

Exodus Chapter 20 v 8 - 11

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Date: 27 November 2016

Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. great joy. Many believers around the world aren't able to meet together as freely as we can today.

[1 : 58] They have to meet in secret. They may only be able to meet together over the internet through chat rooms as Christians. So this is a blessing for us and a joy for us. And God has given to us the opportunity to meet together, to worship him and to rejoice in his goodness to us. And so it's not just today, but every day is a day for us to worship God. And our first hymn reminds us of that.

All my days I will sing this song of gladness. Give my praise to the fountain of delight, the one from whom all our joy comes. May we make Jesus our joy and our delight this morning as we come to worship.

144. Let's stand as we sing. All my days I will sing this song of gladness. Give my praise to the fountain of delight. For it is a our name of ■■■■■.

of God's chance, of death, in the eternal life without end.

Beautiful Savior, wonderful Counselor, worthy majesty, Lord of history, the way that took the life, star of the morning.

[4 : 20] For His gloryness, know the risen one, heaven's champion, and He reigns, He reigns over all.

In everything we do, we're to give glory to God.

In every moment of every day, we're to seek to please Him. And of course, in all circumstances, we're to bring to Him our requests and prayers. So let us pray together now.

Let us all pray. We thank You for every day that You give to us. Every day is a gift from Your hand. Every day that we have life is a testimony to Your faithfulness to us, O Lord our God.

Every day is a gift given that we might enjoy it and that we might enjoy You in it. We thank You again for this past week and for Your keeping and protection over us, whether we've been traveling or whether we've been at work or at home or whatever we've been up to.

[5 : 32] Thank You that You've never left us nor forsaken us, but You've been with us, O Lord, every step of the way. You've been with us as well, O Lord, when we've sinned. You've not...

Those failings of ours, those foolish words and actions, Lord, those thoughts which are so wrong, Lord, You've known them, You've seen them.

We may have hoped that You didn't and wished that You hadn't, but You did. And, O Lord, we do come to You again this morning and thanking You that today is a day of grace, a day of forgiveness, a day of favor.

Thank You, O Lord, that there is still for us and for anyone the opportunity for us to receive that pardon for our sins. Thank You, Lord, that when we come to You, confessing our sins, You have promised that You are faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from these things.

We pray, Lord, that You would give to us each that repentant heart to turn away from what is sinful and to seek Your will. For Your way is always best. Your way is always good.

[6 : 37] Your way is always right. And for our blessing. And, O Lord, we only, in one sense, do ourselves harm, O Lord, when we sin against You.

We pray that You would help us as we come to worship this morning. We want to worship with all of our hearts. We want to worship with joy and thanksgiving as we consider the wonderful blessings that we have in Jesus.

We want to come with a sense of excitement because we believe that You are here and by Your Spirit believe that You want to speak to us through Your Word. And, Lord, to hear a word from God, surely that is the best thing our ears can ever hear.

And so we pray that You prepare our minds and our hearts and our thoughts and our lives, Lord, to hear and to obey Your Word, to act upon it with faith. We praise You and thank You again for, Lord, every good gift that we have.

And we pray that we might come, Lord, and give You our praise and thanks, not only in this time together, but through this day and in the week ahead. May all our days be days in which we sing that song of gladness that Jesus Christ is my Saviour and my King.

[7 : 48] Amen. Let's read together from our Bibles. And we're going to turn to Hebrews and chapter 4, though we're going to begin in chapter 3, actually.

And that's page 1203, page 1203 in the Church Bible. Hebrews and chapter 3, and we're going to read from verse 12.

Hebrews and chapter 3, verse 12 into chapter 4. So, page 1203, beginning at verse 12 of chapter 3. Here is the Word of God. See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart and turns away from the living God.

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

[9 : 13] As it has just been said, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion. Who were they who heard and rebelled?

Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness?

And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter because of their unbelief.

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did.

But the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said.

[10 : 20] So I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest. And yet, his works have been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words, on the seventh day, God rested from all his works.

