

Exodus 20:8-11

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[0:00] Please take out your copy of God's Word, which I hope you have with you. It's well read and treasured in your heart this morning. And turn with me to Exodus chapter 20. Our primary text for today, although I'll go to a number of other texts, is Exodus chapter 20, verses 8 through 11.

Before we read it together and get into a discussion of it, I want to remind you where we've been. Or inform you if you're a guest, you're with us today.

A careful study of the Sermon on the Mount brought us to Matthew chapter 5, verses 17 through 20, where Matthew records Jesus saying, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

[1:14] For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And this text has caused us to ask the question, what is the relationship between the Old Testament law and the gospel of Jesus Christ?

We have answered that question with two answers. First, the Old Testament law is meant to bring us to Jesus Christ.

It fixes for us the holy standard that God requires and exposes our failure to keep such a law. It creates for us a problem that we might find the solution to said problem in the person and work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So that's one way that the law serves. Secondly, having been set free from the burden of it, the Old Testament law continues to serve as a guide for how our lives might please God.

[2:31] So having been accepted by God in the perfect righteousness of Jesus, we are gratefully obedient. To the commands of God.

Now we have distinguished between some categories of Old Testament laws. We have divided them into three parts. And this is a common division found.

Those laws that are considered civil, that were meant to govern Israel as a theocracy. And so when Israel ceased to exist as a theocracy, those laws no longer reign.

Ceremonial. Ceremonial. Ceremonial. These are laws that are meant to foreshadow something greater that's found in Christ. The sacrificial system, as an example.

The Day of Atonement. And those sacrifices that were made on that day find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for all time.

[3:31] And finally, those laws that are moral. And that is these commandments that we are to keep perpetually.

The moral law finds its briefest summary in Matthew chapter 22, verses 37 through 40, where Jesus says, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

And Jesus here is citing from Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18. The moral law finds its more expanded summary in the Ten Commandments, which is why we have found ourselves here in

Exodus chapter 20, considering these commands given to Moses on Mount Sinai, written in stone, which is significant.

And we began considering them in detail last week. And I'll insert at this point an apology for the fire hose of information I gave you all last week.

[4:45] But my hope was to get you to see the expanse of the commands that are given to us that we might pick up the Bible and read and understand and desire obedience to a most holy God.

The first four commandments outline what loving the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind looks like. And the last six commandments outline what you shall love your neighbor as yourself looks like.

Now, I have informed you that there are many views on the relationship between the Old Testament law and the gospel of Jesus Christ. I purchased a book this week that I had to discipline myself not to open because it was five competing views.

And one of those books well put together where someone writes and somebody writes in response to their writing. And I just went, nope, nope, nope. I can't blow my brain open again on this matter. You may remember the giant stack of books that I brought up on stage to make the point that it's a big point of contention and a challenging one. Some will say that the Old Testament law has no place in the life of the Christian and will look instead to the commands of the New Testament.

[6:03] This is not at all troubling as nine of the commandments found in Exodus 20 are restated at some point and in varying ways in the teaching of the New Testament.

It's not troubling until we consider the fourth commandment, which we will do today and I believe also next Sunday.

Yeah, we're going to get into it next Sunday as well. I won't cover all my notes today because of time. Having stated that I believe that, having been set free from the burden of the Old Testament law, it continues to serve as a guide for how our lives might please God, I believe that we are to keep it, which includes the fourth commandment.

We don't merely dismiss one out of the ten and go, well, these nine we'll keep active, but this one we won't. But what we must answer is, how are we to keep the fourth commandment?

What does it look like for us to keep the fourth commandment? So before we do that, I want you to be reminded that the law was not given, its intention was not to be a burden to God's people, but it was intended to be loving instruction.

