

Stewarding Our Lord's Day

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 July 2023

Preacher: Ty Brunet

[0 : 00] Good morning. It is a privilege to be with you this morning and preach God's word.! For today's message, I have included an outline in your bulletin that will be helpful as we go through this topic of stewarding your Lord's day.

While Nathan's on sabbatical, the elders have decided that a series on stewardship would be beneficial to us. The normal rhythm of our preaching is a verse-by-verse exposition. We hope to preach expository, expositionally, and our hope is to bring out the meaning of Scripture and to apply it to your lives.

During this series, we are taking a topical approach in looking at different topics of Scripture. We're going to do this in four parts. Last week, Zach took the topic of preaching on stewarding our time. Today, my responsibility and privilege is to teach our second message on stewarding our Lord's day. To teach a series on stewardship, we need to define what stewardship is.

[1 : 04] Stewardship, when discussing Scripture, involves taking care of all that God has given us. So for this message, I'm going to define stewardship, and you'll see the definition, as something God has entrusted to us for His supreme glory and our ultimate good.

What God has given to us is our responsibility to care for as God has instructed in His Word. So when we talk about God's supreme glory, it means that in everything that we've been given, that we use it or manage it for God's glory.

And all these things should go to bring about good in our lives and to the glory of God. So the main point for today's message is the Lord's day is God's gift to us, and we have a responsibility to steward this day for His supreme glory and our ultimate good.

Now that we've defined what stewardship means, let's clearly define what the Lord's day means. In the 1689 London Baptist Confession, there is a helpful summary of what the Lord's day is.

On your outline, if you flip to the back, I've provided this definition if you want to read with me. In 1689 chapter 22, paragraphs 7 through 8, it says, It is the law of nature that in general portion of time specified by God should be set apart for the worship of God.

[2 : 41] So by His Word, in a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment that obligates everyone in every age, He has specifically anointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy to Him.

From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, the appointed day was the last day of the week. After the resurrection of Christ, it was changed to the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day.

This day is to be kept to the end of the age as a Christian Sabbath, since the observance of the last day of the week has been abolished. The Sabbath is kept holy to the Lord when people have first prepared their hearts appropriately and arranged their everyday affairs in advance.

Then they observe a holy rest all day from their works, words, and thoughts about secular employment and recreation. Not only that, but they also fill the whole time with public and private acts of worship and the duties of necessity and mercy.

So this is how I would define the Lord's day that I think that we've seen in church history and what I believe the Bible teaches for us. To see this in Scripture, though, I hope for us to go to Exodus 20, verses 1 through 11.

[3 : 54] And then we'll spend our time there, and then we'll spend our time in Hebrews 4. So if you'll take your copy of God's Word and turn to Exodus 20 with me. Exodus 20, starting in verse 1.

Hear and believe the word of the Lord. And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water

under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, visiting iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. 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.

[5 : 11] On it you shall not do any work you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your livestock or the sojourner who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made the 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.

Here in Exodus 20 we are presented with what we call the Ten Commandments. We see that the first four commandments instruct us on what it looks like to love God. And the last six commandments instruct us on what it looks like to love others.

So the first four commandments help us understand that to love God is to worship him and him alone. In the first four commands he specifies how he is to be worshipped.

Look at the first command with me. He says, in the first command he shows us who is to be worshipped. In the second command he tells us how to be worshipped.

[6 : 14] In the third command he directs us in what way we worship him. And in the fourth command he advises us on when we should engage in public worship. The commands provide us with the what, the who, and the how for worshipping God.

But it also provides us of the when. So we'll see this in three points. The first point today is the Lord's day is a day of worship to Yahweh alone.

And the sub-point is the name of Yahweh. When we begin this text, when we look at verses 1 through 2, we see the phrase that says, I am the Lord your God.

The Lord in all caps in our copy of God's word is a translation of his personal name, Yahweh. When we read this word in the Bible, it calls to mind who God is.

It did for the Israelites. When God revealed himself to Moses, he said to him, I am who I am. And he said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent you.