And again, in the passage above, he says, they shall never enter my rest. Therefore, since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, God again set a certain day calling it today.

This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

[11 : 40] We ask the Lord to help us to apply his word to our lives. We've been looking at the Ten Commandments together in our way through Exodus, so I'd like us to turn back there to Exodus 20.

If you've got a church Bible, that's page 78. page 78 in the Church Bible, Exodus 20 in verses 8 through to 11, as we read the whole of that commandment together and then consider what it means for us today in the light of what we've read in the New Testament, in Hebrews, and in other passages as well.

So, Exodus 20, verse 8, the fourth of God's commandments to his people Israel. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping 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, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
[13 : 05] If you've ever seen the film Chariots of Fire, it's the story of the 1924 Olympics and one of the central characters is a man called Eric Liddell.

Eric Liddell was a devout Christian. In fact, he was a man who had a complete devotion to God and a great love for people to come to know and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He went as a missionary after the Olympics to China and he served there until his death some years later. But Eric Liddell is remembered for that one event, one particular event, one particular thing that happened in the Olympics of 1924.

He'd been selected to run the 100 yards which was his best race and he held the record for many, many years even after his death. But he was unwilling to take part in a qualifying race for the 100 yards because that qualifying race took place on a Sunday.

And he believed that for him to take part in that race would mean breaking God's fourth commandment with regard to the Sabbath. So instead, Liddell was moved from the 100 yards to the 400 yards where he won the gold medal again in a record time.

[14 : 24] It was his resolute determination not to run on a Sunday that earned him both public anger and public respect and has kept his name alive in that sense.

And the question is really this, is the example of Eric Liddell an example that we should follow? Is it an example of how we are to understand this fourth commandment? Now there are two, basically two ways in which Christians through the ages have understood this commandment.

Two ways in which they've understood how we are to apply it. The first is that many Christians believe that the Sabbath day in the Old Testament has been carried over into the New Testament and replaced with the Lord's Day.

the day that we now commonly call Sunday. They believe that the regulations against working, the command to rest and to treat that day as holy are to be obeyed by all today.

And they have reasons for that, biblical reasons to hold that position. First of all, this commandment is still God's will for all people just as the other commandments are. the commandment not to kill or not to steal or not to lie.

[15 : 42] We know that those commandments are still in place, so this fourth commandment still must be in place. Secondly, the Lord's Day is a phrase that is used by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation where he speaks about being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

And it is thought that this was a reference particularly to the first day of the week. Because when we read in the New Testament on the first day of the week, the Christians began to meet together.

Then, instead of the Saturday, which was the Sabbath of the Jews, and the reason they met on the first day of the week, which we see in Acts and the places, is because that was the day that Christ rose from the dead.

A new beginning, a new start, and a new day. However, all through time there have been Christians who don't see the Sabbath in that same way.

They do not believe that Sunday is the direct replacement for the Old Testament Sabbath. And they too have biblical reasons for that. The Christian in the New Testament does not relate to the law in exactly the same way as the Old Testament believer did.

[16 : 52] And so, Paul writes to the Corinthians, you are not under the law but under grace. They also point to the fact that there is nowhere in the New Testament where we are instructed to keep the Sabbath day, nor is there any place in the New Testament where the first day of the week is called a Sabbath or the Sabbath, but rather the Sabbath is still used as a title in the New Testament for the Jewish Saturday Holy Day.

Now this difference between Christians of viewpoint, of belief, of practice and so on is not something which is necessarily new that we may feel it may be in our day and generation because we have had in the UK a very strong tradition of holding that Sunday is the Lord's Day or the Sabbath.

But actually when we go right back to the New Testament we see that this was a cause of difference of opinion and practice even there. For in Romans and chapter 14 we read this where Paul is writing to the Christians one person considers one day more sacred than another another considers every day alike.

Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. And then later on as he talks about these differences he says this you then why do you judge your brother or sister?

Why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. Now I am not going to spend this morning discussing debating or studying which of those positions is the right one because I want us rather to draw out from God's word and this commandment encouragement blessing and good things as well as hopefully some practical pointers as well.