[7:28] Listen to a sampling from Psalm 119 concerning the goodness of God's law. The psalmist writes in verse 1, Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Verse 14, In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. Verse 35, Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

Verse 52, When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O Lord. Verse 103, How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Verse 167, My soul keeps your testimonies. I love them exceedingly. The psalmist tells us that God's law brings blessing, is a delight, is a comfort to the afflicted, is tasty, and that it is lovely. This is the attitude that we should come to the fourth commandment with. As we approach it to try to understand it, we should understand, the filter we place up is, God loves us, and cares for us, and wants good for us.

[8:55] We should not see it as burdensome, but rather as aimed at our good, and more importantly, at His glory. So, Exodus chapter 20, verse 8 through 11, Beloved, this is God's word to us.

It was written for His glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it, in order to believe its promises, and obey its commands. 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 the sojourner who was within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made 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.

Now I just want to make a little bit of a note, before moving on. Of these commands etched in stone, God spends more time, more space, stone space, on this command, than any other.

[10:13] Isn't that just interesting? Right? It's the transition command, from those devotions to God, service to God, and to those commands, that are devotion and service to others.

That's all. It's just a thought. Now, if you were to ask me, Nathan, are we meant to keep the fourth commandment? I would say, yes.

But if you ask me, Nathan, are we meant to keep the Sabbath? I would say, well, we are meant to keep the fourth commandment. And then I would proceed to answer a number of questions, for our mutual benefit.

Question number one. What does it mean to keep the fourth commandment? What does it mean to keep the fourth commandment?

Now, we have previously distinguished between some categories of Old Testament law, civil, ceremonial, and moral. I ran back through those for you just a moment ago. The fourth commandment, interestingly, has elements of all three.

[11:18] And this is important in our understanding of the commandment. First, it had some civil elements to it. Israel as a nation state, collectively rested on the Sabbath day, on Saturday in their time.

Altogether, stopped. It was meant to be kept by all of them, and therefore breaking it was punishable. In fact, it was a capital crime.

If you read in Nehemiah, Nehemiah is furious with God's people when they break the Sabbath, when people are so eager to get in and to trade, to gain more for themselves. He's absolutely furious with them that they would do such a thing.

So it has a civil element to it, which is no longer the case in our day, although we could all wish that it was, that no one had to work when we gather as a church.

It also has a ceremonial element to it. The Sabbath was meant to foreshadow the rest that is found in Christ.

[12:24] The rest that those of us who are in Christ have and will have for eternity. And it also has a moral element.

The Sabbath commandment comes smack in the middle of the Ten Commandments, as I mentioned, the other nine of which are plainly moral laws. Old Testament prophets consistently emphasize matters of the heart, moral laws, above the ceremonial laws.

For example, in Hosea chapter 6 and verse 6, God says to the prophet Isaiah, for I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

The prophets treated the Sabbath as if it was a matter of the heart, commending the keeping of it again and again.

For example, in Isaiah chapter 56 and verse 2, blessed is the man who does this, keeps the Sabbath, and the son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

[13:36] So the Sabbath commandment is a sort of ceremonial moral law. If you can combine those two things together.

The fulfillment of the ceremonial portion, having been fulfilled in Christ, should find us expecting some change to the commandment.

An example of this would be circumcision to baptism. The moral component should find us expecting to keep it. I noted earlier that nine of the commandments found in Exodus 20 are restated at some point in the teaching of the New Testament.

The single exception being the fourth commandment. Some argue that because the fourth commandment is not explicitly mentioned, then it no longer has to be obeyed.

But it is also never explicitly abolished. Why then would we assume that it is not to be obeyed? This kind of logic will lead us to all sorts of errors.

[14:46] So let me take you to a place in the New Testament where the Sabbath is spoken of, and it is spoken of much in the New Testament. This will be one example. Matthew chapter 12. So please turn with me to Matthew chapter 12.

Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12. Matthew chapter 12.

Here Matthew records for us two circumstances that happened on the Sabbath.

So this has been on Saturday. And the Pharisees' problem with what happened. And then Jesus' response to it. Luke records this for us as well. In Luke's account, these two things happened on separate Sabbath days.

