

Remember the Sabbath Day

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[0:00] Okay, so we're in the book of Exodus. We're going through the Ten Commandments. We've gone through the first three. We set it up with somewhat of an introduction. And I always want to do this at the beginning of every message on the Ten Commandments, is to remind us of the perspective that we take the Ten Commandments as Christians.

We talked about this in our first few messages, but I want to just repeat real quickly, is that when it comes to the law that we find in the Old Testament, the law of Moses, which includes the Ten Commandments, the Bible teaches us that the law is good, but only if it's used lawfully.

And that as Christians, we are in the memory verse that we've been memorizing that was in our bulletin, says that as Christians, today, we talked about that dispensational chart, today there is a change.

We are not under the law like the Jews were. Instead, we are, the Bible says, under grace, in which God has given us a free gift of salvation and a relationship with him without any kind of requirement of keeping any kind of commandments.

And that's incredible. I mean, to a lot of people, that seems like it shouldn't be that way. God should require something more from us. But you know what? He doesn't. In fact, what is that song that we sang today? Faith is the victory.

[1:21] Our victory is our faith in Jesus Christ. And that is it. And because of that, we shout victory, right? There's not a lot of shouting in this church. We need to work on that, don't we? Do we have victory?

Okay. We'll try that. Do we have victory? All right. We'll get a little shouting going on here. And so we are under grace. We are not under the law.

But what does that mean? What is our relationship to the law? Well, the Bible also teaches us in the New Testament that the law is good and that if we use it lawfully, we can use it for instructions in righteousness.

It can teach us about right from wrong. And so we shouldn't ignore it. We shouldn't just make up our own morality. We should look to the law to help us do that. And so today we're going to look at this fourth commandment and talk about some of these things.

Let's go ahead and start by reading it. This is in Exodus chapter 20. And we're going to start in verse 8. This one is several verses long. It goes like this. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

[2:29] Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work. You nor your son nor your daughter nor your male servant nor your female servant nor your cattle nor your stranger who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and he hallowed it or made it holy.

Now of all the Ten Commandments, this one is by far the most controversial among Christians. It's the one that there's the most controversy about, the most dispute.

And so we're going to be talking about, a little later on, kind of the four major views of how Christians should view this Sabbath commandment.

And we've already established, right, we just said we're, as Christians, we're not under the law, we're under grace. But what does that mean for us as Christians? Should we observe the Sabbath at all?

[3:33] And we're actually, I'm going to, because of all the content, and there have been books written about the Sabbath, big books, and so there's a lot to discuss. I'm not going to go over every detail.

But it is going to require two messages. So we're going to have a part A this week and a part B next week. So if you walk away a bit unfulfilled at the end of this message, come for part two next week. I'd like to start with some levity here. So there was a Jewish rabbi, and he really enjoyed golf. And he hadn't been in a long time, and he woke up on a Saturday morning. It was just beautiful. It had been months and months since he had gone golfing. After synagogue, he just couldn't resist it anymore.

It's the Sabbath day, but he really needs to go out and enjoy the golf course, which is forbidden according to the Sabbath law and his traditions and all that.

[4:38] And so, but he kind of sneaks out, gets his golf clubs, goes out to one of the golf clubs kind of far from town so that nobody will recognize who he is as the rabbi of the local synagogue, and he starts playing golf.

Well, at the fourth hole, he's got a par four there. And up in heaven, Gabriel's talking to the Lord, and he says, Lord, look at Rabbi so-and-so down here.

He is breaking the fourth commandment. And Gabriel says, would you like me to send down lightning and strike him down? And the Lord says, no, we won't do that.

I've got a different idea. And so as they're watching this rabbi, he takes a great big swing, and that ball goes flying straight down the courseway towards the green, and it plops 400 yards to that little green, and it rolls and rolls and rolls, and finally it drops in the hole, a hole in one.

And Gabriel is, the rabbi is just thrilled, right? Gabriel is just shocked. He said, Lord, what are you doing?

