

## 11 - The Fourth Commandment Part 5 - 2014-04-06

Call to Worship: Matthew 11:28-30

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 20:30-34; 21:1-6

Sermon: "The Fourth Commandment Part 5" Mark 2:23-28

Benediction: 2 Peter 3:18

The Israelites stood at Mount Sinai delivered from slavery in Egypt. 430 years they had been in Egypt, and slaves for most of that time. Their bondage had been severe; their taskmasters had been cruel. But God, with His mighty arm, had redeemed them from their slavery. He gave them the passover lamb, whose blood saved them from death. He had baptized them in the Red Sea, had drowned their enemies, and had made them sing a new song of deliverance. Then He pronounced to them His law; not as a cruel tyrant, but as the loving, gracious, merciful God who had done so much for them.

Here we are today in much the same situation. We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were enemies of God, separated from His favor, at enmity with Him. But God loved us while we were still sinners. He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins as the true Passover Lamb. He was buried, but then was raised to life again on the first day of the week. By His Holy Spirit He has given us a new birth unto a living hope of eternal life. He has put a new heart in us, that loves the law of God, which is written in it, so that in the inner man we delight in the law of God and desire to obey all that the Lord Jesus has commanded us. As the redeemed servants of Christ, then, reconciled to God, we delight to hear His commandments.

So it is that we are studying the Ten Commandments, and have for the past four sessions been studying the fourth commandment, the sabbath commandment.

### REVIEW

1. The commandment itself
  - what we are to do; how to do it; why we do it
2. The difficulty we have in seeing the sabbath as a matter of right and wrong
  - because it is not in the second table but the first
  - because it is not moral-natural but moral-positive
3. The change of the sabbath to the first day of the week
  - because on the first day of the week the Lord Jesus rose from the dead!
4. What we don't do and what we do on the sabbath day
  - what NOT to do: we do NOT honor and delight in ourselves, but instead honor the LORD and delight in Him
  - what to do: we recognize Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath, not ourselves as lords of the sabbath

There remains one major issue to study regarding the Sabbath day commandment, and it is this question:

What do I do about the sabbath commandment if my job requires me to work on the Lord's Day?  
OR What if I have to work on Sunday?

1. for many people, this question typically comes up regarding the work of making meals: six days I cook, serve, and clean up three meals a day; I'm commanded to rest from my work on the sabbath day, but I still have to cook, serve, and clean up three meals. How should I handle that?
2. for many other people, this question typically comes up regarding the work of your employment: you would love to work six days and be off work on the Lord's Day, but your employer assigns you to work on Sunday; so you ask, "How should I handle that?"

There is a nugget of truth in the Old Testament that informs the conscience on this question. When Jesus came, He pointed it out to us, so we could make use of it. That truth He points out should serve us well, especially in making judgments about serving meals on the Lord's Day. In this same passage of scripture, the Lord also made a broader statement of that truth, which should serve us well also, especially in making judgments about working at our employment on the Lord's Day.

## BODY

Read the text: Mark 2:23-28

- I. One encounter Jesus had with the Pharisees revealed their ignorance of this truth (23-24)
  - A. the disciples, on the sabbath day, on the way to the synagogue, being hungry, plucked heads of grain and rubbed the grain in their hands to remove the husks, so they could eat a handful of grain
  - B. the Pharisees, seeing them, accused them of breaking the sabbath commandment by working
  - C. the Lord Jesus defended them by accusing the Pharisees of ignorance, of not having understood the necessary truth from the scriptures to make a right judgment about this matter (25)
  - D. APPLICATION: So, if you are quick to judge other people as being sabbath-breakers if you know they are working on the Lord's Day, or if you are quick to condemn yourself as a sabbath-breaker because your job requires you to work on the Lord's Day, take care that you are not ignorant of the applicable truth from the scriptures
- II. The Lord Jesus showed how an event in the life of David teaches us the point of truth that the Pharisees were missing, and that perhaps you are missing (25-26)
  - A. the sinful actions of someone else (King Saul) caused David to have to travel without proper provisions; he had to flee, without enough food

B. the only food available to him and the people with him were the loaves of bread from the tabernacle, which God had commanded to be hallowed, sanctified, considered holy, set apart unto Him; only the priests were allowed to eat it

