that by His word in a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, God has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto Him.

And that wording is deliberate. The Sabbath is moral in that it belongs to God's unchanging law, just like you shall not murder, you shall not steal.

It reflects a universal principle that human beings made in God's image are to, in this case, work six days and devote one day to rest and worship.

[ 27 : 59 ] And again, that's not a rhythm that's cultural. It's not temporary. It's rooted in creation itself. It's part of how God designed us to live. At the same time, the Sabbath is also called a positive law.

And what that means is that there is a specific day appointed by God for rest. It's not necessarily determined by natural law, but by God's explicit command.

The exact day isn't something we could necessarily figure out by reason alone. Do you see what I mean? It had to be revealed to us.

And under the old covenant, of course, that day was the seventh day of the week, but under the new covenant, we see that day has changed through the example of the early church.

God, through the authority of Christ and the apostles, has appointed the first day of the week as the day of rest in worship, the day we now call the Lord's day.

[ 29 : 01 ] So the pattern shifted in the New Testament, not because of human innovation, but because of the reality of the Lord's resurrection, the reality of His finished work.

The author of Hebrews speaks to this when he says in Hebrews 4.9, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Now that phrase, Sabbath rest, is actually one word in Greek, and this is the only place it appears in the New Testament. And it's a word that implies ongoing rest, ongoing Sabbath observance, if you will.

The author is speaking of something that still remains. And he ties this rest to creation, to Israel's entry into the promised land, and then ultimately to Christ.

So while the final fulfillment of this Sabbath rest will come in eternity, there's still a very real way in which God's people enjoy a Sabbath now.

[ 30 : 08 ] And throughout church history, most Christians have understood that to be the Lord's day. And this understanding helps us guard against two common errors.

On the one hand, some Christians treat Sunday like it's any other day. Church might be a part of their schedule, but it's just one activity among many.

There's no sense of this day being sacred or set apart. And then on the other hand, some fall into a kind of legalism, where Sunday becomes this day of strict rules and gloomy restrictions.

And I think both extremes miss the point. The Lord's day, again from Isaiah 58, 13, the Lord's day is meant to be a delight.

A delight. It's a day for worship. It's a day for rest. It's a day for fellowship. It's a day for service. It's a day for reflection. It is not meant to be burdensome in the least.

[ 31 : 15 ] It is meant to be holy. It's not a day that's simply to do whatever we please, but it's also not a day that we're supposed to impress God with our rule keeping. You know?

It is a day to enjoy God and to enjoy the gospel. It's a day to step away from the ordinary and to remember who we are and who we belong to.

We should also remember that the Lord's day is not just about rest from physical labor. It's really about spiritual refreshment. As John Owen put it, the Sabbath was given for the increase of the knowledge of God and to promote holiness.

That should shape how we spend the day. It should be filled with public and private exercises of worship. The preaching of God's Word.

Singing. Praying. The Lord's Supper in some cases. Enjoying fellowship with God's people. Reading. Studying. Discussing the things of God in our homes.

[ 32 : 28 ] Keeping the Lord's day is about resting in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ and giving Him the honor He deserves. It's a time really to recalibrate our hearts.

You know? To step out of the noise and the rush of the week and remember that we are not defined by our productivity or by our jobs and so on, but by the grace of God.

The Sabbath is not about doing less for the sake of doing less. It's about making space in our minds and in our hearts for what matters most.

In Christ, we still say, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. But how exactly do we keep it holy?

And I know that's what everybody wants to know. What does Sabbath observance look like in the life of a Christian under the new covenant?

[ 33 : 31 ] I have six practical guidelines for your consideration. Number one, prepare for the day. The fourth commandment begins with the word remember.

That is, in part, a call to plan ahead. If the Lord's day is truly holy, set apart for rest and for worship, then we need to prepare for it.

We need to be ready for it, if you will. Think about those Israelites gathering their manna in the wilderness. On the sixth day, they gather twice as much. Why? So they wouldn't have to gather on the seventh day, on the Sabbath.

And I think that same principle can apply to us. We make it easier to honor the Lord's day by, you know, preparing meals in advance, perhaps, or finishing chores, or any shopping that needs to be done ahead of time, and going to bed early enough on Saturday night so that we're not dragging ourselves into worship half awake.

Preparing well helps us receive the day with joy, not with stress. Number two, gather with God's people.

[ 34 : 53 ] The most important way to keep the Lord's day holy is to gather for corporate worship. Hebrews 10.25 says, Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

The early church met regularly, as I said, on the first day of the week, and so should we. Worship is not just one possible activity for Sunday, you know, among many.

It's really the heartbeat of the day. This is when we hear God's word read. It's when we hear it preached. It's when we sing praises, and pray, and confess our sins, and receive the Lord's Supper, and join with the saints, and glorifying the risen Christ.

There's just no substitute for that. There's no substitute. Number three, rest as much as possible from ordinary work.

The Sabbath command calls us to do no work. Now, that doesn't mean we lie motionless all day.

