

Remember the Sabbath

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[0 : 00] Our first Bible reading. Okay, that was our first Bible reading.

Have you all got it? Some of you weren't even listening, but I didn't even say it. Here we go. Psalm 118 and verse 24, the verse that we began the service with.

Psalm 118 and verse 24. I will let you find it if you have your Bibles, which is good.

And it says this. This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Okay, so that's Psalm 118, verse 24.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Okay, we're going to stand and sing.

[1 : 22] And then we're going to have an Exodus. That's the second book of the Bible. Exodus chapter 20. And we're going to read verses 8 through to 11.

So that's Exodus chapter 20, verse 8 through to 11. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work. 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 your sojourner who is within the gates.

For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the 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.

That's the second reading. Here's the third. Deuteronomy, which is book number five. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. Deuteronomy, chapter five.

[2 : 58] And verse 12 through to 15. Now listen carefully because even though it sounds the same, it's not exactly the same.

Beginning at verse 12. Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy as the Lord, your God, commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

For the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God. God, on it you shall not do any work. You, your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock or the sojourner who is within the gates.

That your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. And the Lord, your God, brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Therefore, the Lord, your God, commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. Well, over the next few weeks, you might find yourself learning something new.

[4 : 18] You might find yourself learning something new. A bit like a child moving up a class at school. It has to happen. Indicating that it is time to move on.

Indicating that it is time to grow a little bit more than you did the previous year. But in order to begin, we have to begin with a reminder.

And the Sabbath day is a good reminder as any. Remember it. Why remember it?

Well, because you could easily forget it. It's interesting how the Sabbath day starts with the word remember. The fourth commandment starts with remember.

Why? Because God knows your temptation to forget it. So remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. And then here's why.

[5 : 18] Here's the reason why. You need to instantiate your belief in the fourth commandment. What that means is you need to put the first three commandments.

To love your Lord, your God. To not worship idols. To not take his name in vain. And you need to put all of that truth into the behavior of the fourth commandment.

You need to instantiate it in a behavior. See, God knows that you find it very hard to remember anything unless you're practicing it in behavior.

It becomes very difficult to remember something unless you're practicing it. That's why God gave us the fourth commandment. He knows that we have to follow up our belief with a behavior.

Now, here's why. Because if you don't, you will forget the God who you are to worship. That's the whole point of the Sabbath. The whole point of the Sabbath, the whole reason for keeping this day holy, is so that you do not forget the God who you are to worship.

[6 : 28] And those who don't keep the Sabbath have already begun to forget, have already forgotten the God, who God is, and therefore they don't keep it holy.

Here's the principle. The principle is God knows that remembering alone doesn't work. You have to remember by instantiating it in behavior.

You have to put what you believe about God into the behavioral pattern of the Sabbath so that you don't forget the God that you belong to, so that you don't forget to worship the God that you belong to.

And so what happens when people forget? Well, of course, they don't keep the Sabbath day holy. Now, God gave you the Sabbath for you.

He gave it in the same way Jesus gave the Lord's Supper. Do you remember how Jesus handed out the bread and the wine? And what was his reason for doing that?

[7 : 36] Well, he says, when you take it, do this in remembrance of me. In other words, Jesus also understood, of course, he is God, that belief about his life, death, and resurrection had to be instantiated in behavior.

In other words, you had to take what you believed about his life, death, and resurrection and then put it into a behavioral practice, the Lord's Supper. So as you eat this bread and you drink this cup, you do it in remembrance of me.

Why? Why? So that you don't forget the God to whom you are to worship. So that you don't forget the God who you belong to.

So in the same way, God gives the Sabbath day, he made it holy, so that you don't forget him. And Jesus gave you the Lord's Supper, so that you don't forget him.

Why? Why? Because you will. You may be able to recall it, but it would have slipped your mind in order for you to be able to recall it.

[8 : 43] Oh yes, I remember now. Now here's the crutch to all of this. God doesn't need our worship.

God doesn't even need us to keep the Sabbath day. In fact, God doesn't need anything. God is in need of nothing.

And the moment you begin to realize that God doesn't need anything, that God is in need of nothing, then you have to come up with another reason for why God wants us to keep the Sabbath day holy.

And here's why. God doesn't need it. Because we need it. Okay? We need to keep the Sabbath day holy, not because God needs it, not because God benefits by it in any way whatsoever.

He doesn't. We need to keep the Sabbath day holy because we benefit by it. The reason why God gives it as a command, the reason why he follows that command through and to say, look, behave in this way on this day is for your benefit entirely.

[9 : 51] Because God is in need of nothing. He doesn't need it. But he wants it for you so that you don't forget the God to whom you belong, so that you don't forget the God who you are to worship.

So, when you look at your obedience, okay, it's an obedience to a command. No, it's an act of obedience for your own well-being.

In other words, I'm going to listen to God. I'm going to do what God says so that I don't forget him, so that I really can worship him as he is, as the God who portrays himself as God.

Why? Why? Because if I don't, I'm going to get out of the practice of praying. This is why we have prayer meetings. The reason why we have a meeting in which we practice prayer is because even we understand that unless we force ourselves into that day, unless we force ourselves into that practice, we get out of the habit and it begins to slip.