[18 : 45] Now this fourth commandment as we have seen all the way through the previous commandments is given to us to teach us about the very person and character of God. So you shall worship only one God you shall have no other gods before me teaches us the uniqueness and the transcendence of God that he is wonderful that he is different that he is unlike anyone else.

We learn about the second commandment that he is not a God who we can put into a box by an image or a picture or a symbol but he is a God who is not defined by our imagination so we shall not make idols.

We learned last week about the name of God that it sums up all that he is that in his name and the name of course of his son the Lord Jesus there is power and salvation and therefore his name is precious to us and loved by us not to be misused.

And so when we come to this fourth commandment we are coming to particularly ask ourselves what does this tell us about God and as we have seen in the previous ones what does it tell us about Jesus and how we live in relationship to him and what it means for us today.

So that first that fourth commandment then what does it tell us about God? Well it tells us of course that God is a God who knows our needs because he created us.

[20 : 05] this word Sabbath that we use is simply a Hebrew word which comes from the meaning to rest or to cease from labour. So in one sense remember the cease from labour day remember the rest day is what the Sabbath means.

God calls his people here to remember the Sabbath day remember the rest day well to remember something means that you've forgotten it or you've let it slip and really again what God shows as he goes through is that there is in the cycle of God's creation the need for a rest day for the whole of creation.

That it's something that was put in place from the time when God established the world on its axis. That in nature there is a cycle which requires us to rest one day in every seven to make sure that our bodies are not overworked.

And God has set the example himself for we're told there in verse 11 reminding us of what we learn in Genesis 1 in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them but he rested on the seventh day.

Now God did not rest because he was tired after his creative work but he ceased from his creative work. He didn't cease working Jesus makes that clear in the New Testament we know God is at work in his redemption in his salvation in his providence in so many ways but in that particular way of creation God ceased.

[21 : 40] All that has been created all that will be created if I'm put it that way in the world as we see it now has been created and was created in those six days. So God made us and he knows us he knows we need rest.

we know that if we continue to work if we work seven days eight days nine days it is detrimental to our health physically emotionally mentally and spiritually.

God has put into us in one sense a safety valve to keep us from overdoing it. We see people again and again don't we?

We hear them having burnouts in their particular careers or circumstances. We hear of people exhausted with things like ME and other things which are because they have pushed their bodies beyond what they should do.

So when we take a day off from work as we need to we're acknowledging that God our creator knows what's best for us. We're acknowledging that he knows better than we know.

[22 : 48] And in fact in taking a day off what we're doing is actually acting in faith. Why do we keep working so hard? Why do we push ourselves beyond six days in work?

Often it's because well we need to do overtime to ruin the money. It's because we want to get further up the ladder of our career. Actually it may well be that we don't trust God to provide for us.

So taking one day off a week is an act of faith for the Christian saying Lord I trust you to provide for my needs. I trust you Lord that you will provide the money to pay the bills in the six days that I work. It's an act of faith. And remember this commandment that God gave he gave to his people the Israelites. Three months after they'd come out of slavery for 400 years they'd been slaves.

400 years they had been worked we're told in Exodus mercilessly harshly. They hadn't been given proper rest and time. They had been worked hard.

[23 : 49] So God says to them now things are different. You're in a relationship with me. I'm not a taskmaster like the others. Now I want you to rest from the hard labour. Now I want you to relax.

Now I want you to find refreshment for your bodies and for your souls. In fact this commandment teaches that doesn't it? Not only does it teach us we need a day off we need to rest physically but in one sense it's teaching us as well that we need to take care of our souls.

The spiritual aspect of our life. God says remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Later on he says the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

It's clear that God is involved. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. We're to set aside time in the business of our life for God for the Lord.

To set aside the word holy means just that to set aside. Filling our lives with busyness whether it be work whether it be sport whatever it may be whether it be those things which take up our time pushes out any time for the Lord.