[5:57] What kind of a, what kind of, what's going on? You know, he's breaking the Sabbath, and you just rewarded him with a hole in one. And the Lord says to Gabriel, he says, you know what?

This is a fate worse than death. He just made the greatest shot of his life, and he can't tell anybody. And so for a Jew, you know, this might be something that you are not allowed to do, and he is in this predicament.

He can't share this amazing shot with anybody because he was breaking God's law. What I want to start out with this morning is to just explain the details about the Sabbath, what it actually requires, what it actually requires.

And then like I said earlier, we're going to look at some different views that Christians have. You know, sometimes Christians disagree on things. You know, did anybody notice that? And so, and I'll take a particular view and share that.

But the first thing I want to do is just get into some of the details. As we look at this passage again, again, it says, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

[7:11] There's this special day. Holy means set apart. Something that is special. Something that is different from other things. In the Jewish system, you had holy objects for the temple.

You had holy locations like the temple itself. You had holy people like the Levites and the priests. They were set apart unto God. They had holy service. And then you had kind of holy ritual water for washing and the vessels that those things were kept in.

And those things were holy because they were just set apart for a special purpose. If you had a bin of water in your home, you use that to just clean your hands for everyday purpose. But the one that sat in the temple courtyard, that one was a holy vessel, a special vessel.

And so this Sabbath day was special. It was different and meant to be different from all the other days. It was set apart. There are places in the law and throughout the scriptures that talk about profaning the Sabbath, that you shall not profane the Sabbath.

Well, what does profane mean? We think about the term that we use today as profanity, right? And profanity, you might think of, well, that's like, maybe that's cursing the Sabbath. Well, that's not what it's about.

[8:29] Profanity is actually just using words that are very common. Profane just means common. And so you shall not treat the Sabbath like other days.

You have to treat it special. Well, what is this day a special for? How should it be treated that's special from the other days?

Well, it continues on in verse nine. Six days you shall labor and do all of your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

And so all the other days are for working, for doing labor. But this one day in a week is a special day that you should set aside, again, as the Jewish people, to rest, to do no work.

You know, God created man to work. That was one of the purposes, or one of our purposes in life that God created us for was to work, to labor. In fact, if you look in the beginning at the creation account, it talks about man, God commanding man to be fruitful, right?

[9:35] And to multiply. In order to be fruitful, well, you have to work. You have to work. To fill the earth and to subdue it. Subduing the earth, that requires what? That requires work. Work. And also to take dominion over the earth.

That requires work. It requires effort. So if you're just taking a nap all day long, every day, right? You're not going to subdue things. You're not going to take dominion. You're not going to be fruitful. So work is important.

And then, even when sin entered the world, right? Did work cease? No. Actually, in a lot of ways, it got harder, right? When the curse, with the fall of Adam and Eve, when they sinned and brought sin into the world, one of the things that God said to Adam specifically, he said this in Genesis 3.17, Cursed is the ground for your sake.

In toil, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles, it shall bring forth for you. You shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.

So our entire life is filled with toil. And we have been able to, to some degree through technology, been able to make less toil for ourselves. But still, there is work and hard work for many of us in our lives.

[10:53] And that work is good. But this fourth commandment says, hey, working is good. But what I need from you is that every seventh day, I need you to rest, to stop the working.

And by the way, not just for a few hours, how long is the Sabbath? One whole day, 24 hours, an entire day. The Jews actually, I don't think there's anything in the Bible that prescribes this, but they would count a day from the sunset the previous day.

So typically a Sabbath is Friday night when the sun goes down to Saturday night at the same time. And so a full day.

And is God saying, I need you to just slow down on that Sabbath day, on that last day of the week. You know, continue working, but just maybe bring it down to like 50%.

Is that what God is saying? No, he says, the work should cease. In fact, that's what the word Sabbath means.

[11:57] Did you know that? Many of us have probably heard the Hebrew term Shabbat. You will hear that in a Jewish context. And that is the literal Hebrew word for Sabbath is Shabbat, spelled exactly the same.