C. David and the priest Ahimelech, faced with that situation, made a right judgment; they made a good decision: they judged that it was not sin to take something holy, set apart unto God, and use it for man if man really needed it

1. you and the men with you must go hungry, because this bread is holy to the Lord

2. you and the men with you may eat this bread rather than going hungry

D. The Lord Jesus endorsed that judgment as the correct one

E. Here, then, is a statement of this important truth: It is not wrong to take something holy and use it for yourself and other people if you really need to, especially if otherwise people will go hungry

F. This episode with David was not in reference to the holy sabbath day, but in reference to holy bread; so, restating the truth in terms of the sabbath, it is something like this: It is not wrong, not sinful, to do your own work on the Lord's Day if you really need to, especially if otherwise people will go hungry

G. APPLICATION: Do not consider it wrong, sinful, to get food ready, serve it, and clean up on the Lord's Day. Instead, find delight in contributing to the fellowship of God's church in this wholesome way.

*Exodus 12:16 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat--that only may be prepared by you.*

H. APPLICATION: Do not get unnecessarily involved in sabbath day meals that you neglect the more important matter of listening to the Word of the Lord.

*Luke 10:38-42 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. (40) But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." (41) And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. (42) But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

III. The Lord Jesus made a broader statement of this truth (27)

*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*

A. The first part, "the Sabbath was made for man"

1. NOT to be taken as, "The Sabbath was made for man to do with whatever he pleases with no regard to God's sabbath commandment"

2. INSTEAD, "The Sabbath was made for man to use as God intended him to use it, so he can get what he needs with it."

- a. you and your family are in need of some things

- i. you need to praise God
  - ii. you need to thank God
  - iii. you need to pray to God
  - iv. you need to hear the Word of God, especially the good news (EXPOUND)
  - v. you need to fellowship with the other people of God (for your own good and for theirs)
- b. the Lord God has made the Sabbath for you, so that you can use it as He intended, to get these things you need
- c. you of course also need food and other basic necessities; God has given you the other six days to use for getting these things; but sometimes, because of the effects of sin, you find it necessary to use the sabbath day for this, also
- d. well, the Lord teaches us that the sabbath day was made for your use; so, if you really need to use it for getting your family's food, then it is not sinful to do so
- e. however, consider that this is not what it was the sabbath day was intended to be used for
- i. let it be your aim to be in a better situation than this  
e.g. Jack, Eddie
  - ii. check carefully to make sure you are not creating this problem by your own sinfulness
- Ex 34:21 "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest."*

B. The second part, "not man for the Sabbath"

1. NOT to be taken as, "Man was not made for the Sabbath, and so I don't have to pay any attention to the Sabbath commandment."
2. INSTEAD, "Man was not made for the Sabbath, and so any system of man-made sabbath rules that would lay a heavy burden of requirements on people is not the right way to observe the sabbath."

CONCLUSION

Understand, then, that It is not wrong, not sinful, to do your own work on the Lord's Day if you really need to, especially if otherwise people will go hungry, because the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Let us use the last statement in this passage, verse 28, as the conclusion to this study today, and to our five-week study of the sabbath commandment.

It has been necessary to take this good long look at the sabbath commandment, but in doing it we have run the danger of setting our eyes on the Lord's Day, and losing sight of the Lord Himself.

The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath!

The world around us, as the devil has his way with so many of our fellow men, calls you to non-observance of the sabbath day, or to a very weak observance of it.

They want you to work at your vocation on the Lord's Day

They want you to play their games and watch their games on the Lord's Day

They want you to play in their shows and watch their shows on the Lord's Day

You, however, are learning from God's Word that there is a sabbath day to remember, to keep holy. You've heard the commandment

God has given us six days out of seven to use for ourselves. He has set aside one day out of seven for us to use unto Him, in worshiping Him. He has commanded that we not use that one day for doing our own work, for seeking our own pleasure. Yet the Lord would have us understand that we may use this sabbath day for our own work if we really need to, to the degree that we need to, and in such cases it is not sin to do so.

In one passage in the gospel of Mark, the Lord Jesus put this truth to us by reference to an event in the life of David and by a very rich statement.

