

The Patio Pulpit For July 29, 2020
The Fourth Commandment: “Remember the Sabbath”
Exodus 20:8-11

I would dare say that for most Americans Sunday is different. It feels different. But so does Saturday, and while we're at it, so do Friday and Monday. Friday is the beginning of our weekend and personally, my second favorite day of the week (I love Friday nights), Saturday gets first place in my book. Monday is the most dreaded day of the week; it's a real buzz kill. But out of the seven days on our calendar, Sunday is a standout.

Sunday “feels” different than the other days of the week. There's something calming about Sunday mornings, well, unless you have children to get dressed while you're trying to get yourself dressed. Friday night and Saturday feel different to me, but Sunday is more different. Sunday was always special when I was a kid even though my parents didn't go to church or like church. They took us to the church in our little rural community in Union County, N.C., and my brother and I always felt loved and welcomed there. And, of course, Sunday's are really different these days for yours truly since becoming a pastor back in 1994. But that special day feeling is still there.

But doesn't Sunday “feel” like the end of the week rather than the first day of our week? Sunday is the climax of the week to us when it's actually the first day of the week.

And for Christians, it's the day of the week that we gather to worship God. And that's why since I was a kid Sunday has been different.

⁸ *“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

⁹ *“Six days you shall labor and do all your work,*

¹⁰ *but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.*

¹¹ "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the 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. (Exod. 20:8-11 NAU)

Throughout this series on the ten commandments, I will remind us that the ten commandments, the law of God, the law of Moses, or simply "the law," was given exclusively to Israel **for the purpose of letting them know what God says is sin, number one, number two, how utterly sinful the Jews were, third, to provide a temporary way of atoning for their sins through the sacrifices of bulls and goats and birds, and fourth, to point to the coming Messiah who Himself would be the final sacrifice.**

First, **Sunday is not the sabbath**

⁸ *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

If I didn't know better, I would think that Sunday is the sabbath. It's our day of rest, kinda, and I remember being told not to go outside and play on Sundays when I was just a kid. The stores and most businesses except for a couple of restaurants and the Dairy Mart in Monroe were closed on Sundays. And that all changed in the '60's and many businesses began opening on Sundays. I liked it. It meant we had more hang outs to cruise on Sunday afternoons.

We live under grace and not the law of Moses. We worship on Sundays and then many of us go out to eat which means that the restaurant owners and the servers have to work on Sundays. We are not under the law including the law of the sabbath.

What is the difference between the sabbath and Sunday? Saturday is the seventh day of the week and that makes it the sabbath day. Sunday through Friday are the six days God refers to in the fourth commandment with Sunday being the first day of the week.

"Pick a day; any day."

You have the freedom to do that. We have the freedom to worship on days other than Saturday or Sunday. Let's say your job has you working every Sunday like our servers do at the restaurants we frequent. Let's say you have to work every Saturday as well. And let's say you want to worship the Lord Jesus so you will have to do it some other day. That's great. You can do that. Those who are in Christ are not chained to Sunday. Listen to this:

⁵ One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. (Rom. 14:5-6 NAU)

What days are you free to worship? Then pick one of those days and worship. Hopefully you can gather other believers with you so you can encourage one another and study the word and grow in your faith. ²⁴ *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (Heb. 10:24-25 NAU)*

We can have church anywhere we choose, even down by the riverside (if we're truly gathered for that reason).

My daddy was a deceived and unregenerate man, and a liar. He once told me that he could worship God as good as anybody while he was out in the woods at night with his buddies coon huntin.' Yeah, right. I went with daddy and his buddies coon huntin' numerous times and not once did I hear or witness them worshiping God.

¹³ And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

¹⁴ *A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. (Acts 16:13-14 NAU)*

This woman named Lydia was already a worshiper of God and since she was at the place of prayer with other women, she was either a Jew by birth or had been converted to Judaism and was sincerely seeking God. God answered her prayers by sending the apostle Paul and his companions.

I suppose that if my daddy and his buddies had been gathered in the woods late at night out in the middle of nowhere to worship God, God would've sent someone to find them and preach the gospel to them.

And yours truly, where was I when I got saved? In the cafeteria of CPCC. And what day of the week was it? Tuesday. And God found me in the middle of my nowhere and sent his messenger to proclaim the gospel to me.

The sabbath of the ten commandments was narrowly defined and applied by the Jewish leaders til it crippled and bound the Jews so that they saw it as the only time they could worship God and the temple or the synagogue were the only places they could worship God.

Beloved, we are the church. The building where we gather each week is not the church. It's a building made of brick and mortar and wood and shingles and glass. We are the church. We are the body of Christ, free to worship whenever and wherever we so choose.

For those like the leaders of the Seventh Day Adventists who command their followers to worship on Saturday because it's the law, they are the 21st century equivalent of the Pharisees of the Lord's day. They are the 21st century equivalent of the damnable Judaizers of Paul's day who destroyed souls by persuading them that only by keeping the law of circumcision could they be justified. ¹³ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. (Matt. 23:13 NAU)*

I close with this. Jesus said, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.”

The law of God, the law of Moses, is good and holy and right and pure because it reveals to us what is right and wrong, what is sin, and it gives us light on our walk of faith. **It cannot save but it sure can shine.**

Love you guys. In Jesus’ name, amen.