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Exodus 20:8-11

How To Rest: Sabbath & Simplicity

God Commands Rest

Jonathan M. Romig

CornerstoneWestford.com

*S# refers to the slides that go with the message. They are available on the same page as the sermon upload.

Introduction: (S#1)

1. Don't you wish someone would write a law that said you had to do less—to stop for a day of the week?
2. In Massachusetts we have blue laws which restrict or ban work on Sundays. (S#2)

Whoever on Sunday keeps open his shop, warehouse, factory or other place of business, or sells foodstuffs, goods, wares, merchandise or real estate, or does any manner of labor, business or work, except works of necessity and charity, shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars for a first offense, and a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than two hundred dollars for each subsequent offense, and each unlawful act or sale shall constitute a separate offense. (M.G.L. c. 136, s. 5)

3. The very next section (s. 6) lists all the types of work not prohibited, including:
 - (12) The operation of public bathhouses.
 - (24) The making and baking of bakery products and the sale thereof in a shop or store.
 - (26) The sale and delivery of ice.
 - (47) The sale of tickets or shares for the state lottery.
4. We create a law to restrict what we do on Sundays and then create loopholes to do what we want.
5. In the Old Testament, God also gave his people Israel laws for their day of rest, the Sabbath.
6. Today we're going to look at how it applies to us and the loopholes we use to get out of it.

(God commanded Israel to take a Sabbath in the Ten Commandments.)

(It seems restrictive, but God gave them this day as an act of kindness.) (S#3)

I. God gave Israel Sabbath law to give them rest. (Read v. 8-10a)

A. God gave Israel the Sabbath in a unique way.

1. The Sabbath begins Friday evening and lasts until Saturday evening.
2. Genesis 1:5b ...And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. (NIV®)
3. Quick Application: Start your day in the evening, in rest, instead of in morning (CCC worship).
4. The root for Sabbath (sabat/to rest) is in Gen 2:2, but “Sabbath” 1st appears in Ex 16:23 (manna).
5. Prohibitions (-): don't gather food (Ex 16:29-30), don't plow or harvest (Ex 34:21), don't light a fire (Ex 35:3), don't gather wood (Num 15:32-36)
6. Commands (+): do give day off to your servants, animals, foreigners (Ex 20:10, 23:12, Dt 5:14).
7. God gave Israel the Sabbath rule when he gave Moses the law at Sinai after fleeing Egypt.

B. God gave Israel three types of law: 1) Civil, 2) Ceremonial, 3) Moral (Christians divide to understand)

1. Civil Law - Judicial Rulings (for Israel) (S#4)
 - a) This category includes punishment for striking or murdering a man, pregnant woman, or ox.

- b) This type of law is good as it extended rights to women and slaves that weren't protected.
- c) We have civil laws that determine punishments for speeding, burglary, and crimes today.
- d) Most civil laws are temporary to the nation of Israel (we don't stone our oxen today).
- e) Aspects of the Sabbath are civil law, like the Israelite punishment for not obeying it.

Numbers 15:32–36 32 While the Israelites were in the wilderness, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, 34 and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. 35 Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp.” 36 So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the Lord commanded Moses. (NIV®) (S#5)

(We wouldn't put someone to death today, so I think to fair the punishment is a civil regulation.)
(God protects his people when they're just getting started—Ananias and Sapphira die in Acts 5)

2. Ceremonial Law - Religious Rituals (for Israel) (S#6)
 - a) This category includes guidelines for what is clean food (fish) and unclean food (shellfish).
 - b) It also included how to worship God by sacrificing bulls, sheep, turtledoves or pigeons.
 - c) In the Middle East, Sharia law orders everyone to live and worship Allah a certain way (US).
 - d) Ceremonial laws are temporary and came to an end with Jesus (Peter's vision Acts 10).
 - e) Aspects of the Sabbath are ceremonial law, like it marking Israel as God's OT people.

Exodus 31:13 13 “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a **sign between me and you** for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy. (NIV®) (S#7)

(God gave Israel civil and ceremonial laws to show his holiness and to set Israel apart.)
(God doesn't want his people to look or act like the world.)
(These laws, like not eating pig and shellfish, also had health benefits.)

3. Moral Law - God's Character (for everyone) (S#8)
 - a) This category includes laws that you and I know to be true (murder, adultery, stealing).
 - b) They usually had the death penalty, so would include adultery and homosexuality (Lev 20).
 - c) But even then it's not always clear, so need to read the whole Bible in context.
 - d) If the teaching is consistent from Genesis through the NT, then it's always true.
 - e) All the Ten Commandments, including aspects of the Sabbath, are moral law.
 - f) I believe the Sabbath is civil, ceremonial, and moral law (all three aspects).
 - g) The moral component of the Sabbath is who and how we worship (and rest).