Our word Sabbath is just kind of our own phonetic way of pronouncing it in a little bit of a different spelling, but it's the same word. So Shabbat means to stop, to cease, to rest.

Again, not slow down, but to completely cease work altogether. If we continue reading, who is this for?

Who is it that needs to stop working? You know, you might think if you're the head of a household, well, hey, there's a lot of work to get done around here on the farm. And so I'm going to take a day off, but I'm certainly not going to let everybody else take a day off, right?

I got my kids. They can keep working. They got plenty of energy. I'm tired, but they've got lots of energy, so I'm going to go ahead and let them keep working seven days a week. And I've got servants, and I've got animals, and I'm going to make sure they keep working because we got to make sure we get the work done.

[13:11] But here's what it says. Verse 11, What's a stranger?

Well, that's just talking about a foreigner, somebody who's from out of town, from outside the country, from outside of Israel, who's just passing through maybe, coming for a visit. Maybe they're like a day laborer in your nation.

We see that a lot today, right? Some people, they'll come down from Mexico, or from Mexico, they'll come up here. I see a lot of roofers, right? Every single roofing crew I've seen, it looks like they're from South America or Mexico or something like that, right?

They come here to work. And you see that, I see people go to Saudi Arabia and all kinds of different places all over the world, they go there to work.

So if you have a foreigner that's staying in Israel, they are not allowed to work either. This is a universal thing. On that last day of the week, no one is working.

[14:17] It doesn't matter who they are, not even the animals. So is this like just a strong recommendation that God is giving? It's like, hey, you know, it's a good idea to rest, and I think you guys should rest, so last day of the week, we're going to kind of go with that?

If you can do it. Is that what the commandment was? Well, is there a way to enforce this command? Israel had the same question.

In fact, there was a time while they were wandering in the wilderness, this is after they had received the Ten Commandments, and they were wandering in the wilderness, they had actually just refused to go into the land of Canaan.

God had kind of set things up for them, but there were giants in the land, and they said, we can't do this. They're too big, they're just going to slaughter us if we try to go in there. And so God was upset, and he said, you know what, this entire generation, you're just going to wander in the wilderness until the next generation comes, and then we'll see about them going into the land.

But let me read this account. This is from Numbers chapter 15. Numbers 15, 32. Now, while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, to all the congregation, and they put him under guard.

[15:35] Because it had been explained, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. Hey, this guy's breaking the Sabbath. This is one of the things that God had said we should not do. You can't pick up sticks on the Sabbath day.

Then the Lord said to Moses, the man shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp. So as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp, and they stoned him with stones, and he died.

Whew! That's a pretty big deal. This is not a suggestion, is it? This is a command, and a very serious one. God intended for the Sabbath day that it would be revered as holy, and it's something that people would not just do with as they want.

This is something that needed to be enforced, even with the death penalty. In Exodus 31, 14, this is part of the law itself. God says, you shall keep the Sabbath day, therefore, for it is holy to you.

Everyone who profanes it, who treats it as common, it shall surely be put to death. For whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

[16:45] That term, cut off, is just a euphemism for being put to death. And so this is actually a very serious matter in Israel's kind of administration.

It's very important to God that they keep the Sabbath. Now, why would that be? We're going to talk a little bit about, is this a commandment, a fundamental morality? Something that is so horrendous that you would work on a specific day of the week that somebody should be put to death?

It just doesn't make any sense. Does that make sense to you? It doesn't make sense to me on the face of it. But this is something that was important for God, and we'll talk about this later, as a type and a shadow.

Something that was looking forward to something that was going to happen in the future. It was also an important part of the covenant that God had made with Israel. And if this was just kind of a recommendation without any kind of strong enforcement, then really, probably it would never happen.

Right? And this thing would not be established and ingrained in their culture over, what, thousands of years? If there's one thing that Jews do today, what is it?

