

The Ten Commandments: Posted on our Hearts and in our Homes
So...Can I Go to a Restaurant after Church Today?
Exodus 20:1-2, 8-11

July 10, 2011

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Introduction to Text: We are in a series of messages concerning the 10 Commandments.

Just to review a brief second--we said that the importance of the first commandment is that only God is to be worshipped. The focus of the second commandment has to do with the how of worship of that one true God. In other words, it is not enough to worship God; we must also make sure that we worship the one true God in a correct manner. We learned last week about the third commandment-- that taking God's name in vain is about a whole lot more than our language, but instead it concerns with taking up the name of God as in "Christian" for example but only as lip service.

Today we are on the fourth commandment. This is the last commandment that deals specifically with our relationship with God. The remaining commandments deal with our relationship with God as it relates to our relationships with others. We will read verses 1-2 as the introductory words to all of the commands and then read verses 8-11 which give us the fourth commandment.

Text: ¹ Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

⁸ Remember to dedicate the Sabbath day: ⁹ You are to labor six days and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the foreigner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

Introduction: I might be wrong, but I'm sensing something this morning. I'm sensing that there is a group of people who are here today who can't wait for this message because you want me to use this text today to scold everyone who works on Sunday. You want me to condemn every family outing, every blade of grass cut, every restaurant open, every store open, and every ball game played on Sunday. I'm sensing that there is another group who can't wait for this message because you want me to use this passage to free you up to do all of the aforementioned activities and more. You want to be released from church attendance if there is something else to do. You probably want an apology for all the years that you have been asked to come back on a Sunday evening. You want me and others to cut you some slack. I feel like the umpire. Some are going to hate and some are going to love.

This deal of standing before others and saying that "I have a word from the Lord" is not always easy! So, as I would always want, but with special reinforcement today, "Just listen." Listen before jumping to conclusions. Let the word of God penetrate your heart. Care little about what this preacher says, and listen to the word of God. Allow the spirit to be the teacher. Be concerned with what the Lord would say to you and not to someone else.

As we approach this fourth commandment, certainly there are a couple of critical issues that must be faced if we have any hope at understanding this command in an appropriate way. Facing these issues will help us with our interpretation and application. Here are the two critical issues: What did the fourth commandment mean to Old Testament Israel? What does the fourth commandment mean to us today?

What did the fourth commandment mean to Old Testament Israel?

This is the easy question. He told them to not do any work on the Sabbath day (for them-- not our Sunday, but Saturday—or actually from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday about 6 p.m. to 6 p.m.) To take away a loop hole, God expands that to their children, animals, and slaves. Then, He gives them a model in creation.

3 Important Words:

- Sabbath—which literally means stop
- Holy—which means separate
- Remember—Remember what? According to Exodus 31:12-13 the Sabbath caused them to remember the covenant. Remembering sounds like a cognitive (or thinking) exercise, but remembering is often times an active exercise. For example, men, what if in remembering your anniversary or your wife's birthday you stop at just the thinking part. Or, what about this—the words of the Lord's Supper—"Do this is remembrance of me."

What does the fourth commandment mean to us today?

First, we have an immediate issue with the day right? We are all smart enough I think to realize that the Sabbath of the Old Testament is not Sunday. Historically, there seems to be four ways that people have dealt with the Sabbath.

4 Possible Ways to Understand the Fourth Commandment

1. Seventh Day Adherence—Some well meaning Christians believe that even in Christ, God never removed the law of 7th day Sabbath. Every once in a while I will get a letter or e-mail from someone I don't know declaring that I'm going to hell if I don't immediately repent of not keeping the Saturday Sabbath.

We are probably most familiar with the practice of Seventh-Day Adventists. Did you know that there are also Seventh-Day Baptists?

2. Sunday Transference—Some would suggest that we transfer what the law revealed about the Sabbath to Sunday. While it is true that we have ample evidence that the earliest Apostles began to gather the church on Sunday in remembrance of the Sunday resurrection of Christ, there would be little Biblical or historical support for transferring the Old Testament law of the Sabbath to Sunday.
3. Sunday Observance—A third option would be to observe Sunday in some kind of special way like public assembly, but also with the refraining from certain activities. The only problem with this understanding is that a list of "do's and don'ts" is rather arbitrary.

4. Sunday Non-observance—Yet, still others would insist that no day is more important than the other. Actually, it might even be argued that to elevate one day over the other lends itself to the problem that every day should be equally dedicated to the LORD.

So, where do we go from here?

3 New Testament Scriptures:

- Matthew 11:28-12:8
- Colossians 2:16-17
- Hebrews 3-4

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath (rest).

- Remember the purpose of the command.

Rest

Remembrance of the Covenant

- Remember the priority of the command.

What about your priority to the remembrance of what Christ has done for you? Is it too much to devote a day (set it aside, make it special, make it different) in remembrance of what Jesus has done for us? The question is not what is the minimum that we can do in remembrance, but what is the most that we can do in remembrance.