

SN005 – 04/28/13
“Keep the Sabbath”
Exodus 20:8-11

Introduction

- We are taking a few months to go through the 10 Commandments found in Exodus Chapter 20
 - Now why in the world in New Testament age of Grace times would we want to do that?

Well for one reason on Wednesday Nights we are looking at the Book of Exodus from which the 10 Commandments come in its entirety

- And seeing the context for what we are studying is so important and so I want to connect the two
 - This week.....

Okay, sounds interesting but why are we studying the law with all its weird customs and dietary laws

- Well remember the first five book of the Bible are called the Law, but much of it is what the New Testament calls the Law of Moses
 - the holiday the Jews were suppose to keep
 - the rights of cleanliness that the Jews were to do
 - the Law of Moses was given to the Jewish people for that time
- The 10 commandments are different – they are given to all people for all time
 - Why???

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

- We wonder why people don't see their need for Christ. Why do people walk away from Jesus?

I think one of the reasons is because we do a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ when we say things like – Give your life to Christ, He will make your life better

- It has been such a good experience for me!

We are like the flight attendant I talked about the first night who had been told by the pilot, 3 of the 4 engines have failed and we are going down, get the parachutes out

- But that flight attendant, like many of us, we don't want to offend, we don't want to impose

So she says, hey, sorry to interrupt your in-flight movie, sorry to interrupt your diet coke drinking – but would anyone like a parachute

- see how good it looks on me, it should you seat more comfortable
 - and most people are like why is this person interrupting my movie
 - and the few who take one, realize right away, it doesn't make my seat more comfortable and they want to take it off

But if that flight would have been honest with the people – We are going down

- but good news, we have a parachute, who wants one
 - well then no one would care about the movie or their soda

- no – help me, give me the parachute

And so too when we in love, help people to see there is a standard, and you have fallen short and the wages of sin really is death

- but good news, there is a savior
 - The law doesn't save us, doesn't make us more acceptable to God
 - But when we understand it, it drives us to Christ

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

- The Law show us our duty to God and to our fellow man – this is how you love God and love people
 - And in a day and age where so many including Christians do whatever is right in their own eyes, because we have lost the standard
- We live in the age of Grace which I am thankful for, we could not be saved without grace
 - But we sometimes think well then it doesn't matter how I live, grace brother – no friend there is a standard

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

#3 – The Law helps us Discover Christ

- You learn something about the Law giver from the laws

Some of the laws on the books in our city governments let us know that at one time someone making laws was dumb

- In Arkansas it is illegal to mispronounce the name of the state – Ar-kansas - can you image if California? Our old governor would be in jail – Cali-forneeea
 - In Arkansas - You can beat your wife, but only once a month – horrible but so funny to me
 - In Arkansas like Georgia last week, it is illegal for you can't keep a donkey in the bathtub – I didn't know this was so much of a problem
 - But in Arkansas you also can't keep an alligator in your bathtub – really series about regulation bathroom pets
- We will look at other states as this series progresses

But those laws tell you something about the lawgivers

- well the 10 Commandments are the same
 - and what we primarily will discover about God from His law is that He is love

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” - I John 5:3

- As we keep His commandments
 - Not to save us, not to qualify us for His love
 - But just as we are directed in Christ - I experience His love for me

I tell my kids, don't play so ruff with the dog, sticking your fingers near her mouth. Oh Dad its fun – listen don't be the illustration this week, and as soon as I say it – ohhu! The, dog bit me, punish her. Punish her, she is a dog, you are riling her up and sticking your fingers in her mouth – I should punish you – you just need to listen to me – the things I tell you to do

are because I love you! – My commandments are not grievous. Same thing with the laws of God and tonight we get to Commandment #4...