[17:52] They keep the Sabbath, right? They keep that Sabbath day. Some other practical, just details that we find when it comes to this, and these are, some of them are directly talked about.

Actually, the very first time we read about the Sabbath was before the Ten Commandments. And this was right after the Exodus, after Israel had been, had crossed the Red Sea.

And remember, they were complaining because they didn't have any food. And they're like, hey, we were better off as slaves. At least they fed us. Out here in the wilderness, we're starving to death. And God was like, where's these people's faith?

They're just complaining, complaining, complaining. But tell you what, I'm going to provide food for them. So he provided manna. Manna would come like frost each day on the ground.

And then quail would come as well. And that would be food for them. But as part of this, there was a special consideration on collecting that manna.

[18:52] And if you remember, they would collect only as much as they needed for that day. And if they collected more than that, they would find that on the second day, the manna would actually spoil. There would be actually worms in it.

Yeah. And so they were only supposed to collect enough for one day. Except, God told them, on the last day of the week, or the second to last day of the week, I guess, you are to collect enough for two days.

So on Fridays, collect enough for Friday and Saturday. And he said, this is the reason. I don't want you working. I don't want you collecting food. I don't want you doing anything. I don't even want you to boil anything or bake anything on that last day of the week.

It's a Sabbath day and it's going to be a day that is holy to me. So on that day, collect your manna. It will actually last two full days. Whereas the rest of the days of the week, will only last one.

And that's what happened. And that's actually the very first mention of a day of rest in the whole Bible. It's that time where they came out of, or crossed the Red Sea coming out of Egypt.

[20:02] And so, part of keeping the Sabbath was you're not allowed to cook food. And so we see in popular movies, right, we just recently watched *The Fiddler on the Roof*, right, what a great film.

But it gives you kind of some insight into Jewish life and tradition. And so on Fridays, they are prepared. You've got to make sure your meals are ready ahead of time because as soon as the sun goes down, you're not allowed to cook anything.

You know, if your food's not ready, you're not going to be eating. Or maybe you're going to be eating raw food or whatever it might be. So no collecting of firewood, no cooking. Also, another thing that we see, we just have a little hint of this, during the time of Jesus, there's a reference to a Sabbath's day journey.

A reference to a Sabbath's day journey. And so it seems, this isn't something that you find explicit in the Bible, that at that time anyway, the Jews would only travel so far on the Sabbath because traveling further than that would be considered breaking the Sabbath.

So you're allowed to walk around on the Sabbath day. You're allowed to go visit your friends, right? That might be an important part of resting, is going to visit your friends across town. But there was somewhat of a limit on how far you could go.

[21:12] You're not allowed to hike over the mountains or across a great desert or some long journey. And so there was something that it's actually mentioned just once in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 1, called a Sabbath's day journey.

By the way, another thing to consider, sometimes we consider what is part of something and then a lot of times over, you know, through just tradition, we assume things that are part of something that are not.

And so, one thing I want to point out is that when it comes to the Sabbath day, it was not a day to worship God. Today, a lot of Christians consider what we're doing this morning as like a Sabbath practice where we're coming, we're gathering together, it's once a week, right?

Just like the Sabbath is once a week. And we get together and we come to sing and we come to hear from the scriptures and to worship God in those ways. That's actually not anywhere in the law of Moses.

It never says anywhere that that last day of the week, that Sabbath day is a day of worship. But, we do find that that becomes somewhat of a practice later on.

[22:25] In fact, I don't know if you recall, but during the time of Jesus' ministry and then even on into the ministry of the apostles, we see that Jesus going to these places called synagogues.

And you kind of, they're kind of like what we would call our churches today. It would be a gathering place for Jews for them to gather together. And it was actually common for them to gather together on what day?

The Sabbath, that last day of the week. And so, Luke 4, 16, it says that Jesus, as was his custom, went to the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath day.

And so, he would customarily, like the other Jews, go to a synagogue on the Sabbath day. And they would have readings from the scripture and they would pray together. Again, not something that was commanded through the law of Moses, but became somewhat of a tradition.