[25 : 02] This is what we see again in our day and generation. Men and women are filling their lives with whatever they can so there is no time for Christ. There is no time for God. We've got no time to go to church.

We've got no time to pray. We've got no time to read the Bible. We've got no time to think about my soul. But we're to set aside time as believers to remember the one who saved us.

To give him time. To think about what he has done for us. To remember him our creator and our God. And so God gave this Sabbath commandment out of his goodness didn't he?

Out of his love. Out of his understanding. Out of his care for his world. We just see it in that way.

Reflection of God. Now the sad truth is of course as we go through the Bible as we go particularly from Exodus right through into the time of our Lord Jesus we find that God's word and his truth was distorted and perverted.

And so by the time we get to the life of Jesus we have the Pharisees. The ultra-religious leaders of the day. And they had invented 1,500 things that must not be done on the Sabbath.

[26 : 19] They had taken it and they had filled in all the blanks that they wanted. You cannot do this. You cannot carry certain things. You cannot walk certain distances. You cannot take part in this or that.

So much so that they had turned the command which was a blessing for rest and refreshment into a curse. And on the matter of the Sabbath and its laws Jesus clashed again and again with the religious leaders of his day.

If we find that in Matthew in chapter 5 sorry in Matthew Jesus has this event where he comes into contact with the Pharisees and they have an argument about the the day itself.

It's in Matthew 12 don't need to look at it necessarily but Jesus makes an astonishing statement when the Pharisees come to him and tell him off because he and his disciples are pulling wheat and eating it as they walk through the cornfield.

He says this the son of man is the lord of the Sabbath. He came into the world to put right our understanding about God's law about his commandments about his truth and that means and includes the Sabbath.

[27 : 38] So what does it reveal to us about the Lord Jesus? This commandment reveals to us that the Sabbath is indeed something that God has given for our good.

Something that Jesus has given for us to enjoy. It reveals that Jesus came to fulfill the commandments of God. He said that right in chapter 5.

but it also reveals to us that's something more wonderful even than that. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill this Sabbath commandment by bringing us perfect rest.

By bringing us perfect rest. There's that wonderful phrase at the end of chapter 11. In fact, just a few lines before Jesus has this confrontation with the Pharisees where he says to the people, come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. Jesus came to bring us the perfect rest which is promised in the Sabbath commandment.

[28 : 54] By his life, by his death and resurrection particularly, our Lord Jesus has secured for all who believe in him full and eternal rest from their toils and labors.

And that particular rest of course is a rest from and a deliverance from the labor of seeking to earn God's favor through works.

Galatians in chapter 2 in verse 16 Paul writes, so we too have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified, made right with God by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law because by the works of the law no one can be justified.

This is where the Pharisees have got it so wrong. They thought that if they kept these 1,500 commandments that they'd added to the commandments and many others besides, somehow they could earn God's righteousness, they could earn God's forgiveness, they could earn God's acceptance of them.

And this is the basis for every religion in the world. Every religion apart from Bible Christianity teaches you've got to do something to earn God's favor, to earn heaven, to earn salvation, whether it be the Muslim who has to hold to the five pillars of Islam, whether it be the Hindu who has to go and wash himself in the river, Ganges, whether it be the Buddhist who has to meditate inwardly upon himself and do those particular rituals.

[30 : 25] Whoever they are, it's all about doing things, works, to find rest. But in our Lord Jesus Christ, he came to do the works we could never do for ourselves to give to us rest.

rest. There's nothing that you and I can do to earn or to work for God's forgiveness apart from what Christ has done. See, this law, along with all the commandments, with, in one sense, the whole of the Old Testament, is something which was temporary and pointing us to the fulfillment that Christ came to bring, the lasting blessings of knowing the one true God, of worshipping him, of knowing his name, of enjoying his rest, and the others as we shall see.

That's why I read to you from Hebrews in chapter four. In Hebrews in chapter four, as you know, Hebrews is about, it's on page 1203, we're going to look at it just for a moment, Hebrews is about the apostle, the Christian apostle, writing to the Jewish believers, the Jewish Christians.