(We'll learn more about this next week when we get into Mark 2, but also later in this message.)
(Remember... God gave Israel Sabbath law to give them rest.)

- C. A year ago January my mother-in-law gave Monica and me a trip to Disney World.
 1. She wanted to give us a fun vacation but she did have expectations/rules.
 2. We had to get out of bed before noon, eat the food at Epcot, and stay late at the Parks.

3. To be honest, I got a bit cranky trying to meet some of those rules.
4. But if I hadn't, I might have missed out on some of the fun of Disney World.
5. God gave Sabbath rules to Israel for their own good even if they seem difficult.
6. God gave Israel Sabbath law to give them rest.

(Now when you go to Disney, you're going to do it differently than me, which makes sense.)

(You might not go on all the same rides or function by the same rules, but you'll have fun like me.)

(As we look at Christianity today, we're going to see similarities but also differences in how we rest.)

II. God gives all his people Sabbath rest to set them free. (Read v. 10b-11) (S#9)

A. God gives all his people Sabbath rest.

1. Last week I defined Sabbath for you and me as one day in seven to rest, worship God, and play.
2. So when I say, you should take A Sabbath, I'm not saying take THE Sabbath, but simply to rest.
3. God expands who should rest to several groups of people (principles apply to us):
 - a) You shall not work - Finding rest begins with individual commitment to a day off.
 - b) Nor your sons or daughters - Parents are to model a day of rest for their children.
 - c) Nor your male or female servants - If you supervise others, you should help them rest.
 - (1) This means I shouldn't ask our Office Administrator to work on Sunday.
 - (2) Chick-fil-A closes all its restaurants on Sundays and encourages its employees "to rest, spend time with family and friends, and worship... It's part of our recipe for success."
 - d) Nor your animals - A need for weekly rest is built into the creation.
 - e) Nor foreigners - When we rest, we witness to others about our God (Chariots of Fire).
4. God gives all his people Sabbath rest.

B. One of my best friend's growing up was a Messianic Jew—they were Jews who believed in Jesus.

1. When I think of Sabbath, I always think of them because their home felt like rest (inviting).
2. One of the ways they cultivated a welcoming family was by taking Saturday to themselves.
3. They'd plan family trips, activities, and just spend time together.
4. Eventually I learned not to invite my friend over on Saturdays because he'd never come.
5. I invite your family to set aside one day a week to rest, worship, and play.
6. God gives us a Sabbath for us to grow deeper in love with him and each other.

(God gives all his people Sabbath rest to set them free.)

C. Sabbath rest sets us free.

1. Our passage explains that we should rest because God rested after creation (be like Him).
2. In Deuteronomy, there's another version of the Ten Commandments that's different. (S#10)

Deuteronomy 5:15 15 Remember that **you were slaves in Egypt** and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. (NIV®)

3. Israel spent 400 years without a day off, enslaved in Egypt.
4. Moses led the people out of slavery so that they could be free, not enslaved to a different master.
5. Are you a slave to your career, your grades, your hobbies, even people or dreams?

6. God gives us this weekly reminder of the freedom we have in him—not saved by works.
7. Sabbath rest sets us free.

D. We have Sabbath freedom because we have freedom in Christ.

1. At CCC, we don't think Sabbath has transferred to Sunday (No NT call to obey Sabbath).
2. Jesus fulfills the civil, ceremonial, and moral aspects of the Sabbath, and that sets us free.
3. The Bible calls Sunday the "Lord's Day" b/c Jesus rose on Sunday morning.
4. Most churches worship then, but we believe we can adapt b/c we have freedom in Christ. **(S#11)**

Romans 14:5–6a 5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully **convinced in their own mind**. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord... (NIV®)

5. We don't have to worship on a specific day, but we do have to worship Jesus in faith (who/how).
6. Our *Foundation Verse* tells us a mystery... Jesus is the Sabbath (think Greek weekdays). **(S#12)**

Colossians 2:16–17 16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; **the reality, however, is found in Christ**. (NIV®)

(How is Jesus our Sabbath day?)

(On the cross, Jesus wins rest for us.)

(Through himself he gives us peace with God.) **(S#13)**

Conclusion:

1. Remember how Moses led the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt?
2. Jesus leads us out of spiritual, emotional, and physical slavery in this world.
3. When he died on the cross, he broke your chains and granted you freedom.
4. Are you living like you're a free man, taking advantage of rest in Christ?
5. Or are you living enslaved to the demands of this world?
6. Sabbath rest sets us free.
7. Jesus sets us free.

Benediction: **1 Kings 8:57** May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us. (NIV®)