But he puts them together. And I think Luke does so to really clearly make the point. What is Jesus trying to teach us about the Sabbath? About a day set aside in this way.

[15:53] So beginning in verse 1. At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry. And they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. He said to them, Have you not read what David did when he was hungry and those who were with him?

How he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?

I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

For the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath. He went on from there and entered their synagogue. And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him?

[17:03] He said to them, Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep?

So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand. And the man stretched it out and it was restored healthy like the other.

But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him how to destroy him. So let me note a couple of things for you from this text. First, Jesus does not abolish the Sabbath.

He does not say to the Pharisees, Oh, the Sabbath is no longer a thing. He just simply says, I'm the Lord of the Sabbath. I'm going to define what was always meant by the keeping of such a day.

Secondly, Jesus allows for work of necessity. Now note that he does not refute that what the disciples were doing was not against the law.

[18:09] What they were doing was working. They were gleaning wheat and eating it. And he goes on to use an example that's a clear infraction of the law where David and his men, having returned from battle, were hungry.

And they went and ate sacred bread. They were not meant to eat. And what is the point that Jesus makes here? That this profaning of the Sabbath is okay in times of necessity.

That it's not okay for these disciples and David and his men to go hungry. This is not the point of the keeping of this day.

That it's okay. He actually calls the priestly duties a profaning of the Sabbath. But they had work to do on this day in keeping the temple.

So he says and allows for work of necessity. Now, would it have been better that David and his men and the disciples had packed bread along with them and had something to eat?

[19:16] Surely it would have been. But it was okay. When they were hungry, they ate. And we can give lots of application for this. And I'll do so in brief this week and get into it more in particulars into next week.

We want to give allowance for people that we want working on the Lord's Day. Military. Police.

Are we glad that we can call 911 this morning? I am. Firemen. I'm glad that we just don't have to let buildings burn to the ground on Sundays. ER doctors and nurses.

Thankful that we can go from this place to a hospital and receive care. Maybe in some cases of absolute necessity that the only job you can find is going to require of you to work on a Sunday.

But there is some space made here for necessity. The third thing I want to note is that Jesus desires mercy.

[20:22] Now the Pharisees failed to understand that the Sabbath was for mercy. It was meant to be an expression of mercy to them. And they were meant to be merciful to others.

The Pharisees had built up so many extra laws. Things that they added on top of in order to define what it meant to rest.

They were just too uncertain about the fourth commandment. And so they had to create a bunch of particular things and pressed upon everybody to obey them. Laid up burdens on people in that way. Some Pharisees held that. You'll get a kick out of this. I don't know if this happened often in their day. But if a wall fell on top of someone on the Sabbath, only enough rubble could be removed to find out how badly the person was injured.

So you can lift those stones to just say, are you all right? If he was not injured too badly, then he must be left until the Sabbath ended when the rescue could be completed.

[21:28] They allowed for acts of mercy in absolute dire circumstance. Like the person will die today if they don't receive care. But otherwise, they had to wait.

Which is why it's significant that Jesus goes and heals a man with a hand that's withered. And I take that to mean that he had broken it.

Maybe the bones were crushed. He couldn't use his hand. Which is not a necessary part of our body. A very helpful part of our body. But not a necessary part of our body.

And Jesus displays mercy. So Jesus does not abolish the Sabbath. Jesus allows for work of necessity. And Jesus desires mercy.

So Jesus clarifies here. And this is recorded by Matthew and by Luke to help us to understand the Sabbath itself. Now the change that we do find to the Sabbath in the New Testament is the moving of the day of rest.

[22:32] From Saturday as a time of rest and a remembering of their deliverance from Egypt.

To Sunday where early Christians set themselves apart from Judaism. And met on this first day of the week in celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Which occurred on a Sunday. We can see this in Acts chapter 20 verse 7. On the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread. Paul talked with them and instructs them until midnight.

This day came to be known as the Lord's day. We see that in Revelation chapter 1 verse 10. John speaks of the vision that he has. And he says, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.