And there's nothing against that. It was just commanded that it should be a day of rest. But even on into the Acts period, after Jesus ascended, and we see the apostles going out to minister, we see very commonly, right, especially as they go out among the Gentile areas, there would be synagogues.

[23:43] And that was actually one of the reasons why synagogues came into being was because when the Jews were taken captivity hundreds of years earlier, they were taken outside of their homeland, they were taken into captivity into Babylon and Persia and all over, you know, the Roman Empire.

and so they established these little Jewish communities among the pagan nations. And as a way for them to kind of get together as a point of focus, they would build a synagogue as a place for them to gather on a regular basis.

And the Romans allowed that. And so we see Paul specifically, Peter, the other apostles as well, they would go around and minister and a lot of times they would go to a synagogue and share to the Jews the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So that's a lot of information about how the Jews under the law of Moses were supposed to keep the Sabbath. We're supposed to observe this special day.

So here's the next question. As Christians, what are we supposed to do? Like I said, of all the Ten Commandments, this one is the most controversial. But from what I can kind of identify, I think there are four major views that we can consider and the last one will be the one that I will offer as what I think is the best way to view this as Christians.

[25:09] The first view is called Seventh-day Sabbatarianism. Oh boy, is that, that's a big word. Sabbatarianism. You know, theologians like to make up big words so they can sound smart.

But basically all that means is, hey, there are Christians who believe that you should keep the Sabbath, just like the law says, on the seventh day.

You have Seventh-day Adventists. That's a fairly sizable kind of denomination I might call it. In fact, they're pretty big here in our area. In fact, from what I, if I, if I'm correct, is it the Kettering Health System?

The Kettering Health System is actually founded, and I'm not sure to what extent they run it, but by the Seventh-day Adventists. And so, you will actually find scriptures and different things, but the Seventh-day Adventists are the ones behind that particular health system.

But they are big on, and that's right in their name, they're called Seventh-day Adventists because they believe it's important to worship God on Saturday rather than Sunday. You also have kind of Messianic Christians, those who are, you might call it, Hebrew roots type of Christians.

[26:21] and they will point to things like what we just read here in the Ten Commandments, right? What does it say about the Sabbath day? Does God say, well, pick just any day of the week, whichever day you want.

Is that what he says? No, he says it needs to be that seventh day. Even, and remember what we read is that it actually points back to the creation. God worked on those six days, and on that seventh day, God rested, and it says this, this is Genesis 2-3, then God blessed the seventh day, and he sanctified it.

He made it holy because in it he rested. In fact, that word rested is actually the word sabbath. If you can make a verb out of a noun. He sabbathed on that day is what it says from all of his work which God had created and made.

And then in Exodus 31, we actually referenced that a little bit ago, but he said that this sabbath day is a sign and it is to be a perpetual practice among my people, Israel.

So, it's to continue on and on. And so, they kind of make some good points. God didn't say pick any day, he said it's the last day of the week. The one that God himself rested on.

[27:44] And so, Christians ought to worship and keep the sabbath on that day. The second view is called first day sabbatarianism.

So, Christians ought to keep a sabbath but not the last day of the week. Instead, because of the resurrection of Christ and what day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead?

On Sunday, which is the first day of the week. That is a change that Christians should recognize and instead should treat as a sabbath the first day of the week.

That is a Christian sabbath, some people call it. And so, you have a lot of the reformers from the time of the reformation, the Puritans, Presbyterians, today, people who would be considered congregationalists, even old school Methodists would take that view that there is a new Christian sabbath.

We need to follow the same thing. It should be a day of rest. You shouldn't do any kind of work, but it's on Sunday and not on Saturday. The third one is a little bit looser.

[28:55] People will call it, have you ever heard somebody say, well, they'll call Sunday the Lord's Day. Have you ever heard that called the Lord's Day? I think I've probably even used that.