[7 : 21] In Exodus 3, God's revelation of his personal name, he reveals that he is who he is. Or this could translate as, he will be who he will be.

In this verse, we see a clear testimony that God has always been and that he always will be. God is who he is all the time.

There is not a moment that we will find when God is not God or has given up his godness. He has always been. He is and he always will be.

Our God will never change. So Yahweh will always be who he is all the time. This is the great I am. When we read about God and his name, it defines who he is.

It carries an understanding of the wondrous works he's done and what he is like. We naturally do this too. We naturally associate what people are like with names.

[8 : 21] So when you think about naming a kid, you don't choose certain names because it reminds you of certain things. In our case, we named our son William. William is a name for Bill, who is a mentor of mine and has blessed me and set a good example of godliness.

So we wanted to honor Bill in naming our son William, but we also want William to walk in the example that Bill has set. It's a name that brings great association. It reminds me that Bill is a man who has walked faithfully in serving the Lord and he loves him with his whole heart.

So when we read the all caps of Yahweh in verse 1 or of the Lord in verse 2, we know that God's personal name is here that says Yahweh. When it says, I am Yahweh, it reminds us that this is God. Verse 2 also says, Yahweh, your God. This is Yahweh, the God of the people Israel. When the people hear, I am Yahweh, your God, it carries the meaning that this is the great I am who has saved them and cares for them.

We see in the verse that he defines who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. They are reminded that he is God and that he'll always be God.

[9 : 39] So when I consider thinking of God in a way that's helpful and simplistic and considering his attributes, a way that's been helpful for me is to remind myself that God is great and God is good.

So I'd love us to consider God's greatness and goodness for a moment. In considering God's greatness, Yahweh is incomprehensible.

He is far too great for us to even know. His name is too wonderful. His thoughts are too deep. His power is too great.

His wisdom is too inscrutable. His being is too vast. Our God does not depend upon anyone. He does not change like shifting shadows.

He does not have fleeting or changing emotions as if we cannot depend upon him. No, Yahweh is independent. He is all say. All things come from him, from within him.

[10:41] And he does not depend upon anything. He alone is God. He alone is Yahweh. Isn't this how we see in Psalms when David describes God?

Psalms 145, 3 says, Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised. His greatness is unsearchable.

Psalms 147, 5. Great is our Lord and abundant power. His understanding is beyond measure. How about how Isaiah describes them in Isaiah 46?

I am God and there is none other. I am God and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done.

Saying, My counsel shall stand and I will accomplish my purpose. Or how about Isaiah 55, verses 8 through 9? For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, declares Yahweh.

[11:45] For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. Truly, God is incomprehensible and majestic and too great for us to know.

But He is also good. He has revealed Himself to us in His creation and revelation. And we see His goodness. He is full of steadfast love.

He lavishes His mercy and grace upon us. He is kind and compassionate. He is holy and just. He sees us and knows us.

He is near to the broken and takes care of the widows and the orphans. We see this also in the Psalms when David says, Yahweh works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

He may know His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel. Yahweh is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

[12:51] He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is His steadfast love towards those who fear Him.

And as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so Yahweh shows compassion to those who fear Him.

For He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. Or how about Psalm 147.3? He says, He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

So when we read Exodus and we see in verse 2 that He's introduced as, I am Yahweh, your God. He shows His redemption in that verse.

But it also carries this meaning that this is God. And it should cause us to be enthralled. It should cause us to praise that this is the God that we come now to worship.

[14:00] On our Lord's Day, when we steward it, when we manage our day, we're preparing our hearts to go and meet the living God in the church of the living God. So when we get here, we see that this is how Moses introduces the Ten Commandments.

After presenting himself to Israel as Yahweh, the God who has saved them from their slavery, He then gives them His gracious rules for how to love and worship Him.

These rules are a demonstration of God's grace to inform us how we should live. He has revealed Himself to us. For the unbelieving, these rules serve as a rod that condemns, that shows one of their sin.

But for the believing, these rules are a guide and a counsel. A counselor. Psalm 119.18 says, Open my eyes that I may behold the wondrous things of your law.