There is evidence that this was the prominent practice of the early church. Ignatius, who was a first century bishop, wrote, Christians no longer observing the Sabbath, but fashioning their lives after the Lord's day.

[23:39] On which our life also arose in him that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ. And Tertullian, who was a second century theologian, wrote that for Christians, Sunday is a day of joy.

And that pagans would not celebrate anything on Sunday for fear they might be mistaken for Christians. So the church had clearly, not in entirety, there was a lot of working out happening of this Sabbath, Saturday, Sunday relationship.

But certainly into the first and certainly in second century, there was a transition that was happening. And the early church was meeting in this way.

And so let me read to you from the London Baptist Confession of 1689. I did not put this on the back of your bulletin. You are welcome. Briefly, as it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time by God's appointment be set apart for the worship of God, so by his word, in a positive moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week.

And from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

[25:21] So I really want you to get on board with this. And I don't want you to get on board with this because I need you here on Sundays. I certainly don't want you to get on board with this because God can't do without your voice in the choir of the congregation.

But I want you to get on board with this because God intends it for your good. And if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, he intends it for his glory. He intends to set his people apart in very particular ways.

We are strange people for gathering together in this room, doing the things we're doing on such a beautiful day. If this doesn't have weight and meaning because we worship this risen Christ, we should go hiking.

It is gorgeous outside today. And we live in or close to Dahlenega. So if you're feeling some defiance at this point, maybe you've studied this matter for yourself.

There's some texts that are coming to mind. You're going, wait, wait, Nathan. Hang on. I want to look at some of those difficult texts. I really want to lay the issue to rest, although I'm assuming it won't be laid to rest this morning.

[26:36] We'll have many conversations following this about it. But let's look together at some of those difficult texts. Some of those go-to texts that people go to to say, wait a minute, we don't have to keep the fourth commandment.

Many of these seem on their outset to run in contradiction to what I'm about to say. First, let's look at the Pauline texts. The first one, Romans chapter 14.

So turn there with me. Romans chapter 14. This may have come to your mind.

Verse 5. Verse 5. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike.

Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. And so, here in this context, Paul is talking about not passing judgment on the weaker brother. And many will run to this and say, look, see, if someone thinks, right, here I am representing the weaker brother this morning to you, right, I think we ought to gather on a day, and we ought to set it apart for rest and joy in the Lord.

[27:59] Just let him think that. And it's okay that you don't have such a narrow view. This is what people will do with this text. But the greater context of this passage concerns food.

Look at verses 3 and 4. But not the one who eats despise the one who abstains. But not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls, and he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

And then we see verse 5, right? Now look at verse 6. It is most likely that Paul is not addressing two separate matters here.

He is not addressing the matter of food and then the matter of a particular day of worship, but rather he is addressing fasting. And those who believe that there was a particular day on which they should fast.

[29:17] I think that is a fairly plain reading of the text. Now, if you can't get there with me, if this text gives us any space for our understanding of the fourth commandment, it would only be in the day selected.

And I'm okay with that. Exodus chapter 20 verse 9 says, Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

It doesn't define necessarily that it has to be Saturday. In fact, some assume that the word Sabbath means Saturday, and it doesn't. It actually means week. It's a very basic Hebrew word.

But no one would contend that we ought not gather as the church. And if they do, they could be corrected from Hebrews chapter 10, verse 24 and 25.

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 encourage one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

[30:27] So you see, taking a day of rest and a day to gather with the church is not meant to be done at your convenience. It's meant to be even

labored for, set aside, especially for the worship of God.

So you don't wake up in the morning and come if you feel like it. I would never come. You come because it's a good command for you to come.

Let's look at another text. Galatians chapter 4, verses 8 through 11. And I'll have you know that as I've had conversations about the Sabbath after the last couple of weeks, every one of these has been brought up as a, but what about, hey, but what about Galatians 4?

So, so here, here are the answers to those questions. And they're fair questions. They're very fair questions. If you want to come down to my study, I'll show you the board that I actually printed all these texts and put them on to just like stand and look at them all.

