

Luke 13:10-17

¹⁰ On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹ and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." ¹³ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

¹⁴ Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

¹⁵ The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? ¹⁶ Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE COMMANDMENT OUT OF THE TEN GOD GAVE TO US, WHICH DO YOU THINK IS THE LEAST IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE TODAY?

IN OTHER WORDS, WHICH SEEMS TO BE THE MOST NEGLECTED EVEN BY PEOPLE OF FAITH?

THIS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY, BE AN INTERESTING, AND PERHAPS AMONG SOME PEOPLE, A HEATED TOPIC OF DEBATE.

CERTAINLY, COMMANDMENTS ONE AND TWO ARE FREQUENTLY NEGLECTED.

MANY PEOPLE TODAY PLACE OTHER THINGS BEFORE GOD, ALTHOUGH MOST OF OUR IDOLS ARE OF MATERIAL GOODS OR SOCIAL STATUS RATHER THAN THE STATUES.

THEN AGAIN MISUSING GOD'S NAME, THAT IS- USING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN, HARDLY RAISES AN EYEBROW ANYMORE.

AND THERE ARE MANY WHO FAIL TO HONOR THEIR FATHER AND MOTHER.

THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND MURDER, HAPPENING NATIONALLY AND AROUND THE WORLD REMIND US HOW MUCH "THOU SHALL NOT KILL" IS IGNORED.

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT ADULTERY IS ANOTHER COMMON OCCURRENCE.

AND OF COURSE, THEFT IS SO COMMON THAT BUSINESSES AND EVEN MANY HOMEOWNERS GUARD AGAINST IT.

THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST NOT COVETING SOMEONE ELSE'S RELATIONSHIP OR PROPERTY IS BROKEN EVERY TIME PEOPLE EVEN THINK ABOUT STEALING.

THEN THERE IS THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST BEARING FALSE WITNESS, IT IS ALSO POPULAR TO IGNORE.

WHETHER UNDER OATH OR NOT- PEOPLE LIE SO OFTEN AND SO WELL MANY BELIEVE THOSE LIES ARE TRUTH.

TRULY, IT SEEMS TODAY LYING IS ONE OF MOST ACCEPTED AND EXPECTED PRACTICES IN MANY RELATIONSHIPS, BUSINESS, AND POLITICS.

THIS MIGHT CONVINCING MANY THE NINTH COMMANDMENT IS THE MOST IGNORED TODAY.

BUT THERE IS ONE OTHER YET UNNAMED ONE THAT IS A STRONG CONTENDER, IT IS THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, WHICH CONCERNS THE SABBATH.

IN FACT, IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE THIS ONE HAS MORE WORDS EXPLAINING IT THAN ANY OTHER COMMANDMENT.

“REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOR AND DO ALL THY WORK. BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD;

THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, THOU, NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER, THY MANSERVANT, NOR THY MAIDSERVANT, NOR THY CATTLE, NOR THE STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES.

FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY; WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY, AND HALLOWED IT.”

ANOTHER PASSAGE DECLARES THE SABBATH IS ALSO HOLY AS A REMINDER OF GOD’S REDEMPTION OF HIS PEOPLE FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT.

I WAS SOMEWHERE LAST WEEK WHERE A JEWISH MAN MENTIONED MANY NON-JEWS THINK YOM KIPPUR OR THE FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER ARE THE HOLIEST DAYS FOR JEWS.

BUT HE SAID THE HOLIEST DAY IS THE SABBATH DAY. IT SURPASSES, FOR RELIGIOUS JEWS, EVERY OTHER HOLY DAY.

FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE AROUND 147 VERSES IN SCRIPTURE THAT MENTION THE SABBATH, WHICH GIVES US THE SENSE IT IS IMPORTANT TO GOD.

AND YET SABBATH KEEPING AMONG MANY OF GOD’S PEOPLE JEW AND CHRISTIAN ALIKE IS NOT ALWAYS FOLLOWED.

FURTHERMORE, THERE IS SOME DEBATE OVER WHEN CHRISTIANS SHOULD CELEBRATE THE SABBATH.

THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS KEPT THE SABBATH DAY ON THE SEVENTH DAY, BUT EVENTUALLY WHEN CHRISTIANITY BROKE FROM JUDAISM, SUNDAY BECAME OUR SABBATH.

MOST CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE THE SABBATH ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, BECAUSE JESUS ROSE ON A SUNDAY.

AND YET THERE ARE GROUPS OF CHRISTIANS WHO HOLD THAT THE TRUE SABBATH REMAINS ON SATURDAY AND TO KEEP IT ON SUNDAY IS WRONG.

EVEN THE NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT SEEM TO AGREE ON WHEN OR EVEN IF CHRISTIANS ARE BOUND TO SABBATH KEEPING.

IN HEBREWS 4, IT COMMANDS THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS TO KEEP THE SABBATH.