Psalm 119.24 says, Your testimonies are my delight. They are my counselors. And Psalm 119.10 says, The law is more to be desired than gold.

[15:11] Even much fine gold. And sweeter also than the honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. According to the Bible, the law is something that is sweeter than honey and richer than gold.

And it is good. And it is gracious that we have them so that we can love and worship God properly. So in the first three commandments, we see that because God is Yahweh, He deserves our worship exclusively.

He commands that there is no one before Him and there is nothing that we can do to resemble Him on earth that will properly worship Him. In fact, for those who make images to represent God and worship Him, when they make something and they bow down to it, they're actually heaping up judgment.

Verse 5 says, I, Yahweh, your God, am a jealous God. We should not make images to worship or resemble God because we have God to worship.

Our love and affection finds its chief end and purpose in God. Man and woman, God's image bearers, the crown of His glorious creation, find their purpose and fulfillment in the worship of God. [16:26] Creation and all that is within it was made to worship and glorify God. That's what the Bible is teaching from beginning to end. We are image bearers and our goal is to reflect the majesty and the glory and the splendor of our God.

Then we get to the third commandment and it directs us on how we should live in a way that honors Yahweh with our words and our speech. The word here, take, is the Hebrew word that is used to mean to carry or to lift.

The verse is saying that we should not bear the name of Yahweh in a worthless manner. As followers of the one true God, the way we speak and live is not inconsequential, but it matters consequently.

When we speak, our words represent the God we worship. When we act, our actions reflect the God we serve. The third commandment directs us to bear God's image well, to reflect and represent Him well in the world we live.

So finally, the fourth commandment informs the time in which we should worship. In the first three commandments, one sees that God requires worship exclusively, and this is done in how we live for Him.

[17:47] According to the first three commandments, our worship to Yahweh is every day. Every day we're commanded to worship God and bear His name well. In the fourth commandment, God reminds the people that while they represent and image God every moment, there is a special day that God has established for His people to worship Him.

This precious and sacred day is the day we call the Sabbath day. Leads me to point number two. The Lord's day is the day of resting in Christ.

So look at Exodus 28 with me. It says, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. This verse here is not establishing a Sabbath day for the people of God to start doing.

It is pointing back to Genesis 2, 1-3, and telling the people to remember the Sabbath day that He has established. This command was established in creation and was meant for the people of Israel to keep.

Genesis 2, 1-3 says, Thus the heavens and earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done and rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.

[19:01] 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. We see here that the Sabbath day is what we call a creation ordinance or a creation law.

It was established in creation for all humanity. At this point there wasn't Israel and other nations. It was Ab and Eve. It was meant for all humanity to observe. It is meant to be kept from the beginning of creation and to the end of the world when we have final and internal rest.

So in Genesis 2, 1-3, we see a few things. We see that God has instituted a pattern or rhythm meant to be kept of work and rest.

For six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall observe the Sabbath rest. Number two, the Sabbath day was a day of rest.

And number three, the seventh day was made holy. It is a day to be sanctified by all men in the day in which God has blessed. So when we get to Exodus 28, the word remember is recalling.

[20:12] It's not establishing a new thing to practice. It's something that God has reminded us that has been since creation. The use of the word remember shows us that we have a sacred practice established by God since creation.

This command is for the perpetuity of the sabbatical rhythm. Six days we work, one day we rest. The command emphasizes the continuity of a Sabbath day.

This day is to be exalted as a significant day of the week where we come, revere, and worship Yahweh, and we find rest in Him. The Westminster Larger Catechism, in discussing the Fourth Commandment, asked this question.

Why is the word remember set in the beginning of the Fourth Commandment? And the response of the catechism is, the word remember is set in the beginning of the Fourth Commandment, partly because of the great benefit of remembering it.

We being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it, and in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments. And to continue a thankful remembrance of two great benefits of creation and redemption, and partly because we're very ready to forget it.

[21 : 21] The Sabbath helps God's people to be reminded of the sanctity of the day that God has set, and it's important that we learn to regulate our lives around it.