Formally, when you do not know God, Paul writes to the Galatians, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world whose slaves you want to be once more?

[31:53] You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. Right? So some will say, wait, he's talking about the observation of days.

And I agree, he is. He most certainly is. And he very likely is referring to the Sabbath. But what is the larger context of Paul's letter to the church of Galatia?

They were being overrun by what are known as the Judaizers. Those who claim to be followers of Christ, but said to Gentile believers, you must come underneath the law of God.

You must be a keeper of the law of God to be accepted by God. They flipped the gospel upside down. Right? So that's not what I'm saying. Right?

We're accepted by God, by faith in Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness, and therefore we want to obey him. They were flipping the whole thing around. They're saying, no, no, no. You must be circumcised.

[32:53] This was the major issue of the day. Right? You Gentile believers must be circumcised in order to be found in Christ. This is what Paul is speaking against, and he's giving further example of that in talking about this observation of days and months and seasons and years.

Not for obedience, but for salvation. You're keeping these things. Right? May it never be. There's Galatians chapter 4.

One more. Colossians chapter 2. One more from Paul, anyway. Colossians chapter 2, verse 16 and 17.

Paul writes, Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. Your translation might say Sabbaths.

There were multiple keepings of these. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Okay? So many will take this, and I can understand it, but many will take this and say, See, no one can pass judgment over me.

[34:08] No one can expect that I would keep a day set apart for the Lord. But once again, Paul is battling a particular heresy of the day. And we don't know exactly what it was.

Some letters we know, Ephesians, Galatians. In this case, it seems to be some kind of Jewish asceticism. If you read on down in Colossians chapter 2, verse 20 and verse 21, Paul says, If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations?

These are the things being applied to them by these Jewish ascetics. Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch.

So if you read carefully through Colossians chapter 2, you'll see that Paul is addressing this very particular type of heresy that was being applied as well to these festivals, new moon, Sabbaths. Once again, it's not explicitly say that we're no longer meant to keep the fourth commandment. And then finally, turn to Hebrews chapter 4.

[35:32] The logic of the author of Hebrews really, really begins at the end of chapter 3. I could argue at the beginning of chapter 1, but for the sake of time, I'm just going to read verses 9 and 10.

So Hebrews chapter 4, verses 9 and 10, I invite you to look at the larger context. Verse 9, 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.

And this text does not abolish the Sabbath. The writer of Hebrews is writing to a predominantly Jewish audience to be sure that they enter the rest that could be theirs in Jesus Christ.

And he uses, he quotes from Psalm and he uses the Old Testament example of the generation that came out of Exodus with Moses and didn't get to go into the promised land.

They had to stay in the wilderness as a warning to them. Don't be like that generation. Be like the generation that was faithful and believed and entered into the rest.

[36:45] He is exhorting them to stop keeping the law to be accepted by God but to be accepted by God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is employing the ceremonial aspect of the fourth commandment as was intended to point them to Jesus.

which brings me to the next question I would answer if you asked me. Nathan, are we meant to keep the Sabbath? I would say, well, we are meant to keep the fourth commandment and then I would also ask and answer this question.

Why should we keep the fourth commandment? The fourth commandment begins with the word remember. And the Westminster Larger Catechism in question 121 says, why is the word remember set in the beginning of the fourth commandment?

And I'll give you their answer in brief. Number one, partly because of the great benefit of remembering it and secondly, partly because we are very ready to forget it.

We are such slow learners. And we are so quick to forget. We are to remember to keep the fourth commandment in order to remember.

[38:10] This is a day set apart for the worship of God. To be gathered together with the church to learn and to be reminded that we have rest in Christ.

The wicked cannot rest. Isaiah 57:20 says, but the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet and its waters toss up mire and dirt.

But beloved, this is not us. We do not have to frantically work to be valued in this world. If we are in Christ, we are gods.