Many of you may have as well. It's just a very, very common saying and as Christians, we know what people mean when they say the Lord's Day. They'll call it a Lord's Day observance and they'll say, hey, this isn't a day where we would keep the sabbath.

We shouldn't have all the same regulations that were put on the Jews, but it is a special day that we should observe as Christians. It's not required necessarily for rest, but should be required as a day of worship.

Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, a lot of Lutherans, Anglicans, Episcopalians, and even many evangelicals, kind of like closer to us, would hold that view.

And so they'll take observation that as you read through the book of Acts, you notice that the Christians would start to gather on Sundays instead of like the Jews did on Saturdays.

[29:58] Again, there's no commandment that you find, but just an observation of something that we see in the Bible. And do you know where that term Lord's Day comes from? You'd think that it's something that's littered throughout the Scripture.

There's only one Scripture in the whole Bible that uses the term Lord's Day. And I've actually stopped using that term if I ever have. It's hard to tell, you know, if you use a term regularly or not. Because it's not just really, it's just really not something found in the Bible. There's one verse, it's in the book of Revelation, and it says that John the Apostle, the Revelator, who wrote the book of Revelation, was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

And that's it. That's all it says. And so there's a lot of just assumptions that people make. Oh, well it must be taught, well if it's the Lord's Day, what day is that? Well, it's probably one of the days of the week, and it's probably Sunday, because well, that's the day the Lord rose from the dead.

And so they just kind of throw a bunch of assumptions, and so well we're just going to call Sunday the Lord's Day, and we'll make it a requirement for Christians to meet together on that day. But not a lot of evidence there.

[31:01] The last view, which is the view that I'm going to share and give some backing to, some further backing to, is basically no Sabbath.

Christians are not to keep the Sabbath, and really it's a freedom in Christ view. That as Christians, we are free to worship God and to rest in any way that we see fit.

That we as Christians can treat all days alike if we want to. And that every Christian is free to decide for themselves what they do with their rest time and what they do with their worship time.

Just a few points of evidence for this. One, a lot of people consider the Sabbath to be some kind of a moral, an issue of fundamental morality, a fundamental right and wrong.

And I don't find that to be the case, and I think there's evidence for it. One, again, we don't see it until the time of Moses. We don't see any reference to resting on a certain day of the week. We don't even find any references to there being a recognized seven-day week at all until the time of Moses.

[32:16] Throughout any of history and any people group, there was no seven-day week until the time of Moses when the Sabbath day was established. There's no mention from the creation until Moses, which is a time of about 2,500 years of any kind of day that was required for resting or a day that was required for worship.

Not from Adam. We don't see it with Noah. We don't see it with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Nowhere in the Bible until the time of Moses. And in Nehemiah, there's a verse that says, this Nehemiah 9.14, you made it known to them your Sabbath and commanded them precepts, statutes, and laws by the hand of Moses, your servant.

Even Nehemiah pointed out, hey, the Sabbath was something revealed by Moses. It wasn't revealed by anyone else. It wasn't until the time of Moses that that Sabbath observance was revealed.

And so this isn't some kind of a universal moral law. This is something that was very specific with Israel. And I'd like to read another passage. This is in Exodus chapter 31. And I'm going to go ahead and read this passage.

It's about six verses. But I want to read this because it indicates that the Sabbath was not just for everybody, even though it was required in the land of Israel that the whole community observe it, but it was specifically for the people of Israel.

[33:39] Exodus 31, verse 12. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, Surely my Sabbaths you shall keep. Now, Sabbaths, what does he mean Sabbaths?

Is he talking about all 52 Sabbaths in a year? No. There are actually other days of rest beside the weekly one. Surely my Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generation that you may know that I am the Lord who sacrifices, or excuse me, who sanctifies you.

You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord.

Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. God's not playing games. He's repeating this over. This is very serious. Verse 16. Therefore, therefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

He's saying, listen, this has to do with my covenant with Israel. Verse 17. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever.

[34:51] So this Sabbath day is a sign. It is a symbol. It is a sign of what the covenant that he made with them and with their fathers.