They'd come to faith in Christ, but they were finding it tough because being a Christian and being a Jew meant that you had a double whammy. Not only were you a Jew, therefore you were persecuted by the Romans, but because you were a Christian Jew, you were persecuted by the Jewish Jews.

And there was a temptation for them to go back, to sort of take part in all the things that they'd done before, the Old Testament laws, the Old Testament ceremonies, the Old Testament works.

[32 : 05] And so throughout the letter of Hebrews, the writer is saying to these Jewish Christians, everything that Jesus came to bring is to fulfill and to bring to completion what the Old Testament pointed to.

It's no good going back to there and we've got to go forward. And what we have in Christ is much, much better. So he shows that Jesus is greater than Moses, and Jesus is greater than the high priests, and Jesus is greater than the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

And then he speaks about, as we see there in chapter 4, this rest. And he says on several occasions that there is a rest, a rest that comes from faith.

Now he's particularly thinking about the occasion in the Old Testament where God's people were on the threshold of entering the promised land, God's promised rest, but they disobeyed God and they went back into the wilderness and they died there, and they missed out on the rest that God had promised for them through disobedience.

And yet he also seems to be pointing strongly to the fact that the Sabbath rest promised is also to be found through faith in Christ.

[33 : 18] So he says, verse 3, now we who have believed enter that rest. It's something that's happened and happens when we come with faith in Jesus.

He says this, verse 6, therefore, since it still remains for some to enter that rest, in other words, those who've not yet come to faith in Christ, and since those who formerly did have the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because they're disobedient.

They're people who still haven't entered into the rest of being right with God, of knowing the joy of being accepted by God and forgiven by God on the basis of what Jesus has done.

There's still some outside of that rest, that wonderful place of peace, and so he says, verse 9, there remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works just as God did from his.

So Christ came to bring you and I rest, rest for our souls. I know that I'm accepted by God.

[34 : 26] I know that there's nothing I can do to earn his forgiveness. I can rest in the finished, full, perfect, wonderful work of Jesus. And so that Sabbath rest is a shadow.

It's pointing forward to what Jesus came to do. And so Paul teaches in Colossians chapter 2 verses 16 and 17, therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day.

These are a shadow of the things that were to come. The reality, however, is found in Christ. So when we come to Christ, when we come into the New Testament, we come into a relationship with God, there's a change in the way as New Testament believers we relate to God's commandments. We don't ignore them, we don't say that they have no consequence or importance, we don't dismiss them, but rather we understand that the commandments that God gave are not purely and solely outwards, but they are a matter of the heart and the mind.

And so when we think again of Jesus speaking on the Sermon on the Mount, again and again he refers to the Old Testament words. He'll say things like this, you have heard it was said to the people long ago, you shall not murder, and anyone who murders shall be subject to judgment.

[35 : 52] But I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. In other words, the law of murder does not just mean you don't shoot somebody, stab somebody or kill somebody, it means within your heart you have a love for them and you do not hold bitterness against them.

There's a spiritual aspect to it. And so we find again in verse 27 of Matthew 5, you have heard it said you shall not commit adultery. And so he goes on, verse 31, you have heard it has been said. And again all the way through, whether it be for an eye for an eye, love for your enemies and so on. Jesus is teaching us that the commandments of God flow from within the heart.

In other words, I'm not going to kill somebody that I'm not angry with, am I? If I'm not angry with them, I'm not going to kill them. So the problem isn't how do I stop myself killing them, it's how do I deal with the anger?

I'm not going to commit adultery with somebody if I haven't already in my heart wanted to commit adultery with them. So how do I deal with that? It goes back to the heart, it goes back to the spirit, it goes back to the indwelling of Christ.

[37 : 02] And where does that leave us then? Where does that leave us in regard to this commandment and to others? Well, we need to recognize again that the importance of, how can I put it, a personal conscience before God.

personal conscience before God. Paul warns us against that. That's why I read from Romans 14, remember what I read there, one person considers one day more sacred than another, another considers each day alike, each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind, whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord.