And when it begins to slip, we begin to forget the God to whom we belong to. In other words, we start imagining a God different from the one as portrayed in Scripture.

[11 : 12] And so, those who don't keep the Sabbath either don't know that they ought to, which I find very unlikely, or they have to temporarily set aside everything that they believe about God in order to do what they want.

Or they have to willfully ignore it completely. You see, there is no way of getting around it.

In other words, the only time someone can actually do what they want on the Lord's day is if they consult with themselves and agree that they're not going to do what the Lord wants on his day.

And so, on that day, when they're doing what they want, they are forgetting the God to whom they belong. They're forgetting to worship him as they ought to.

And one day, you think, well, it's not a big deal. Well, no, but it is the bit of the wedge which you can, it's a bit like, you know, sleeping too close to the edge of the bed.

[12 : 31] At some point, you're going to fall out. That's the issue there. It's not, well, it's not a big deal. Well, it is when you fall. So, God is giving you this commandment, not because he wants you to obey it, because he's going to be benefited by it.

No, no, no. He's protecting you. God is going out of his way, or going in his way, to protect you in your faith.

And so, he does that by giving you this behavior to practice. I'm going to give you an example of where people are fed up with the Sabbath. It comes from Amos.

It says, this is what the people say. When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, when will that be over, that we may offer wheat for sale?

What's the issue there? Well, the issue is, if you can't see it, they have forgotten the God to whom they belong, and they have forgotten to worship him. In other words, they want to do something else.

[13 : 36] In other words, they are in the service of God, in the worship service of God, and they're doing this. They're looking at their watches, wondering what time it's going to be over, so that they can get on and do what they want to do.

Now, how clear is that, even in our present day? Well, we're going to do this, this, and this today, but first we have to go to church. As though it gets in the way of what you're wanting to do.

See, the issue here is not that they wanted to work on the Sabbath. That's not the issue. That's to be blinded by it. They had six other days for that.

God even commands that you should work six days. So, the issue is not that they are so adamant that they want to work on the Sabbath when they've got six other days to do. That's not what they want.

They want to do something else. They don't want to worship God. And they don't want to worship God because they've forgotten the God they want.

[14 : 42] Their minds and hearts are elsewhere. They want to buy. They want to sell. They've got six other days for that. God approves of that. God welcomes that someone would go out and want to be like that.

But this day, no, no, no, no. The only reason why someone would have their mind and heart on other things is because they don't know the God they worship.

They don't know the God that they belong to. They have a vague idea of Him, but they don't actually know Him. It takes time to get to know anybody.

It takes an awful amount of time to really get to know someone. And it's no different with God. You learn of God through your walk with Him and as it is confirmed in His Word and by His Spirit.

It's not a case that you can learn of Him in one particular way. It all goes together. Why? So that we may know Him and that we may follow Him. And yet, these people were unwilling to put their belief about God into a behavior.

[15 : 54] They're unwilling to instantiate their belief in behavior. And so, they end up forgetting the God to whom they belong. They end up forgetting to worship the God that has made them.

And this is why we come to Psalm 118. The psalmist says this, This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. Now, here's the problem. When we only quote that section, we have no idea what day He's talking about.

And when we have no idea what day He's talking about, we naturally assume He's speaking about any day. This is the day. And tomorrow, we would say, This is the day.

And in a certain sense, that is entirely true. But let's read Psalm 118, verse 24, in its context.

[16 : 54] So, turn with me to Psalm 118. So, Psalm 118, verse 22.

Here it is. In its context. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing.

It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day. That the Lord has made. And we will rejoice and be glad in it. What are we rejoicing in?

What are we rejoicing in? What are we being glad about? Is it not the Lord's day? Is it not the very day that Christ, the rejected stone, rose from the dead and became our cornerstone?

Is it not the fact that Christ is the founder and finisher of our faith? That he was rejected. That he died. He was buried. But on the third day, the Sunday, what is known as the Lord's day, we have redemption.

[18 : 10] We are a new creation. That's what Psalm 118 is pointing to. That the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. But on what day did he do that?

Well, on the day that he rose from the dead. This is the day that the Lord has made. And that's what we rejoice in. And that's what we are glad about. The fact that Christ rose from the dead and became the very cornerstone of our faith and belief and our foundation and position in God.

On that day, we were new creations. On that day, we were redeemed from sin. On that day, every promise of God is proven to be true in Jesus Christ.

That's what the psalmist is pointing to. He's not just saying, this is the day that the Lord has made, as though it applies to every day. It does apply to every day. But listen to him carefully.

He puts it after that very clear prophecy. And then you get to Peter. And Peter quotes those very verses indicating to us that it's speaking about us, that we have become the people of God, that we have become a new creation, that we have been redeemed from sin and from slavery.

[19 : 36] That's what we're to rejoice in. That's what we're to be glad about, all because of Jesus. Jesus did it all for us. And that's what we come together to recognize today.

Today, you know by being here that you are the redeemed people of God, that you belong to him and are safe with him both now and forevermore.