[ 36 : 15 ] It means we set apart, or set aside, I should say, our regular employment, our day-to-day labor, again, as much as possible, to focus on the Lord.

The Puritan Thomas Watson said, on the Sabbath, we must rest from our calling that we may be more fit for holy duties. In our fast-paced culture, this feels like a very radical idea, and for many of us, it goes against our nature.

The world tells us to hustle constantly, you know, to maximize every moment, to treat time like money. But God says, stop. Trust Him.

Stop. And rest. Of course, there are legitimate exceptions, and I think we understand this. Jesus taught that it is lawful to do works of necessity, to do acts of mercy on the Sabbath, caring for the sick, feeding a child, putting out a fire, whatever.



These are not violations of the Sabbath. But that doesn't mean every task is necessary. Maybe mowing the lawn, or catching up on emails, or doing laundry.

[ 37 : 29 ] Maybe these things can wait. And when we say no to those things, that's not just so we can sit there and do nothing. it's actually making space for us to do something even better.

You see. Number four. Cease from secular recreation. This is a tough one.

This is often where the questions begin. Is it okay to watch sports on Sunday? What about going out to eat? Can we go to a restaurant? Can I take my kids to the park?

These are all great questions. And we do not need to approach them with legalism. But we approach them with love for the Lord and a sincere desire to keep His day holy.

Again, Isaiah 58. If you turn your foot from doing your pleasure on my holy day, the Lord says, and call the Sabbath a delight, then you will delight yourself in the Lord.

[ 38 : 38 ] So the point, obviously, is not that we shouldn't enjoy the day. We're supposed to enjoy the day. We're supposed to delight in the Lord, but that's a little different than maybe worldly distractions or at least some forms of secular pleasure, entertainment.

Obviously, the goal is not to make the day gloomy, but there's a sense in which it's not supposed to become just another Saturday either. Now, this may mean saying no to sports or no to shopping or movies or certain kinds of travel.

It may mean limiting our use of phones or the TV or entertainment. That said, I believe it takes wisdom and discernment.

A walk in nature, is that secular entertainment, pleasure? I think a walk in nature while meditating on Scripture and just enjoying God's creation, that can very much refresh the soul.

A quiet meal with family, that can reflect the joy of Christian fellowship. I think what matters most in our age of Christian liberty, if you will, is the intent.

[ 39 : 58 ] Maybe we just ask ourselves, is this drawing me closer to Christ or is it distracting me from Him? Number five, devote the day to worship, to fellowship, and to mercy.

The fourth commandment is not just about what we stop doing, and that's what we tend to think of, because I think human beings just seem to be legalistic naturally.

The fourth commandment is also about what we start doing, right? The Lord's day is a time to actively pursue God. This means, again, public worship, but also private and family worship.

Spend time in prayer in the church at home. Read scripture, sing hymns, psalms, read a good Christian book, talk with your children about the sermon you heard that morning, ask your spouse what maybe the Lord is teaching them.

Use that extra time to draw nearer to God and to one another. It's also a wonderful time for Christian fellowship. Invite others into your home, share a meal with church members.

[ 41 : 15 ] Encourage someone who's struggling. Spend time with your spiritual family, not just your biological family, though they may be one and the same, but also your spiritual family.

And don't forget about works of mercy. Jesus healed on the Sabbath and he reminded us that it is good to help others on that day. So maybe you visit someone who's lonely.

call an elderly neighbor. Write a note of encouragement. These acts of love are not distractions from Sabbath rest.

They are, in fact, expressions of it. And sixth and final, make it a delight, not a duty. Above all, we should remember that the Lord's day is a gift to us.

It's not about rule-keeping. It's about delighting in the Lord. Psalm 118, 24. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

[ 42 : 16 ] That's how we should approach Sunday. If the day feels like a burden, maybe we need to re-examine our understanding of it. God did not give us the Sabbath to weigh us down.

He gave it to us to lift us up, to free us from the tyranny of our routines and our schedules and what we have to do six days of the week.

He gave it to us to remind us of our identity in Christ and to give rest to our souls. That's what the day's for. So don't focus on what you can't do or don't you feel like you shouldn't do.

Focus on what you get to do. You get to worship. You have the privilege of resting. You get to feast on the Word. You get to gather with God's people. You get to enjoy Christ and His grace in a very special way.

So each week as Sunday rolls around maybe we hear Christ calling out to us. Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest week after week.

[ 43 : 23 ] That's what the Lord's Day is all about. Resting in Christ. Rejoicing in His finished work. Remembering that we are not our own. We belong to Him and one day this rest that we enjoy now in small measure will be all we ever know.

Let's pray. Father, You are so good and gracious to us and You know precisely what we need. We praise You for giving us rest not just in body but in Christ.

we confess that we have not always honored Your day so I ask that You would forgive us for often treating it lightly or filling it with lesser things. Lord, we thank You for the gift of this day.

We thank You for Jesus our true rest and we ask that You would help us to delight in this day to worship You with joy and to remember that we belong in You and that ultimately we will know permanent and perfect rest.

And it's in Christ's name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.