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” – Exodus 20:8-11

Now you would think people would love this commandment – Lord I get a day off – thank you so much – you are so good God – but that is not the normal reaction to the fourth commandment

God sets up the Sabbath and commanded His people to take one day in seven to do no work, but instead to honor the Lord and to rest

- When God ordered this of His people – it was revolutionary
 - no society at this time took a day off
 - this was something brand new
 - it was something wonderful God was doing

God knows our tendency

- we will keep going and going and going and going until we fall over from exhaustion or death
 - and God wants to intervene
 - David wrote in psalm 23:2 –

“He makes me lie down in green pastures” – Psalm 23:2

- and I love the imagery there
 - He has to make me, He has to get involved and say Jason, lay down, take a break, take a rest
 - Take a day to reflect on my and cease from your labors
- And that is what the Sabbath is meant to be

The word “Sabbath” means “resting” – it is stopping what you normally do

- Taking a break
 - Taking a day to reflect on the Lord, to pour into your family, to rest from the weeks work

Now anytime we talk about the Sabbath, or the subject comes up there are normally four reactions to the subject of the Sabbath

Reactions to the Sabbath

#1 – Some deplore it

- The Romans mocked it because how can you rule the world if you take one day off
 - Not just the Romans – but cultures today

In Japan – there was a story in USA today the other day about a man who killed himself in Japan after averaging one hour of sleep a night for 10 years, going to work, never having one day off in 10 years – his family is suing the company

- Not just to conquer militarily, but to conquer economically

But it is not just cultures, we do it too

- there is something in our flesh that says, I can take it, pour it on me

I don't need a break, I don't need to rest

- Give me the load, no problem
 - Rest is for the weak

- We can deplore it

Reactions to the Sabbath

#1 – Some deplore it

#2 – Some ignore it

- I agree with the concept, but I have to ignore it at this time in my life
 - I'm working two jobs – I don't have time for a day off
- Maybe you would say - I have got little kids, and I need to put bread on the table – I need to work to provide bread for them

Bread, bread – remember the story – Bread came down from heaven, and God told them, every morning you need to gather enough for you to eat each day, don't keep it over night or it will breed worms

- But on the sixth day, you are to gather double and it will not breed worms the next day – I will take care of your day of rest
 - But the people didn't listen – they came out on the Sabbath day, but it was fruitless, there just was no bread

And some ignored it them, but quickly realized – there was nothing

- And you might think that might have been true for them – but I am getting bread, I getting ahead
 - Maybe you are – but listen to me, it will amount to nothing – God's commandments are for your good, not to save you, to bless you

But I am not tired – you might say – I don't need a day of rest

- Listen – it has nothing to do with physical fatigue – We just read that after creating for six days, God rested
 - Why do you think that was???
 - Do you think God was tired???
 - “Ah I have been working so hard” – creating that whale really took it out of me
- It was not because He was tired

It wasn't because He was out of ideas or could not create anymore – after the platypus, okay now that is just silly

- was that the reason – no
 - It was that He was finished – enough was enough and it was time to stop
 - It was to teach you, to teach me a principal
 - But we ignore it

Reactions to the Sabbath

#1 – Some deplore it

#2 – Some ignore it

#3 – Some explore it

- when I can I will and I do
 - I will explore that possibility
 - I will explore the idea of keeping God's Word

Now listen that is better than deploring it, or ignoring it

- But it is still not enough – this is how we experience the Love of God – doing what He says

It is not enough to even explore

- I mean think it through with me ladies

What would happen if your husband ladies, would explore the idea of not committing adultery – I am good this week, next hum...

- now what about your son said, I am going to explore this idea of not murdering somebody
 - I hope so, but I don't know
 - This is not something to be explored but obeyed

With the commands for my kids

- Not running into the street
 - Keep your fingers out of the light socket
 - They are not to be explored – but obeyed – and it is for their own good!!!
 - My rules are to be a blessing
- And it is the same with the Lord

Reactions to the Sabbath

#1 – Some deplore it

#2 – Some ignore it

#3 – Some explore it

#4 – Some adore it

- Now we go to the other extreme - some people worship the day, not the Sabbath, but the day

We see this in Mark 2 – the Disciples were hungry and started picking and munching on some grain –the Pharisees got all uptight – Jesus let them know – you have got it all wrong – Man was not made for the Sabbath – The Sabbath was made for man

