

“Does the Sabbath Continue?”
(Hebrews 4:9-10)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

We've seen so far,
That the reason God made us –
Our main purpose in life –
Is to glorify and enjoy Him.

This doesn't happen automatically –
It's something we have to work hard at.

Jesus has given us what we need to start –

Through His life and death,
He's given us His Spirit,
Who not only gives us
The ability to trust in Him to be saved,
But also to follow Him
Through the love He's put in our hearts.

Jesus has also given us His Word
To show us how to love Him.

Now it's up to aim at His glory
By growing in that love,
By reading and studying His Word,
And by actually living that way
With the single goal of pleasing Him.

Last week,

We saw that the one thing

That pleases/glorifies/makes Him rejoice the most

Is finding His lost sheep –

Jesus, “I tell you that . . . there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7) –

This is what we need to focus on.

But to find them,

We need to look for them –

By shining His light:

By becoming more like Him –

Reflecting His character in our lives –

And by telling others

About the Gospel,

And how the Lord used it in our lives –

We also need to believe

There are yet those who are His

Who need to be reached:

Who will see/hear and will come –

Jesus, “My sheep hear My voice,

And I know them,

And they follow Me” (John 10:27).

If all He was intending on saving

Had already been saved,
Jesus would already have come.

We ended by considering
That one way we can receive God's power –
To shine,
To communicate,
And to believe He will use us –
Is to pray for more of His Holy Spirit.

The Lord sent His Spirit at Pentecost
To give us the power/love/courage to do this.

But we need to pray for His continued help –

The disciples already had His Spirit;
But when they saw what they were up against –
When they were threatened by the Sanhedrin –
They prayed again for God's help:
And the ground shook,
And they were filled with the Spirit and boldness.

This is what made all the difference
In Paul's, Whitefield's, Edwards', and Spurgeon's lives –
As well as many others –

And what will make the difference in ours.

B. Preview.

Today, we're going to look further

At how we can more of His presence/influence in our lives:

And that is through *communion* with God –

Primarily, but not exclusively –

By keeping the Sabbath holy –

By setting the first day of the week aside

To spend with God.

This morning,

Let's consider that the Lord still gives us this day.

This evening,

Why we need this commandment to make us spiritually strong.

II. Sermon.

A. The Sabbath is controversial –

Many, if not most, churches

Don't believe this commandment is in force,

Mainly because of some statements Paul makes:

Paul, "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day – things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:16-17).

Again, "One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5).

The argument is

That since Jesus fulfilled the Law,

We no longer need to keep it.

Some apply this to all the commandments –

We call this "antinomianism" –

But others apply it only to the Sabbath –

They believe,

Jesus finished His work

And entered into His rest:

And now we rest in Him.

It isn't really clear

Why they single out

This particular commandment:

Jesus also kept the first commandment

By having no other gods before the true God:

But they wouldn't say

It no longer matters

Whether we worship the true God.

Jesus kept the second commandment

By not worshipping the true God through an image:

But they don't believe

It's okay now to use images.

The same is true of the third through tenth.

Why would His fulfilling the fourth commandment

Make it no longer apply?

It wouldn't.

So what is Paul really saying?

He's telling the Jews

That when it comes to the Jewish traditions,

They had the liberty to keep them,

Or not keep them,

As long as they didn't turn these things

Into something they *do* for God to accept them.

They could be circumcised –

That's what Paul did to Timothy

So as not to offend the Jews –

And no one had the right to judge them.

The same is true in every area of Christian Liberty –

As long as we don't use our freedom

Either to keep an unbeliever from coming to Christ,

Or to stumble a weaker brother.

In these passages,

Paul is simply saying

That Jewish Christians were allowed

Either to keep or not to keep

The Jewish *ceremonial* Sabbaths –

The Sabbaths that were connected

To their ceremonial law –

And that no one should judge them for it.

He's not saying

They/we shouldn't keep the fourth commandment:

The one God has made a moral requirement.

B. But let's consider a more positive argument:

Our conscience needs to be bound by God's Word;

We need to hear what the Lord has to say,

Before we come to any conclusions.

Here are a few things to think about:

1. First, the Lord established the Sabbath

On the seventh day of the Creation week:

Moses, "By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" Gen. 2:2-3).

He blessed that day because on it He rested

And because He intended it to be a day of blessing

For the man and woman He had made,

As well as their children who would follow.

When the Jews later went down into Egypt –

After Pharaoh turned them into slaves –

They lost the Sabbath.

But when the Lord brought them out,

The first thing He did was provide them with manna –

The bread from heaven,

Which was a picture of Jesus –

And He restored the Sabbath –

The picture of the rest He brings –

They were to gather twice as much manna on the sixth day,

Because He was giving them the seventh to rest:

Moses, ““See, the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.’ So the people rested on the seventh day” (Ex. 16:29-30).

When He gave them the Law at Sinai –

As we read earlier –

He included the Sabbath as a moral requirement.

2. No one really questions this:

The real question is whether the Sabbath continues

Now that Jesus has completed His work:

Why should we believe *it does*?

a. First, because the Lord told us in the Old Covenant,

That when the New Covenant comes,

The Sabbath would not only continue,

But that He would bless those who keep it.

He says through Isaiah –

To both the eunuchs and foreigners

Who were then excluded from God’s people –

“For thus says the LORD, ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, to them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off. Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast My covenant; even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer” (56:4-7a).

b. Second, the Lord tells us the Sabbath

Would be celebrated in that covenant

On the day His Son would rise from the dead:

Psalmist, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner *stone*. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:22-24).

This is why we see the disciples

Meeting on the first day of the week.

c. Third,

In the NT, we don’t see Jesus teaching

That the Sabbath has been done away with,

But declaring Himself to be its Lord,

And giving directions on how we are to keep it,

“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:8).

d. Fourth, when Jesus warned His disciples

About what was coming in 70 AD –

He told them to pray they wouldn’t have to escape on the Sabbath:

“But pray that your flight will not be in the winter,

Or on a Sabbath” (Matt. 24:20) –

This would be after His work was completed.

Why would He say this unless the Sabbath was still in force?

e. Fifth, the author to the Hebrews tells us

That the Sabbath Day continues

Because the possibility remains

Of entering into His rest –

Into heaven –

Because of what He's done:

“So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His” (Heb. 4:9-10).

f. He further tells us that in the New Covenant

God gives us the desire to keep the Sabbath –

As He writes His Law on our hearts:

“FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE” (8:10).

g. Any one of these is enough to show us

That our Lord continues to give us the Sabbath.

This evening, we'll look at

Why the Lord gave us the Sabbath,

And it's still so important today.

h. As we close,

Let's use what we've seen to check our hearts:

What do we think about the Sabbath?

Do we find the idea of spending a day with God appealing?

Or would we rather God hadn't commanded this?

If we don't find spending the day with God appealing,

Then how can we really be thrilled with the prospect

Of spending an eternity with Him?

What we think about the Sabbath

Says quite a bit about our hearts.

It's one thing to believe it doesn't continue –

We all need to examine the evidence

And come to an *informed conclusion* –

But it's another not to want a day with the Lord –

When we love someone,

We want to spend time with them:

If we love God,

We'll want to spend

As much time with Him as we can –

That's what the Sabbath is all about.

So let's examine our hearts,

Especially as we prepare to come to the Table. Amen.

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