BUT SOME OF THE WRITINGS OF PAUL TELL CHRISTIANS, CONCERNING THE SABBATH AND ALL RELIGIOUS RITUALS, TO DO WHATEVER THEIR CONSCIENCE TELLS THEM.

THEN THE APOSTLE ADDS THAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT CRITICIZE OTHER BELIEVERS WHO DO DIFFERENTLY.

TODAY, THERE IS A LOT OF DISAGREEMENT ABOUT WHAT CHRISTIANS CAN AND CANNOT DO ON SUNDAY.

SOME HOLD SABBATH KEEPING FORBIDS ANY WORK ON SUNDAY. OTHERS ADD YOU SHOULD NOT PLAY SPORTS OR DO OTHER FUN THINGS.

MANY CHRISTIANS IGNORE SUCH PROHIBITIONS ALTOGETHER. AND OTHERS, LIKE I SAID, KEEP THE SABBATH ON SATURDAY AND DO NORMAL THINGS ON SUNDAY.

SO, THE QUESTION ARISES: "WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE SABBATH?"

SOMETIMES WHEN CHRISTIANS STRUGGLE WITH TRYING TO INTERPRET WHAT IS GOD'S WILL ONE OF THE THINGS WE CAN DO IS LOOK TO JESUS.

AFTER ALL, JESUS WAS SINLESS, SO FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE SHOULD PUT US ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

THE PROBLEM IS-IF WE LOOK THROUGHOUT THE GOSPELS, WE WILL FIND THE ONE AND ONLY COMMANDMENT JESUS WAS CONSISTENTLY ACCUSED OF BREAKING WAS THE ONE ABOUT THE SABBATH.

BUT THIS WAS NOT BECAUSE JESUS FAILED TO ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

MUCH TO THE CONTRARY, JESUS' FAITHFULNESS IN ATTENDING WORSHIP IN THE SYNAGOGUE EVERY SABBATH, IS WELL DOCUMENTED IN THE GOSPELS.

THE PROBLEM THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES HAD WITH JESUS IN REGARDS TO THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT, FOCUSED ON HIS APPARENT DISREGARD OF GOD'S PROHIBITION AGAINST WORK.

THE COMMANDMENT FORBADE JEWS TO DO ANY WORK ON THE SABBATH. THIS INCLUDED FORBIDDING SERVANTS OR SLAVES FROM WORKING, AND EVEN EXTENDED TO ANIMALS.

ONLY THE MOST NECESSARY THINGS COULD BE DONE-FOR EXAMPLE FOOD COULD BE PLACED OUT, BUT NOT PREPARED, NOR DISHES CLEANED.

MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND ANIMALS ALIKE WERE TO BE GIVEN THE SABBATH AS A DAY OF REST.

IN THIS SENSE THE SABBATH IS TRULY A GIFT FROM GOD. IT WAS AND STILL IS MEANT NOT ONLY AS A DAY OF WORSHIP, BUT ALSO RELAXATION FOR ALL PEOPLE. AND EVEN ANIMALS.

I CAME ACROSS A POEM THAT REMINDS US ABOUT THE BLESSINGS OF SABBATH KEEPING:

"GOD CREATED FOR SIX DAYS, ON THE SEVENTH GOD RESTED. GOD RESTED IN ORDER TO HAVE TIME TO LOOK AT ALL THAT HAD BEEN CREATED.

GOD RESTED IN ORDER TO ENJOY ALL OF CREATION. GOD RESTED IN ORDER TO SHOW US THAT WE NEED TO REST.

ONE DAY A WEEK, WE NEED TO STOP WHAT WE ARE DOING. ONE DAY A WEEK WE NEED TO LOOK AROUND.

ONE DAY A WEEK WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT IT WAS GOD WHO CREATED EVERYTHING. ONE DAY A WEEK, WE GATHER TO THANK GOD FOR CREATION."

THIS BRINGS US BACK TO JESUS SEEMINGLY VIOLATING THE PART OF THE COMMANDMENT THAT FORBIDS WORK.

BUT FIRST, WE OUGHT TO REMEMBER THE PRIESTS AND OTHERS WHO HAD RELIGIOUS DUTIES WERE PERMITTED TO WORK ON THE SABBATH.

ALSO, IT WAS PERMITTED TO FEED AND WATER ANIMALS, BUT ONLY BY TAKING THEM TO THE FOOD AND WATER, RATHER THAN BRINGING IT TO THEM.

AND IT WAS PERMITTED TO ASSIST WITH CHILDBIRTH, AND TO DO ANYTHING NECESSARY TO SAVE A LIFE-BUT NO MORE CARE THAN WHAT WAS MINIMALLY NEEDED.

HOWEVER, IF AN ANIMAL NEEDED TO BE CARED FOR OR RESCUED FROM A PIT OR SOMETHING-IT COULD BE DONE.