Mark 2:27-28 - And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

- The Pharisees didn't see it that way and neither do some people in the body of Christ today
 - And for that reason we need to camp out for a few minutes

This question about the Sabbath is important

- not just to understand why God would want us to take a day and rest

But on the other extreme to examine the question, does that mean the Sabbath or Saturday is the only day God wants us to worship, the only day God would have us go to church

- some of have divided the church over what day we worship

The Seventh Day Adventist are one such example

- now understand, in my opinion the seventh day Adventist are a group of Christians who love Jesus and are not at all like the Mormon and JW, meaning they are not a cult
 - but they do have some unorthodox beliefs and one of them is we should worship on Saturday not Sunday
 - and there is a real looking down on those of us that are doing church on Sunday Morning

The Adventist make their case by linking Mark 2:28, (which we already looked at) and Revelation 1:10

"Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." – Mark 2:28

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day,"

- they say Mark 2:28 states that Jesus owns the Sabbath

And so there when John says he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day – it was the day the Lord owns

- so in their theology when you read, “The Lord's day in the scripture” – it means Saturday or the Sabbath
 - But the problem with that is, even if you can make it seem like that in the English, in Greek it doesn't hold any water

Mark is not saying Jesus owns the Sabbath, but He is more important and can do anything he wants on the Sabbath, unlike what the Pharisees were saying

- But because they hold to this idea that Saturday is the only day to worship, then some of the Seventh Day Adventist and I have found, even more groups like the Christians who are trying to become even more Jewish in their beliefs, start to adopt weird ideas about those of us who worship on Sunday
 - even to the point of saying ...
 - I was talking to a guy who was so upset that we have church on Sunday and he was telling me – You have taken the Mark of the Beast – really how so I wondered

Well you see they will say Constantine in 312 AD he changed the day from Saturday to Sunday – to incorporate pagan traditions into the church

- He wanted to worship on Sunday because that was the day the Roman's worshipped the Sun
 - And so Constantine changed it
- The early church never worshipped on Sunday, they also worshiped on Saturday
 - What do you say to a guy or a gal that believes that – what is the answer?

First you need to understand, as far as the Sabbath day

#1 - We don't really know what day it is –

- the calendar has been changed so many times – it is common knowledge we don't know which day is Saturday or Tuesday – as far as when God established it –
 - You can't be in love with the day

You see by the time of Julius Caesar, the calendar was so out of step with nature that Caesar ordered a Greek astronomer named Sosigenes to straighten things out.

Unable to alter the movements of the heavens, Sosigenes solved the problem by adding almost 3 months to that year's calendar giving **The year 46BC had 445 days. The people born that year would have hard time figuring out their birth day**

- **Pope Gregory XIII (1502) commissioned the calendar we use today**, however when Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar in September of 1752, they moved their dates up, and **eleven days disappeared from British History in 1752**. George Washington found his birthday moved from Feb 11 to Feb 22 – so you see what I mean – we have no clue what day was originally Saturday in the garden on even in the book of Exodus

#2 - The early church did not worship only on Saturday

“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread” – Acts 20:7

- the first day of the week was Sunday and there was a shift in the early church from worshipping on Saturday, the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day of the week

They did this because the first day of the week was a the first day of creation, so all things were new

- and of course because Jesus resurrected from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week

“Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it....But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen,” – Matthew 28:1-2,5-6

We also see this in the book of I Corinthians.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

- Paul here is talking about the collection – the offering – and he says to do it on the first day of the week
 - Suggesting that was the main meeting

We see this born out in Biblical text and also in the writings of the early church fathers

- they were writing hundreds of years before Constantine was alive and they were talking about worshipping on the first day of the week, on Sunday
 - consider...