When our lives are in tune with the sabbatical rhythm, we are faithful in obeying the rest of the commandments to live before God. The one day of rest of this week was part of God's good design for us, and God Himself modeled it for us in creation.

But we also see that remember is used because we are quick to forget. We're quick to forget the worship of God and to make Him holy. A healthy sabbatical practice bolsters a healthy holy living every day.

We rest on the Sabbath so that we can rest in Christ every day. They are not mutually exclusive things, as if they're opponents, but they are true in holy duties together.

As we see in the Ten Commandments, three are about worshiping God all the time. One's about time. In the same way, we should rest in Christ all the time. But one command would be to rest in Him on a special day.

[22 : 31] In Exodus 20, 8 through 11, we see the continuation of the Sabbath. When Jesus Christ came, lived, died, He completely obeyed and fulfilled the law.

In the fulfillment of the law, the ceremonial and civil aspects of the law were fulfilled and abolished. The moral law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, serve as a rule of life for the church.

For the Christian, the law is no longer a schoolmaster showing us of all the wrongs that we have done, but the law is a treasure and a guide, showing us how to love our God.

The Christian's proper response to the law is delight, because they know how to love and worship God. Hebrews 4, 1 through 11, teaches us that there still remains a Sabbath rest for the believers today.

If you'll turn there with me, we will look at Hebrews 4, 1 through 11. Beginning in verse 1.

[23 : 33] Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith to those who listened.

For we who have believed that rest, as He had said, as I swore on my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For He has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way. God rested on the seventh day from all His works. And again in this passage, He said, they shall not enter my rest. Since, therefore, it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience.

And again, He appoints a certain day today, saying through David, so long afterward, and the words already quoted, Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from His works as God did from His.

[24 : 48] Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. As you're reading, you probably observed that there is a lot of uses of the word rest.

Rest is all throughout Hebrews chapter 4. And the author in this book is not using the rest in a linear fashion as one usage, but showing multiple types of rest.

He shows the rest of God at creation, the rest of entering the promised land, and other types of rest. But he's using these examples to portray three types of rest we find in Hebrews chapter 4.

We see in Hebrews chapter 4, there is one rest in Christ. We see this in verses 2 through 3. Number two, the saints' everlasting rest in heaven. We see this in verses 11 through 13. And number three, that there is a Sabbath rest. We see in Hebrews 4, 9. In verses 2 through 3, we see that rest is found in Christ.

[25 : 49] The one who believes in the gospel of Jesus Christ has been united to him by faith and enters his rest. In verses 11 through 13, there is a command to strive to enter everlasting rest.

While the believer has rest in Christ, they continually set their eyes on the everlasting rest to come. This is done through God's living and abiding word. In verse 9, the author makes clear that there is a Sabbath observance for the believer.

We see this in three ways. Number one, the phrase, there remains, is used to describe action that is presently required. And this is how the word remains is used in the rest of the book of Hebrews. Number two, the word used for rest is completely different than all the rest of the words. If you were a normal Greek reader in this time, reading Hebrews chapter 4, this is what you would hear. Katapausis, Katapausis, there remains a Katapausis, Katapausis, Sabbatismos, Katapausis, Katapausis. And in that, there seems to be a different word with a distinct and different meaning.

[26 : 56] This is demonstrated in the usage of this word. This word is only used one time in all of scripture. Hebrews chapter 4, verse 9. The third reason, while I think this means Sabbath rest, Sabbath keeping, or Sabbath observance, is that the word Sabbatismos is used four times in post-biblical writings.

And in the Septuagint, it's used with relative associated terms that are associated with the same verbs to mean Sabbath observance. In both all post-biblical writings and the Septuagint with related terms, all of it means Sabbath observance or Sabbath keeping.

The Lexan Theological Dictionary supports this definition, saying, this noun, Sabbatismos, is derived from the verb Sabbatidzo, which means the rest on the Sabbath and helps us understand that Sabbatismos means resting on the Sabbath.

The usage in post-biblical sources and the Septuagint helps understand that the word Sabbatismos in Hebrews 4, 9 has the meaning of Sabbath observance or Sabbath keeping.

