The Law of the Sabbath and the Lord of the Sabbath
(Luke 13:10–17)

We must remember the purpose of the Sabbath, and receive it as a means of mercy rather than turning it into a means of merit. Ultimately, the Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in the rest that He provides.

I. The Perversion of the Sabbath

- Throughout much of its history, Israel profaned the Sabbath by ignoring it (Is 58:13–14; Jer 17:19–27; Ezk 22:26; Neh 13:17–18).
- By the time of Christ, Israel perverted the Sabbath by turning it into a means of merit, an instrument of self-righteousness (Rom 9:30–10:4).
- The woman whom Jesus healed fulfilled the purpose of the Sabbath by seeking the mercy of God from the Son of God in order that she might enjoy God and glorify God. Jesus called the ruler of the synagogue and those like him "hypocrites," because they chastised the woman for breaking the Sabbath when in reality, she was keeping the Sabbath more than any of them.

II. The Purpose of the Sabbath

- God ordained the Sabbath that the people of God might glorify God and enjoy Him, and that they do this by resting from their ordinary labors that they may gather for congregational worship.
- Jesus said it was "necessary" that this daughter of Abraham be healed on the Sabbath (v. 16), because the Sabbath was instituted in order that the saints of God may gather with the people of God, in order to receive mercy and rest and joy in God, and so bring glory to God.

III. The Practice of the Sabbath

In order to learn how we ought to practice the Sabbath, we need a brief biblical theology of the Sabbath:

- First, Sabbath observance is a creation ordinance (Gn 2:3; Mk 2:27–28).
- Second, Sabbath observance is part of the unchanging moral law (Ex 20:1–17; Dt 5:1–21).
- Third, with the dawn of the new creation, Sabbath observance changed from Saturday to Sunday.
- Fourth, the apostolic church immediately began to observe Sunday as the new covenant Sabbath (Jn 20:19, 26; Acts 2; 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Rv 1:10).
- Fifth, the ultimate, redemptive fulfillment of the Sabbath is salvation through faith in Christ (Heb 4:1, 9–10; Mt 11:28–30).
- Sixth, because we experience our salvation in Christ in an already/not yet fulfillment (Rom 8:18–25; Rv 7:15–17), we still need the practice of a weekly Sabbath rest.
- Seventh, we observe the Sabbath command under the grace of the new covenant and with the tone established by Christ and His apostles (Rom 14:5–6; Col 2:16–17).

From the foregoing biblical theology of the Sabbath, we may suggest three principles to guide our Sabbath practice:

- Principle 1: We should obey the fourth commandment by resting from our ordinary labors in order to gather for corporate worship on Sunday.
- Principle 2: We should obey the fourth commandment by coming to God for mercy rather than attempting to establish our own merit.
- Principle 3: We should not judge another's obedience to the fourth commandment.

IV. The Picture of the Sabbath

Luke 13:10–17 provides a picture of the Sabbath rest found in Christ. Jesus saw, summoned, spoke to, and saved this woman. He can do the same for you.