

## **“Clearing a Space”** **Exodus 20:8-11**

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October 28-29, 2017

*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20:8-11 (English Standard Version)*

### **WHAT DID THE ORIGINAL HEARERS UNDERSTAND AS THE PRIMARY MESSAGE OF THIS COMMAND?**

- The Sabbath is deliberately a God-focused day. (Exodus 20:8)

Sabbath = Hebrew word *shabbath* = “stopping” or “cessation”

- The Sabbath has three purposes. (Exodus 20:9-10)
  - A day dedicated to the Lord for worship
  - A day of rest for God’s people
  - A day to extend works of mercy to others  
(See Deuteronomy 5:14; Matthew 12:12)

- God blesses the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:11)

*“If you honor [the Sabbath] . . . <sup>14</sup>then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth . . .”* From Isaiah 58:13-14 (ESV)

- The Sabbath rest has a model: God’s “rest”. (Exodus 20:11)

*So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. Genesis 2:3 (ESV)*

## WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT THE SABBATH?

- Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, grounds the Sabbath in the needs of man, not in anything in the Mosaic covenant. (See Luke 13:10-17; Matthew 12:1-12; John 5:1-17)
- In the New Testament, believers observed a special day each week called "the Lord's Day". (See Revelation 1:10; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

"Celebration on the first day, the Lord's Day, as a holy time is a natural move for those who have rejoiced in the redemptive work of God, begun in the deliverance from Egyptian slavery and continued in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Sunday carries forward Jesus' word that the Sabbath is a time for 'good news' begun and fulfilled in his ministry." (From *Church Dogmatics, III* by Karl Barth)

- The Apostle Paul speaks against the "observance of days" three times in the NT. (See Romans 14:5; Galatians 4:9-11; Colossians 2:16-17)

*Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.* Colossians 2:16 (ESV)

There is no doubt that by the Lord Christ's coming the ceremonial part of this commandment was abolished. For he himself is the truth, with whose presence all figures vanish; he is the body, at whose appearance the shadows are left behind. He is, I say, the true fulfillment of the Sabbath.  
(From *Institutes 2.8.32* by John Calvin)

Although the Sabbath has been repealed, there is still occasion for us: 1) to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the Word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and for public prayer; 2) to cease from labor.  
(From *Institutes 2.8.32* by John Calvin)

## WHAT OBLIGATION DO CHRISTIANS TODAY HAVE TO OBEY THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT?

Sunday is the Lord's Day and continues to be God's plan for rest and worship.

[The Sabbath] is the time when the community gathers to remember the redemptive work of God . . . the day of remembering what God has done for us, both when we were in slavery in Egypt and in our slavery to sin and guilt. Remembering is what the Sabbath-Sunday is all about. "Remember how the Lord your God brought you out with a mighty hand." "This do in remembrance of me." So the church's celebration of the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, is not a rejection of the Sabbath. It is a carryover of the Sabbath, precisely to ensure its observance.

(From *The Ten Commandments* by Patrick D. Miller)

. . . *train yourself for godliness.* 1 Timothy 4:7b (ESV)

### Action Steps

- Make a decision to honor the Lord's Day.
- Be prepared to have your decision challenged every week until the Lord's Day is established in your life.