So when the believer is reading Hebrews 4, 9, it is to be understood that there remains a Sabbath keeping or a Sabbath rest for the people of God. Brothers and sisters, God has designed the Sabbath for man and woman as a practice to be kept until the blessed and happy rest that we have in all eternity.

[28 : 24] The 1689 says, this day is kept to the end of the age as a Christian Sabbath. While verse 9 reminds the people of God of their sabbatical duty, verse 10 gives the people of God the foundation of this duty.

In verse 10, it says, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. The New King James translation says, he who has entered God's rest instead of whoever. I'm inclined to see that the New King James translation has a better rendering here. Verse 10 is not talking about believers but of Christ. The only one who can truly rest from and in his works as God did in creation, in the creation of the world, is Jesus who did in the new creation.

Just as God rested from his work of creation, Jesus now rests from his work of new creation. And as Hebrews 1.3 says, he sat down at the right hand of majesty. The former Sabbath of the New Testament has been abolished and is fulfilled in the work of Christ.

The Christian Sabbath is the first day of the week and is a day to find rest in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus came, he lived, he died, and he rose again.

[29 : 42] That our old lives would be dead in him and our new lives would live in him. It is Christ who now lives in us. And just as Jesus rose from the dead bringing victory and life for us, we wake up on Sunday mornings to celebrate and to rest in Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, are there any here today that is weary or heavy laden? Are any here carrying the weight of their sin feeling condemnation?

Are there any who are anxious or who are depressed or who feel unstable? Is there anyone who is suffering that feels as if their life is tossed to and fro like a wave?

Look no further. The salve of your soul is presented to you this morning. You can come to the house of God on the day of rest and we have a Savior who gives rest to his children.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, offers rest from our sins and works. So today, you can come without price, privilege, or works and rest in Christ.

[30 : 53] As Matthew 11, 28-30 says, Come to me all who labor and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Our souls now rest in Christ as we look forward to the eternal rest to come.

That one day we will be delivered from this body of death. One day we will no longer be stained by sin and be wrestling with the flesh. So as the day is approaching when our rest will be full and forever, brothers and sisters, rest now in Christ with your gaze looking forward towards eternity. Our Sabbath day is designed as a day of gospel rest. This is done corporately in our gatherings and privately in our homes. Truly, the Lord's day is a day of resting in Christ.

Point number three. The Lord's day is a day to be kept holy to God. If you turn back over on your outline to the confession, chapter 22, paragraph 8 summarizes how to sanctify the Lord's day, how to make this day holy.

[32 : 11] The Sabbath is kept holy to the Lord when people have first prepared their hearts appropriately and arrange their everyday affairs in advance. Then they observe a holy rest all day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their secular employment and recreation.

Not only that, but they also fill the whole time with public and private acts of worship and duties of necessity and mercy. Under this point, we're going to have three sub-points. Preparation, observation, and contemplation.

Number one, preparation. First, the Lord's day is a day holy, that is to be kept holy by preparing for the day. This preparation involves preparing our hearts before the Lord and taking care of our normal tasks in advance.

When we work in the preparation for the Lord's day, we are keeping the day holy. Our preparation is giving time to make this day sacred and precious for the worship of Yahweh. So just as the Israelites would come and do ceremonial practices to approach God, we come and prepare our hearts to approach Him in worship today.

And just as Israelites would get their house together and clean up and make sure they're not doing the work they would need to do every day, we prepare our normal everyday affairs and our work so that we can spend this day in worship to our God.

[33 : 32] The day is not about what we don't do, but it's a day where we occupy ourselves with our King of Kings and our Lord of Lords, and our triune God, the Father, Son, and the Spirit.

I don't have much time to provide a lot of practical examples for how this is done. I'd be happy to give some areas that I think would be really helpful if you want to talk. But another suggestion I have is Nathan preached a three-part series on this subject in 2018.

And if you go to CFC's website, scroll all the way down to the bottom and go to sermons, he has a series on Exodus 19, and 20. If you go to those sermons, you can find them there, and he gives so many great practical observations that we can do to help prepare and set this day apart.