We obey the sabbath commandment in the midst of a sinful world, which sometimes makes sabbath observance difficult.

When there is pressure on you to pursue your own work and recreation on the Lord's Day, inform your conscience with this truth:

I. The Sabbath was made for man

ILLUS: A young man is getting married. His grandparents know from experience that he and his new wife will need certain things.

CAUTION: There is a wrong idea that goes around among Christians regarding this statement. This wrong idea goes something like this: "The Sabbath was made for man, therefore I can do with it whatever I want to do, and no one should tell me what I have to do with it."

ILLUS: mother makes nice new dress for daughter

Instead, "The Sabbath was made for man," therefore I will use it as God designed it to be used

Man is in need of some things, and God made the sabbath as the way for man to get these things he needs

A. it was made to give man what he needs

1. Temptation to think, "What I need is to work more hours to get more money so my family and I can have more things."
2. What the bible would teach us to think, "My family and I don't need more money than what I can earn in six days. What we need is time to worship God and learn of Him. What we need is refreshing, encouraging fellowship with God's church. What we need is some rest from the work and busy-ness of life. The Lord knows we need these things, and He made the Sabbath Day so we can have these things we need."

B. it was made to give man what he enjoys

1. temptation to think
  - "What I really enjoy is being entertained by games and shows and sports, either participating in them or watching them" or
  - "What I really enjoy is just staying in bed"
2. of course, on a certain level these things are enjoyable
- 3.

B. man benefits from using the Sabbath

C. God blessed the Sabbath, that it would be a blessing to man

When there is pressure on you to pursue your own work and recreation on the Lord's Day, inform your conscience with this truth:

II. Man was not made for the Sabbath

What is the nature of being a tool? or a servant?

Man is not a tool of the Sabbath or a servant of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

I. Our relationship with the Sabbath Day.

God made the Sabbath day for our use  
like a tool

We were not made to be used by the Sabbath day

II. Implications of this relationship

- A. Right keeping of the sabbath day provides some of our basic needs; it does not deny us some of our basic needs
- B. Right keeping of the sabbath is determined by informed thinking on an individual basis; it is not determined by an ignorant keeping of man-made rules
- C. Right keeping of the sabbath keeps us delighting in it; it is not done by keeping us weighed down by the burden of it
- D.

“I don't really want to keep the sabbath day holy; I really want to do my own thing; so I am looking for reasons why I don't have to spend the whole day in worship.”

1. the sinful conduct of someone in authority over you puts you in the difficult position of being required to work at your vocation on the sabbath day
2. the effects of sin in general put you in the position of being required to work on the sabbath day

PRINCIPLE: The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27)

IMPLICATION: People should not be made to go hungry for the sake of Sabbath observance. (Mark 2:25)

APPLICATION:

A. Food has to be made ready to eat

I. There are certain kinds of work that are no violation of the sabbath commandment.

A.

I. It is sinful ignorance to condemn the innocent regarding their sabbath observance



There is a difference between the case of you being in the position to decide how you will obey the sabbath commandment, and the case of someone else being in the position to decide for you.

Mark 2:23-28 Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. (24) And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" (25) But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: (26) how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?" (27) And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. (28) Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

YLT:

The sabbath for man was made, not man for the sabbath

Exo\_34:21 "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

Henry:

This was David's plea, and the Son of David approves it, and shows from it that mercy is to be preferred to sacrifice, that ritual observance must give way to moral duties, and that may be done in a case of an urgent providential necessity which may not otherwise be done.

Carroll:

in a case of necessity, David being famished, the priest did right to give him the shew bread and he did right to eat it.

Dabney:

there is a natural, moral and perpetual obligation to worship God, yet any and every form of God's worship would be righteously suspended for a time to save a man perishing in the water. This duty of humanity would take precedence of the other duty of religious worship for the time, because of its greater urgency; an hour later God might still be worshipped acceptably, but the man would be drowned. Prov. 21:3 expresses precisely this truth in these words: "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." Both in this place and in our Saviour's citation from the prophet Samuel, whose words he quotes, "sacrifice" stands for religious worship in general. This, surely, is not a duty merely ceremonial and positive, yet it is righteously postponed to mercy.

I. Understand the nature of positive commandments; positive law has the potential to come into conflict with natural law