This isn't a sign for the whole world. Remember, for example, like Noah's rainbow. That was a sign for the whole world that God will not judge the world again with a flood. But this Sabbath was a sign between God, he says, between me and my people Israel with the people of Israel, the Jews, forever.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. So the Sabbath is a day, a special day for a specific group of people and during a specific time period of the old covenant.

Also, some further evidence. The Sabbath, we talked earlier in some of our early messages about the differences in the laws of Moses, how some of them are moral in nature.

They describe fundamental right and wrong. Others have some civil aspect to them. They're about kind of governance. And then other ones are more just ceremonial. They're rituals.

[36:07] And the purpose of those is to be types and shadows of something that God is going to do. God is kind of telling a story. He's creating a drama through history that will ultimately, one day, those things will be revealed for their reality.

And so, how do you know the difference between what is ceremonial, what's symbolic, and what is moral? A lot of times, I think, our just intuition tells us, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not commit adultery.

Like, we see how those things impact everybody and the pain and misery those things cause to the whole world when those things are broken. But it's hard to see with not working or working on a certain day how that's going to hurt people because you work on a specific day of the week.

And so, if you remember, Jesus, multiple times throughout his ministry, was accused of breaking the Sabbath by the Pharisees. And they had added their own extra rules to Moses' law.

And during, during those interactions, there was two actually that I have in mind in which he was accused of breaking the Sabbath. He would, he would be healing someone or sometimes it was just his disciples plucking grain from somebody's farm.

[37:27] They were just gleaning, which by the way was lawful. According to the law, that was fine to just grab grain from the edges of a field. So they could eat on a Sabbath day. And they were just plucking the grain. And that plucking of the grain and then rolling it in their fingers, right, to get the chaff off, that was considered work.

And Jesus said, you guys are a bunch of lunatics. And he said, listen, I'm going to give you an example. He says, does not the Bible teach, doesn't the scriptures teach that the priests are to profane the Sabbath themselves?

Because, well, on the Sabbath, there are certain Sabbath days which the priests were supposed to do sacrifices. That's work, isn't it? And Jesus pointed that out to them. He says, the priests profane the Sabbath.

They treat it as any other common work day. And so he's like, listen, you guys need to read the scriptures more carefully. And then there was another time in the book of John, this is John chapter 7, where he was accused again, I think this one was healing on the Sabbath, and he talks about circumcision, which by the way is another ceremonial command.

There's no moral virtue in circumcision, circumcising or not circumcising your son. But the Jews would actually have a conflict sometimes, and this happens with ceremonial laws.

[38:46] The Jews were supposed to circumcise their sons on the eighth day, right? Well, circumcision requires some work. Well, what happens if your child is born on a Friday? The eighth day falls on Saturday, the last day of the week.

And so, he told them, he says, hey, do you guys circumcise your children on the eighth day according to the law of Moses on Saturday? Yes, you do.

And so, you yourselves, even you, profane the Sabbath in order to keep God's commandment. And so, he was sharing with them, listen, you guys, read the Bible more carefully.

You guys are just making things up. And so, but we see that with ceremonial laws that sometimes some ceremonial law will override another one. But you don't see that with fundamental rules of morality, do you?

Where in order to keep the Sabbath, I have to steal from somebody or I have to commit adultery or I have to murder. Do you ever find that? No. Fundamental rules of morality don't work that way. You don't have to break one rule of fundamental morality in order to keep another one.

[39:52] And so, that's one of the ways we can recognize ceremonial laws. And then the last thing is that Paul himself, the apostle to the Gentiles, the one who said that he was given a mystery, something that had not been prophesied before, that he was given the gospel or he was delivered the dispensation of the grace of God to give or to dispense to administer grace to the Gentiles.

And he taught in his letters, the first one I'm going to read is from Colossians chapter 2. And he explicitly teaches that Christians should not observe the Sabbath.

