

Class #6 - The Lord's Day: Its Place and Privileges

Heritage Presbyterian Church is a Christian and Reformed church. This means that we believe man was created for communion with and service to God. Therefore, we must give careful, loving, devoted attention to the Day He has sanctified for us to rest in Him and commune with Him, namely, the Lord's Day.

The tendency of the age is not to exaggerate the fourth commandment, but to cut it out of the Decalogue and to throw it aside altogether. Against this tendency it becomes us all to be on our guard. The experience of eighteen centuries applies abundant proof that vital religion never flourishes where the Sabbath is not well-kept.

- J.C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts, John, Volume 1, 280

I. Understanding the Lord's Day: A Theology of Sabbath

A. The Institution of the Lord's Holy Day

1. Its Origin

2. Its Permanence

a. Nature

b. Morality

1)

2)

3)

4)

c. Honor

3. Its Time

B. The Purpose of the Lord's Holy Day

1. Fundamentally

a. Worship

b. Rest

2. Functionally

a. Governor

b. Guardian

"It is placed as the guardian of the first and second commandments, in which the Lord is asserted to be our God, and the third, which prohibits the profanation of His holy name. Singular devotion, spiritual worship, serious reverence, sanctify his Day." [Robert Haldane]

c. Gift

C. The Effect of the Lord's Holy Day

1. Preservation:

a. Of Society

b. Of the Saints

"Begin with not honoring the Lord's Day and you will soon not honor God's people; cease to honor God's book, in time you will give God no honor at all. Let a man lay the foundation of having no respect for God's worship or for the fellowship of the saints, and I'm never surprised if he finishes with no God." [J.C. Ryle]

2. Commemoration
3. Communion
4. Anticipation

II. Keeping the Lord's Day: Remembering the Sabbath

A. Devotion from the Heart: like all obedience;

1. Affections
2. Aspirations
3. Faith

B. Duty to our Infinitely Benevolent Sovereign: Call the day a delight, or a weariness?

1. The Duty of Prioritization

2. The Duty of Preparation

Q. 118. Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?

A. The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.

3. The Duty of Participation:

a. Worship

Belgic Confession, Article 28: The Obligations of Church Members

We believe that, since this holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from it, believers ought not to withdraw from it, content to be by themselves, regardless of their status or condition. But all people are obliged to join and unite with it, keeping the unity of the church by submitting to its instruction and discipline, by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and by serving to build up one another, according to the gifts God has given them as members of each other in the same body. ***And to preserve this unity more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to God's Word, to distinguish themselves from those who do not belong to the church, in order to join this assembly wherever God has established it, even if civil authorities and royal decrees forbid and death and physical punishment result. And so, all who withdraw from the church or do not join it act contrary to God's ordinance.***

b. Fellowship

c. Mercy and Necessity

C. Denial of our Sinful Flesh and Tendencies

III. Profiting from the Lord's Day: Delighting in the Sabbath

A. Taking Hold of Blessings

Isaiah 58:13-14 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, (14) Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

- 1. Take Delight in the Lord**
- 2. Ride on the Heights of the Earth**
- 3. Be Fed w/ Heritage of our Father Jacob**

B. Looking forward to Glory

1. The Nature of the Eternal Day

- a. **Holiness:** Rev 21:22
- b. **Glory:** Rev 21:23
- c. **Unity in Diversity (Bavinck):** Rev 21:24
- d. **Unfettered access and unassailable peace:** Rev 21:25

2. The Activity of the Eternal Day: Rev 22:3

- a. Eternal Service
- b. Eternal Worship
- c. Eternal Joy

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Does your present approach to and activity on the Lord's Day prepare you for glory?
- 2) How is keeping the Lord's Day holy one of the greatest antidotes to worldliness, if not the greatest?
- 3) What are some of the unique and particular blessings our God has invested in the Lord's Day?
- 4) How can we work to make the Lord's Day a delight for our children while maintaining its sanctity?