Why? Well, listen, listen. This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Why? Lest you forget the God to whom you are to worship.

Why? Lest you forget the God to whom you belong and to who you are to worship. That's why. When John says in Revelation chapter 1 verse 10, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, again, he's referring to the fact that it's the day that Christ rose from the dead.

In other words, John understands that the Lord's day is the resurrection day. The psalmist understood. Psalm 118 understood that this day that we rejoice in is the day that the rejected stone becomes the cornerstone, the resurrection day, the Sunday, the Lord's day.

[21 : 01] So let's go back to Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. This is what you should have noticed. And if you didn't, don't worry, you'll know it for next time.

When we read the fourth commandment carefully in Exodus and then in Deuteronomy, this is what we will read. In Exodus, this is the reason for keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Exodus 20 verse 11. For in six days, the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, for this reason, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

What's the reason? Creation. In other words, God says, look, it's always been this way. It was this way from the very beginning.

When I created the world, I created the Sabbath day in it. The reason for keeping it holy is because it is a creation ordinance in the same way we believe that it's right that men marry women and women marry men.

[22 : 09] It is a creation ordinance. What about in Deuteronomy? What's the reason there? Well, Deuteronomy 5 verse 15 says this, you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Therefore, the Lord your God commands you to keep the Sabbath day. Why? What's the reason? Well, he says, because you're no longer a slave.

God has shown mercy to you that you have been redeemed from slavery. And so, let's put all of these together as though we're going to take the Bible in one sweep just looking at this one day.

What do we read? Well, we read both in Exodus and in Deuteronomy the reason for keeping the Sabbath day holy is both creation and redemption. The psalmist says that the reason we rejoice and be glad in this day is because on that day the stone that the builders rejected became the cornerstone.

Well, what happened on that day according to Peter? What happened on that day? On that day you became a new creation. On that day you were redeemed from slavery and from sin.

[23 : 28] You see, this is an old fashion. It's not that the Old Testament is out of date. It's very much up to date. In other words, both instances in Exodus and Deuteronomy point to the new creation.

Point to the act of redemption. The reason we keep this day holy is because the reason hasn't changed. God created and then he made you a new creation.

God redeemed the people of God of old from the land of Egypt. God redeemed you from sin, death, and corruption. It's the same reason why we keep the Sabbath holy.

That's why we come. That's the God that we remember and that's the God we come to worship. So here's the exhortation. Don't forget to keep it holy.

Those who say, well, that was then and this is now have forgotten the God they worship. They don't know him. and don't be taken in by their pretense that they do.

[24 : 43] No, they don't. If they did, they would instantiate that belief and behavior. They would practice what they preach. And so what you begin to find is that people don't preach it.

Why? Well, very, very simply because they know that it won't turn up in their behavior. So they become silent witnesses. The trouble is there is no such thing as a silent witness.

Always be conscious of your unconscious witness. Okay? Always be conscious of your unconscious witness. It gives the game away.

Always gives the game away. So we keep the day holy. Why? Because God is our creator. We keep the day holy. Why? Because God is our redeemer.

We keep the day holy. Why? Lest we forget that about God. And lest we forget to come before God and worship Him. Why? Because it is your own spiritual well-being at stake.

[25 : 49] That's what's at stake. God is in need of nothing. He doesn't need you to keep the Sabbath day. He doesn't benefit from you keeping the Sabbath day. He wants you to keep it lest you fall spiritually.

And many of you have. And many of us will in the future. Why? Because our faith ebbs and flows.

And we need to make commitment because the world changes. How many of you have gone back on commitments because your circumstances have changed? Why do you do it?

You should have made the commitment in the first place. We make commitments because the world changes so that we can remain steadfast and sure and proper in the process of following God.

That's why we do it. So that we can hold to the convictions that are true. Now think of it this way as we close. If you get out of practice of anything you get rusty.

[26 : 52] And when you get rusty you forget how you how to do what you once were able to do quite clearly quite easily. You you can no longer do it as you once did. And it's only by getting back into it.

Oh yeah now I remember. As I begin to practice again now I know why I'm here. Well here's the thing. You're only here for your own good.

You're to worship God not for God but you're to worship God for you. See God is not selfish. He doesn't keep his worship.

The reason you're to worship God is for your own well-being. The reason we are to worship God is so that we don't forget the God to whom we belong to.

And here's the dangers if you do forget the Lord's day. Temptation will come and you won't have the strength to fight it off. You won't have the strength to say no to it.

[27 : 51] It'll be too powerful for you. Doubts will arise and you won't be around to hear the word of God to snuff them out. Depression is not something to be welcomed.

But the psalmist tells us in Psalm 73 that if you are absent from the Lord's day then depression will soon follow. And that spiritual depression will set in convincing you that this is a quite happy place to be.

Why? Well, all because you have forgotten the God to whom you belong and who you are to worship. Remember this. God is in need of nothing.

but you need to worship him for your own well-being. So don't go away from here this morning overlooking the importance of keeping this day holy.

Don't overlook the importance of this day. This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it, lest we forget the God to who we are to worship.

[29 : 02] Amen. Amen.