Jesus says in Matthew chapter 11, verse 28, come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

God knows how very fragile we are. And God knows how much we need to stop and to remember I am righteous in Christ because of God's loving kindness to me.

[39:23] I need to remember that for all of my failures of last week and I need to remember that for all my hopes of next week. And we see the example of this given to us by God himself.

In Exodus chapter 20, verse 11, for in six days the Lord made 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 he made it holy. And we read about this in the beginning of Genesis chapter 2 verses 1 through 3.

We see that he rested from all the work he had done at the end of verse 2. 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.

Now remember in the Genesis account what's happening in chapter 1. The God with powerful words is speaking and on a day he makes and then on another day he makes and then on another day he makes.

[40:29] For six days we see this and we see this repetition of a phrase throughout Genesis chapter 1 in verse 4 and verse 10 verse 12 verse 18 verse 21 and verse 25 and that phrase is and God saw that it was good.

God saw that it was good. So did God need rest? Of course not. Right? God is a say. He has limitless power.

God but he saw that it was good and therefore set as an example for us to rest in goodness. What happens in Genesis chapter 3?

Things are not so good anymore. Mankind rebels against God. And Jesus says in John chapter 5 verse 17 my father is working until now and I am working.

So it would seem that on the seventh day God rested and then he got back to work. Remaking things good.

[41:39] God has worked and is now working so that we can rest. Martin Luther said and I will add at this point that I don't completely agree with Martin Luther in his view of the law but I really like what he said about this commandment.

This is on your bulletin if you care to look at it. He said the spiritual rest which God particularly intends in this commandment is this that we not only cease from our labor and trade but much more that we let God alone work in us and that we do nothing of our own with all our powers.

And John Calvin is helpful to us here in answering the question why do we keep the fourth commandment. He has said that we observe the Lord's day for three reasons.

Number one to depict spiritual rest. We have spiritual rest and so in setting a day a week aside we're depicting that rest.

We are saying as a people we do not have to labor seven days a week because God is our God and he has finished a work on our behalf. We show it to the world as a day that we can rest.

[42:55] So we depict spiritual rest. Secondly Calvin says to preserve ecclesiastical order. Church order. That is to say we have a day, prominent day in which we meet.

I have to catch you guys up a lot on where we've been in our sermons because a lot of you aren't here every Sunday when we gather. How wonderful would it be if I said and we left off on verse and just got to go.

Not spend the first ten minutes summarizing where we've been. It is good for us to have a day where we intend, we plan, we set aside to be gathered together as God's people that we can count on being together.

And so having a day like this preserves ecclesiastical order. And thirdly to provide relief from our labor.

We are fooling ourselves if we do not think that we need physical rest. The Lord's day reminds us that we are human.

[44:04] We are not God. We must rest. We must rest from the labor of the week. That we might be refreshed. As the Puritans said, we need to recreate and by that they meant recreate.

in order that we might be strengthened for the work of next week. So we do this to depict spiritual rest, to preserve ecclesiastical order, and to provide relief from our labor.

Now, I'm running out of time. Next week, I want to answer with much greater specificity the question, how should we keep the fourth commandment?

So cliffhanger for you there. I want to get more into the particulars of how it is that we ought to set aside a day for rest and the worship of God. In closing, we must be careful that we do not do what the Pharisees had done with the fourth commandment.

It is not meant to be burdensome,! But joyful! That's all I want to read for our benefit, Psalm 92, and you can certainly go there with me.

[45:11] Psalm 92, a psalm that in the original text has a title. And not all psalms have titles.

This one does. And it is simply a psalm, a song for the Sabbath. And the psalmist writes, it is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High, to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your works. At the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord, how your thoughts are very deep.

The stupid man cannot know, the fool cannot understand this, that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever.

But you, O Lord, are on high forever. For behold your enemies, O Lord, for behold your enemies shall perish, all evildoers shall be scattered.

[46:28] But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox. You have poured over me, fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies. My ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age. They are ever full of sap and green. To declare that the Lord is upright. He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him. Let's pray together.