Early Church Father’s testify

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place and writings’ of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God having wrought a change in the darkness in matter made the world, and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.” – Justin Martyr (150Ad)

“The Mystery of the Lord’s resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than Sunday” – Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons (178AD)

“Sunday, the first day of the week was the only to day to partake of Communion” – Tertullian (150AD)

- now I could not disagree with him more – I am not quoting him to reveal theology but to demonstrate Christians were worshipping on Sunday long before Constantine

So okay – it is not Saturday that is the scared day but Sunday

- I have some people I know who think it is Saturday – I am going to talk to them about how they are not honoring the Lord’s resurrection with their Saturday worship
 - no – your not – it is not about the day
- This month we start a Saturday Evening Service – you mean do Sunday Church, but offer it on Saturday Evening – yes, that is what I mean
 - Is that okay – yes – its great

Because we can't be in love with a day – we need to be in love with the Lord and taking a day to be different in our lives, in our families – a day to rest and reflect upon the Lord

- listen to what Paul says to the church of Colossi

“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” – Colossians 2:16

- all these Sabbaths and festivals are just a shadow
 - the real substance is Christ

And as it has been illustrated before, the fact that people get all worked up over a day and miss the reality of Christ is really sad

- I mean I travel a lot, can you image I come home from a few days away from my family and as I walk up the driveway the kids run right past me and start talking to my shadow
 - My wife gives the shadow a little kiss – I love you Jason
 - I'm right here – what are you doing
 - And I often wonder how does the Lord feel like when we are obsessed with a day and not Him, the reality??

Some are not in love with the day, but the duty

- For some it is not so much the day, but what you do on that day – I do nothing, absolutely it is my law
 - I have worked with Pastors who say I can't go visit someone after church, because today is the Sabbath, I really should even be at service
 - But you are a pastor – what else would you do?
- Friends – that sounds like the Pharisees
 - It was them who made up the rules of you can't leave the house, you can't go out to eat, or put in dentures
 - And the Sabbath became burdensome to the people – because it was about the day and the duty
- That misses the heart completely

It is not about a day, it not about the duty

- If someone wants to worship on Saturday – great
 - I respect their conviction, but reject their condemnation of others
 - Paul writes....

“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord;” – Romans 14:5-6

You see it isn't about the day or the duty – it is about the Lord

- So we ought not to abhor it, not to ignore it, or explore it

Reactions to the Sabbath

#1 – Some deplore it

#2 – Some ignore it

#3 – Some explore it

#4 – Some adore it

#5 – We out to restore it!

We ought to restore it

- take one day and make it holy

Why??? – Jason I still don't see it – you have told us that it is about Jesus – He is our rest – that the day doesn't matter – so why is this important

- Because as we take one day in seven and give it to the Lord we are saying to Him – what I have or enjoy is not about my ingenuity or work ethic – and I am going to prove it by stopping
 - You see to not is to say, everything depends on me, I hold everything together
 - I am pretty important – I hold this whole thing together

In that way I am saying everything I have is the Lords

- it is like the tithe
 - we can say – Everything I have is yours
 - But how does that play out in our checkbooks, is it true
- There used to be bumper stickers in California that said honk if you love Jesus
 - I saw one before I left that said, If you love Jesus tithe – any idiot can honk
 - Funny – and a good principal

Honor the Lord with what we have

- saying it is not mine, its yours Lord
 - whether that be with money
 - or whether that be, with what is for many of us, even more valuable – time - It is yours Lord
- This is the wisdom of God

You see like tithe works with our money

- when we give, God supplies the need to give, I didn't say God makes you rich, I'm just saying, He provides everything we need

When we take time to rest, to honor Him, He will allow everything to get done

You would think a day off man would say whoopee – but fallen man says nope I can't do that

- This is a holy day, a different day for us

A day to spend time with the Lord

- A day to be with your family
 - When you are not strategizing for the week ahead, or running off to the office
 - Lord I trust you with my time

Do we have to keep the Sabbath???

- to get the heaven – no way
- to have the Lord happy with you – nope
- to get all crazy about a day – absolutely not
 - but to take one day in seven to think on the Lord and set it apart for Him – you will be blessed if you do