Also, the Puritans have written some great material on practicing the Sabbath well. So I want to give you a couple quotes on how they describe preparing for this day. Richard Baxter calls the Lord's Day a day for heart work.

For the Puritans, the battle for our Lord's Day is won or lost on the foregoing Saturday night, when time should be set aside for self-examination, confession, and prayer for the coming day. George Swinnick says, if thou wouldst leave thy heart with God on Saturday night, thou shouldst find it with him in the Lord's Day morning.

[34 : 55] Richard Baxter says, go seasonably to bed, that you may not be sleepy on the Lord's Day. Number two of the sub-points, observation. In keeping the Lord's Day holy, we observe a holy rest from everyday affairs and secular employment.

Instead of focusing on everyday affairs and secular employment, we are resting in the finished work of Christ and filling this whole day with worship of God.

This was the central part of the Lord's Day is the gathering of the saints for corporate worship. We see this in Acts 27 and in 1 Corinthians 16, 1-2. Instead of keeping the Sabbath on Saturday, the saints after the resurrection of Christ would gather on the first day of the week, called the Lord's Day, to worship God.

Scripture testifies to this change and church history authenticates this change. The purpose for corporate gathering of the saints is to worship our sovereign king. 1 Timothy 3-16 calls the

gathering of the church the household of God.

Paul calls this gathering the church of the living God. In Matthew 18, verses 15-20, Jesus explains how to confront sin in the church, and if necessary, how to apply church discipline.

[36 : 12] But in verse 20 of Matthew 18, it says, it is in the church of the living God, his household, that in a special way, his presence is here.

When Paul exhorts Timothy to preach the word in 2 Timothy 4, he gives a severe warning. He says, I charge you in the presence of God, who is the judge of the living and the dead, by his appearing in kingdom, preach the word.

the presence of God is with his people in a special way on the Lord's Day, in the gathering of the saints as the church. And when the preacher goes before the pulpit, he is under solemn oath, a solemn pledge to preach God's word and nothing else.

And it is this word preached that we see in 2 Timothy 3 that matures the church, and it is this word preached we see in 1 Timothy that makes the people holy. The people of God experience God in the preaching of his word.

So, brothers and sisters, the gathering of our church on a Sunday morning is not a social endeavor. We come together to worship the living God. We come to praise him and to hear his word brought forth to bear on our lives.

[37 : 30] When we come to the gathering of the saints, we are coming for the God who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. So, as we consider the Lord's day, and how to steward this day for his glory and our good, we need to set this day, especially this gathering that we're in, as holy, as a sacred day and a sacred time.

If possible, the gathering of the church should not be missed because it is the household of God gathered, and the living God is especially present here. the Puritans, when they talked about going to church, they didn't say we're going to church, they would say we're going to sermon, because they're going to hear the word of God proclaimed, brought to bear, so that it would change them, and not only them, that it would change their lives.

So, after that, the fathers would then go home, and they would teach their kids from the oldest to the youngest the sermon, so that the kids would know the word, it would be in their hearts, and Lord willing, they would grow into it, and it would change them.

The gathering of the saints for us is a time for us to rejoice. It's a delight, it's a feast, where we come and hear about the proclamation of Jesus Christ, and where we rest in his finished work, and where we look forward to the day approaching, where we have eternal rest.

While the primacy of our gathering is to worship our triune God, there is an important and organic component that scripture stresses, in the gathering of the church, believers are covenanted together for Christian practice.

[39 : 10] Hebrews 10, 24-25 says, and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Our gathering together is to worship Yahweh, and the organic means that we come together is that we come together to minister to one another, to love and to stir in good works. The Puritans call this every limb, every member ministry.

J.I. Packer describes it this way, the New Testament picture, the New Testament picture is the local church as a body in which every member, that is literally every limb, has its own part to play in advancing the welfare and growth as a whole.

1 Peter 4, 10-11 calls us to steward God's grace given to us. The way in which we steward God's grace is to use our giftings to serve his body. When we come together, we are called to serve one another by stirring one another in love and helping each other become more heavenward.