JESUS, HOWEVER, TIME AND TIME AGAIN HEALED PEOPLE ON THE SABBATH, OF NONLIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS OR DISABILITIES.

ON THE SABBATH JESUS HEALED: THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND, A PARALYZED MAN, A MAN BORN BLIND, AND AS WE HEARD TODAY- A WOMAN SO DEFORMED SHE COULD NOT STAND UP STRAIGHT.

THEREFORE, IN THE BELIEF AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALL RELIGIOUS JEWS OF HIS TIME, JESUS LITERALLY BROKE THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT BY WORKING; EACH AND EVERY TIME HE HEALED ON THE SABBATH.

HE ALSO ALLOWED HIS DISCIPLES TO PLUCK GRAIN FROM THE FIELD TO EAT-ON THE SABBATH.

ALL THOSE THINGS WERE CONSIDERED WORK BY JEWISH AUTHORITIES AND THUS WERE FORBIDDEN.

JESUS, OBVIOUSLY DISAGREED. HE PROCLAIMED THAT HE WAS LORD OF THE SABBATH.

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 5:17 HE SAID “MY FATHER IS ALWAYS WORKING AND SO AM I.”

JESUS ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE SABBATH IS HONORED WHEN WE DO GOOD, WHEN WE SAVE LIVES AND SHOW LOVE.

TODAY’S GOSPEL STORY IS PRIME EXAMPLE OF THIS. JESUS WAS TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE ON THE SABBATH, WHEN HE SAW A WOMAN WHO WAS PERMANENTLY BENT OVER.

JESUS CALLED HER OVER TO HIM, EVEN THOUGH SHE DID NOT ASK TO BE HEALED, AND HE HEALED HER RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF WORSHIP.

THE WOMAN PRAISED GOD FOR HER HEALING, BUT THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE DID NOT, INSTEAD HE INDIRECTLY CRITICIZED JESUS.

HE SPOKE AGAINST JESUS’ WORK OF HEALING ON THE SABBATH BY DECLARING NO ONE SHOULD SEEK TO BE HEALED ON THAT HOLY DAY.

JESUS DECLARED THAT SINCE IT IS PERMISSIBLE TO TAKE CARE OF ANIMALS ON THE SABBATH, CARING FOR A HUMAN BEING IS EVEN MORE PERMISSIBLE.

HIS FOCUS WAS ON HOW THE SABBATH WAS MEANT TO BE A BLESSING-AND THIS INCLUDES DOING THINGS THAT PLEASE GOD.

WORSHIP, OF COURSE PLEASES GOD ON ANY DAY, BUT ESPECIALLY AS PART OF OUR HONORING THE SABBATH-ON WHICHEVER DAY WE DO SO.

HEALING AND OTHERWISE CARING FOR OTHER PEOPLE AND ANIMALS HONORS GOD AND THUS THE SABBATH DAY, AS DOES DOING THINGS WE ENJOY.

THIS BRINGS US AGAIN TO THE QUESTION ABOUT WHAT WE SHOULD DO WITH THE SABBATH?

THE ANSWER IS: WE SHOULD REMEMBER GOD’S ACTS OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION AND GIVE THANKS.

WE SHOULD FOLLOW OUR OWN CONSCIENCE, IN THE SENSE OF FOLLOWING WHAT WE BELIEVE GOD IS TELLING US WE SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO.

AND, WE SHOULD ENJOY THE DAY, BECAUSE REST AND RELAXATION IS ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF THE SABBATH.

REMEMBER, WHILE GOD, WHO DOES NOT NEED TO REST, WORKS SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, BY LISTENING TO AND OFTEN ANSWERING PRAYER REQUESTS- EVEN ON THE SABBATH; WE WHO ARE MORTAL NEED REST.

THEREFORE, TAKING A SABBATH DAY, IF NOT ON SUNDAY, THEN ON ANOTHER DAY, IS PART OF GOD’S PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF ALL LIFE ON EARTH.

SO, LET US RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE THIS, BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GOD’S GIFT OF THE SABBATH DAY.

WE DO THIS BY WORSHIP, WITH OTHERS WHEN POSSIBLE OR ON OUR OWN, WE ALSO DO THIS BY RESTING AND ENJOYING THE DAY.

FINALLY, WE HONOR THE SABBATH DAY BY FOLLOWING JESUS’ EXAMPLE OF DOING GOOD DEEDS, HELPING OTHERS ON THAT DAY, AS WELL AS ON OTHER DAYS.

LET US PRAY:

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THEREFORE, ON THE SABBATH: WE SHOULD REMEMBER GOD’S ACTS OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION AND GIVE THANKS. WE SHOULD FOLLOW OUR OWN CONSCIENCE, IN THE SENSE OF FOLLOWING WHAT WE BELIEVE GOD IS TELLING US WE SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO. AND, WE SHOULD ENJOY THE DAY, BECAUSE REST AND RELAXATION IS ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF THE SABBATH.

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