He goes on to say, for none of us lives for ourselves alone, none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord, if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

And he says this, why then do you judge your brother or sister? Why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seats. In the matter of this commandment, there is liberty of conscience between us and God on the subject.

In other words, for some of us there may be the real sense, this is something, as we've said before at the beginning, that I must do. I must keep Sunday special in this way, and I'm doing it unto God, because I believe that's what he wants me to do.

[38 : 24] For another Christian that isn't that same conviction, which is based upon Scripture, it's not because they just had that way of thinking about things, but because they've worked out from God's word, and they feel that they do not have that binding need to treat Sunday in that way.

Paul warns against us judging one another on this, and makes sure that we seek to walk before God with faith. One commentator puts it this way, Christian liberty, as proclaimed by Paul, included

all days and seasons.

A man could observe special days or not, just as his own judgment and conscience might dictate. But in all such matters, one ought to be careful not to put a stumbling block in a brother's way, and quotes from Romans 14 there, verse 13.

Verse 12 says, So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God on all things, including how we treat the Sabbath. Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another.

Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. So let's look at some practicalities from this.

[39 : 36] Practically, dear friends, as Christians in the UK, Sunday is the best day of the week for us to have off as a rest day, because it means not only can we enjoy physical rest, but we can also enjoy spiritual refreshment and fellowship, which we need earnestly.

I believe that we should do anything to avoid preventing us enjoying this day as a day in which we can worship together. Now, we may have to work on a Sunday.

It may be something that's built into our contract. It may be something that we have to do because we're involved in the care industry or whatever it may be. But if that's the case, we're not sinning against God.

But if we can manage to avoid working on Sunday, that's a good thing. It means we have freedom not to be caught up with those things. We need wisdom. We need wisdom and judgment in applying this commandment.

Remember, it's given for our good and our blessing. How can I get the best out of the blessing? And I want us just to turn for a moment to 1 Corinthians in chapter 10. And if you can turn with me, there's two verses there that are helpful.

[40 : 46] It's page 1152. Page 1152. It's summing up again similarly what we read in Romans 14. But I want it to be practical, I hope, for us as to how we're going to treat this commandment and the principle of this commandment and particularly how we treat Sunday too.

As I said before, Sunday has become, in our nation and in other nations as well, the rest day. It has become the day in which Christians meet, the first day of the week, as they have done always. We know that the laws are changing and so it is becoming much more difficult to simply have a rest day and there's more temptation for us to find ourselves caught up with all sorts of busyness. So Sunday is a day that we have traditionally used and we need to continue to use as a day to meet together. But there's no reason why we can't meet on other days too. So where does this commandment leave us?

We're in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 23. This is a quote that Paul has used before. We looked at it a few weeks ago because we're looking at 1 Corinthians in the evenings. In chapter 6, sorry, chapter 10, 23, he's quoting from them, I have the right to do anything, you say, but not everything is beneficial.

[42 : 07] I have the right to do anything, but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good but the good of others. So thinking about verse 23, from what we understand from God's word, Sunday, to work on a Sunday is not a sin against God.

To do other activities on a Sunday is not a sin against God. But we need to ask ourselves, does the activity I'm engaged with on a Sunday benefit my Christian life or hinder my Christian life?

Does it benefit my physical health? Does it hinder my spiritual health? And so we need to ask ourselves questions. This is what we need to do and one of the things that we are perhaps not happy to do.

There's part of each one of us that likes to be a Pharisee. There's part of each one of us that likes a set of rules telling us what we can do and what we can't do in this way or that. We like it written down.

But the reality is as believers who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are now under the duty, if I can put it that way, we're under the law of grace which says I need to ask and question my motives, my reasons for what I'm doing.

[43 : 22] Is this what God would have me to do? Is this what is pleasing to him? Is this beneficial? And so let's just think of these questions in regard to the opportunity of meeting together on a Sunday.

Does shopping hinder me from being amongst God's people and under his word on a Sunday? Let me encourage you as well in thinking of this question.