So be encouraged by 1 Peter 4, 10-11. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

[40 : 25] Whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God, whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. The Lord's Day gathering includes the gathering of the church as a central day and it also includes how we spend the rest of our day.

So the central part of our day is coming together as a church, as the household of God, as the temple and as the body of Christ. But it's also important how we spend the rest of our day. And that's where we talk about the Sabbath keeping, is that the rest of our day should be spent in ways that encourage and provoke worship of God and rest in Christ. J.I.

Packer says regarding the Sabbath keeping, Sabbath keeping means action, not inaction. The Lord's Day is not a day for idleness. A Puritanist said, idleness is a sin every day, but much more on the Lord's Day.

[41 : 30] J.I. Packer goes on to say, we are to rest from the business of our earthly calling in order to prosecute the business of our heavenly calling. These acts of worship can be offered through hospitality, through holy conversations, through talking of the things of God.

This can be done through taking a nap, going on walks, hikes, playing in the yard, going to the park. The intention is to live in a manner that is worshipful to God and helps your family worship God. On the negative, we should avoid things that make our mind dull and idle. We should not engage in things that provoke sin in our hearts. In a great article by Robert Godfrey called *Revived by Sabbath Revival*, he says, as we seek to cultivate afresh a Sabbath keeping among us, we need to do that positively.

We should not in the first place ask what we may not do as a list of do and don'ts. Rather, we should ask how we can give this day to God to develop our relationship with him. In answer to any question about what we may do on Sunday, we should first ask if it contributes to the giving of the day to the Lord. If work or recreation distracts us from God, then it is not appropriate to the Sabbath.

[42 : 44] We don't need a long list of approved or forbidden activities, but we need to simply ask, does this contribute to worshipping the Lord and giving this day to the Lord?

The Sabbath is not a day of do and don'ts, it's a day of rest and delight in our God. Finally, in brief, contemplation. The Sabbath, the Lord's day, is a day that is to be kept holy and a day of rest until we reach our final rest.

Robert Godfrey says, we need the Sabbath now as a foretaste of the blessed eternal rest that Christ has won for us. Our fellowship with him in public and private worship on the Lord's day is the beginning of that everlasting rest that he promises.

The rest that we partake in every day in Christ, and especially on the Sabbath day, helps us anticipate the marriage supper of the Lamb. It helps us long for the day when sin will be no more, when sin will be vanquished and we will be perfectly arrayed in glory.

Our Sabbath rest is a longing for a greater rest, a rest of eternal communion with our Lord. This is a day of contemplation what is to come and remind ourselves it is far better than the earthly joys that we have now.

[44 : 01] This is a day to teach our children that life is temporary and there is much joy in heaven to come, that we don't live for this world but we live for the world to come. This is a day that we look forward and rest backwards until we one day rest finally forward.

A lot of us parents with young kids are hearing this probably and thinking, how do I do this? How can I sit down and tell my kids certain things about the Lord's Day? How can I cultivate this in my home?

Because right now for a lot of us, life is crazy with littles. My suggestion is that our Sabbath keeping looks different than older kids in the home.

If we had older kids in the home, there would be more conversations, more investment in the growing together and knowing the Lord. But for the littles, I recommend that we now develop habits and practices that we can cultivate in our home, that become normal in our home and regulate our lives to the sabbatical rhythm.

And Lord willing, as they grow up, these practices will be normal. They'll be something that they look forward to and that they can delight in. So in closing, the Lord's Day is a sacred day where God alone is worshipped.

[45 : 13] We rest from our normal affairs and find solace in the finished work of Christ. It is a day to be kept holy. A sabbatical life is a life of rhythm and helps us regulate a proper worship of God.

Let every day be a day of rest in Christ, but let especially the Lord's Day be a day of rest and feasting with your Lord. I want to leave you with a quote from Richard Baxter in his book *The Everlasting Rest of the Saints*.

May the living God who is the portion rest of his saints make these our carnal minds so spiritual and our earthly hearts so heavenly that loving him and delighting in him may be the work of our hearts. Let us pray together.