Now, there are other places where Paul tells Christians, well, don't commit adultery, don't murder, don't steal. In fact, you should work with your hands and give to others, but stop stealing. If you were stealing before, don't do it anymore. And so, he would reiterate what was in the law. But with this one in particular, he said, do not observe those special days. Colossians 2.16, so let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths. Don't let anyone judge you. If you want to rest on a Saturday, that's fine, but don't let anybody judge you if you want to rest on Wednesday or Thursday or Sunday. He says this, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

[41:18] Those ceremonial laws about eating and drinking and days of rest and festivals, those all were types and shadows that pointed to Jesus. But Jesus came and he accomplished something.

And so, we don't need to look towards those shadows anymore. In fact, in Galatians chapter 4, Paul, the whole book of Galatians or letter to the Galatians is just got, or Paul is so upset because they're starting to circumcise their kids in order to like try to be better Christians.

He says, stop it! These Jews who are coming and telling you you have to do this to be a good Christian, they're lying to you. This is false. Galatians 4, 8, but then indeed when you did not know God, he says to them, you serve those things which by nature are not gods.

And so he would tell them all day long, hey, keep the first commandment, don't worship other gods, don't worship idols, stop doing that. But now, after you have known God or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements to which you desire again to be in bondage?

You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, he says, lest I have labored for you in vain. He says, now vanity, your life is going to be, your Christian life will be fruitless if you try to keep these commandments, these ceremonial ones.

[42:34] Your Christian life will be fruitless, so do not do it. Does that mean that you can't rest on a Saturday if you want to? No. No. But do not make it a command.

And I want to just finish off with this an illustration on why it's important for Christians to avoid, to stay away from these ceremonial laws. Because there are lots of Christians today that will tell you that hey, this is important, it's good, it's valuable for Christians.

There was a family and war had broken out somewhere. We'll kind of keep it vague because this isn't a real story. But, and dad was in the military.

He had to go off to war, to the war front. And everybody said their goodbyes and they decided to create a tradition in their household to remember their father, to look forward to his return and to pray for him.

And so when they would have dinner each night, they saved his setting at the head of the table, an empty chair and an empty setting. They would set out the plate and the silverware and the cup and everything and it would just sit empty.

[43:44] But they would use that as a reminder and they would remember their dad and look forward to his return safely from the war front. And then they would pray for him each night when they would do that.

Well, at the end of the year, their father came home safely and gave everybody hugs. It was a time of great jubilation. And then, you know, at the end of the day, they came to sit down and eat a dinner together for the first time in over a year.

And as he went to sit at the head of the table where there was a nice setting there, the family, the kids said, whoa, whoa, whoa, dad, no, no, no, no, no, no, that's supposed to stay empty. That's an empty spot.

We use that as kind of a symbol. We use that as a way to remember you and to think about you and hope for your return in the future and to pray for you. And the dad said, yeah, but I'm here now. I'm here now. So you have the real thing. You don't have to remember anymore. You don't have to hope for the future. And that's the way that it is with these ceremonial laws.

[44:47] We have rest in Christ. He accomplished a work for us. He came and accomplished a salvation for us so that we have a relationship with him.

And we don't need those ceremonial laws anymore to be types and shadows and symbols. So let's celebrate instead of those rituals, those festivals, those special days, we can celebrate him and what he did for us.

And we can focus on that. Next week, we'll talk more about, well, should Christians rest? How should we kind of deal with this?

We'll answer some more of those additional questions. But let's go ahead and finish with a word of prayer. Father, so grateful to you for what you did for us.

That the Jews had something, the Sabbath and these laws that made them special. But those things have passed away, many of them. And you have given us something even better, as it says in Hebrews, over and over and over again, that we have something better than they had.

[46:02] And we want to hold on to those things, to our hope and our trust and our life in you. Help us to understand your word more and more every day. We look to the scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures, the instructions and righteousness, the ceremonies.

We want to learn from them, but we want to understand them rightly. We ask you to help us do that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thanks, everybody. Don't forget the directories.

Hopefully we don't run out this.