Why do we meet twice on a Sunday? Why don't we all meet twice on a Sunday? Okay? Why don't we all meet twice on a Sunday?

And why do we meet twice on a Sunday? Do you know why? Have you got a reason for coming once? Or a reason for coming twice? Do we think about that? Does going for a walk on a Sunday help me to come to church with expectancy to hear God's word?

Does playing sport on a Sunday refresh me or actually exhaust me so I'm too tired? Does watching TV encourage me to worship God or does it actually encourage me or lead me into temptation?

[44 : 27] These are questions that we need to keep on setting before ourselves with the Holy Spirit's help. And then there's a second part, isn't there? Verse 24. So not everything is beneficial.

We need to ask ourselves, is this beneficial to me? Is this constructive to me? Isn't it? 24. No one should seek their own good but the good of others. So we may feel completely free to do whatever we like on a Sunday, but apart from our own spiritual good and blessing, how does that affect my Christian brothers and sisters?

If other believers observe Sunday as a Sabbath, I need to be very careful that I don't condemn them or mock them or in some way cause them unnecessary offense by talking about the things that I've been doing.

It wasn't flaunt our liberty. This is something that comes out again and again in the New Testament. We have wonderful liberty, but we're not to use that liberty to harm others or in a selfish, personal way.

Paul uses it about meat offered to idols, which is a big problem in the New Testament. He says, look, if it means that my brother stumbles and I eat meat, sacrifice to God, I'm not going to eat meat anymore.

[45 : 41] I'm going to make a sacrifice. It's love that is to be the governing power. Do I use the time that I have to encourage believers? Actually, me being twice on a Sunday, what sort of encouragement would that be to others?

What sort of blessing would that be to others, even if I don't feel that I need it? Do we do good to one another? Remember when Jesus worked on the Sabbath again and again, the thing that the Pharisees hated was he healed people on the Sabbath.

He did them good. He showed mercy. He showed love. He showed grace. And they couldn't see any of that. And he had to condemn them and convict them and say, you've kept all the law, but you've forgotten the weight here.

The most important part of the law is mercy. So the principle that God has given us concerning the Sabbath commandment, and it's a biblical principle, it remains the same for us.

It's not the letter anymore that binds and kills. It's the spirit that gives us life. We must set aside time for our bodies to rest, be refreshed, if we're to work and look after them.

[46 : 50] Yes, and we must set aside time as holy for God to seek his face and to fellowship with him and his people. But it shouldn't just be one day of the week that we do those things.

It shouldn't be, as sometimes has been the mentality, well, I go to church on Sunday, therefore I'm a Christian. We know that being a Christian is an everyday relationship.

It's everyday that we are to spend time and seek him and his face. Everyday that we are to seek to be refreshed. Everyday that we are to enjoy the rest that Christ has brought us into of being right with God, and everyday we are to look forward to the ultimate rest day, heaven itself.

We sang that hymn particularly about that because the second part of the hymn is all about the rest that we shall enjoy when we are in the presence of God. Rest for our bodies, rest for our souls.

That perfect fulfilment of this commandment is yet to come. May the Lord help us to be serious about his word, to apply it to our lives, and to receive the blessing that it gives, because that is the very purpose God has spoken to us.

[48 : 15] of Jesus' name, and to receive the blessing of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

Lay down, thou weary, God lay down, my head upon my breast.

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad.

I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely hear, The living water, Thirsty pump, To come and drink and live.

[49 : 32] I came to Jesus, And I dream of that light, Living stream.

I first was quenched, My soul revived, And now I live in him.
I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.
Look unto me, Thy want shall rise, And all thy days be bright.
I look to Jesus, And I bow, In him I saw my star, And in that light of light, I'll walk, Till travelling days are done.

[50 : 41] There remains then a Sabbath rest For the people of God. For anyone who enters God's rest, Rest from their works, Just as God did from his.

Let us therefore make every effort To enter that rest, So that no one will perish By following their example Of disobedience.

Amen.