

Serm. Series: The Good, The Goad, The Guide: Ten Commandments

Sermon Text: Exodus 20:8-11 Holy Rest: The Fourth Commandment

The Lord graciously commands a day of holy-rest for the blessing of delighting in Him.

1) The day of holy-rest is grounded in God's delight in creation and new-creation.

- a) Creation: "For . . . the LORD . . . rested on the seventh day. Therefore . . ." (Exod. 20:11)—This looks back to God's delight in His original work of creation.
- b) New Creation: The resurrection of Christ as the "firstfruit"/"firstborn" of new creation and those in Christ as "firstfruits" of new creation (Hebrews 3-4; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23; James 1:18).
- c) As the Son of Man who receives dominion over all nations and kingdoms, Jesus is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8).
 - i) He established the new creation rationale for holy-rest on the first day of the week.
 - ii) He established the pattern of meeting with His people on the first day of the week.
 - iii) His Sabbath-dominion has continuity in substance from creational to new creational rest with escalating glory: the glory of God's original work of creation (seventh day of week) to the glory of God's redeeming work of new creation inaugurated/firstfruits (first day of week) to the glory of God's redeeming work of new creation consummated (endless day, Rev. 21:25).
- d) **Application:** Holy-rest is blessed participation in God's own rest.
 - i) Blessed Participation:
 - (1) "Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exod. 20:11)
 - (2) "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken" (Isa. 58:13-14)
 - (3) "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27)
 - ii) Participation in God's Rest:
 - (1) "They shall not enter My rest" (Psalm 95:11; quoted in Heb. 3:11; 4:3, 5)
 - (2) "Whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His" (Heb. 4:10).
 - iii) God, being eternal/immutable/impassible does not change from working to resting; His "work" is always "rest". So why does He emphasize His rest from the work of creation? To invite us into His rest.
 - iv) Enter His rest as a glorious gift of delighting in the finished work of Christ, of resting from every vain effort at self-justification, and of hope in the prospect of resting from all our labors in this fallen world (Rev. 14:13).

2) The Sabbath is a gift of holy-rest.

- a) Rest: "On it you shall not do any work" (Exod. 20:10)
- b) Holy:
 - i) "to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8)
 - ii) "the LORD . . . made it holy" (Exod. 20:11)
 - iii) Holy means consecrated to God.
 - (1) Worship, public and private, is holy (Luke 4:16).
 - (2) Mercy ministry is holy (Matt. 12:12).

- (3) Works of necessity, while not holy in themselves, are permitted, becoming like works of mercy (Matt. 12:11).
- c) Sabbath observance is a matter of religion and of justice.
 - i) A matter of religion:
 - (1) Exod. 31:12-17 "Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you."
 - (2) Lev. 19:30 You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD.
 - (3) Isa. 58:13-14 "then you shall take delight in the LORD"
 - ii) A matter of justice: Deut. 5:14-15 "that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you"
- d) **Application:**
 - i) Hear the command to keep the day for holy-rest.
 - ii) Receive the day as a good gift. Call it a delight.
 - iii) Delight in God.

3) **Contending for Your Sabbath**

- a) Neh. 13:15-22 "If you do so again I will lay hands on you!"
- b) Opposition:
 - i) Personal Resentment—"I will do what I want with my time, and no one, including God, will determine my schedule."
 - ii) Anti-Sabbatarian Culture in the World and the Church
 - iii) Greed/Workaholism—Amos 8:4-6
 - iv) Idolatry of Recreation—"doing your own pleasure" (Isa. 58:13) Hunting, Golfing, Sporting Events, Movies, Television, Politics
 - v) (Fear of) Unbiblical Restrictions on Christian Liberty
- c) Contending:
 - i) Repent—Turn your foot from treading on the Sabbath. Turn your heart from resenting the Sabbath.
 - ii) Rejoice—Thank God for scheduling this tryst with you. Delight in God.
 - iii) Rally—Corporate worship, Bible study, and covenant groups bring the saints together to stir one another up to love and good works. Together we can foster a counter-culture that enjoys God's rhythm for time.
 - iv) Remember—Make much of the Sabbath with your family, especially your children. Plan special games and activities for the children that keep their hearts and minds engaged with the things of God, to which they will look forward.
 - v) Ruth—Def. compassion for the misery of another. Engage in mercy ministry (visiting shut-ins, nursing home, homeless).
 - vi) Ready—Make necessary preparations for your enjoyment of the Sabbath.
 - vii) Rest—Rest upon this Lord's Day in anticipation of entering that eternal rest which Christ, our High Priest has secured for us.

Doxology: For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker! For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. (Psalm 95:3-7)