

The Second Sunday of Pentecost June 3, 2018

Our Savior's Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Justin Kumfer

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Everyone just take a breath. Close your eyes. Get comfortable in your seats for a minute. Just rest for a minute. Rest is what this day is about after all. This is the day that is set apart by God as a holy day. Whether it's Saturday or Sunday doesn't really matter. It's the Sabbath, the day of rest.

The Sabbath day was established from the beginning of creation. When God created the world He worked for six days and then on the 7th day He rested. Did He need to rest, well of course not because He's God and doesn't ever get tired or run out of ideas or run out of steam. Nonetheless God rested on the 7th day. It's the day we are supposed to rest from our labors and...do what?

What do you do when you rest? Maybe sit in front of the TV, Netflix and chill? Or maybe you're the type who likes to curl up with a good book? But what if you have young kids? How do you rest then? There are very different ideas for what constitutes rest.

In the times of the Old Testament the Pharisees of Israel had very strict rules for what you could not do on the Sabbath day. And some of these rules were very specific. For example, the gleaning of another's crop, like the disciples were doing, was not against the

law but doing it on the Sabbath was illegal according to the Pharisee's understanding of the rules.

Using this understanding, what the Pharisees were doing was building a fence around the Law to avoid any possibility of breaking it. They did this so much there were 39 types of work forbidden on the Sabbath. When Jesus and his disciples were reaping this grain the Pharisees considered the disciples of Jesus to be breaking the Law of God by working on the Sabbath. They would say that they're only trying to keep God's command that was passed down through the generations. However, these Pharisees were adding even more laws to those given by God to Moses. In reality, they have made the observance of the Sabbath an impossible standard which they are holding up over and against what God intended.

In some ways the church today has gone in the opposite direction and made it so that keeping the Sabbath is more of an option than a necessity. And though this is important for some, others observe the Sabbath only when they feel like it, or when they have the time, or when they aren't so busy. We don't view the Sabbath as the commandment states. It's not valuable to us because we don't understand its purpose. We think that keeping the Sabbath means going to worship and then not working. The end, talk to you Monday...

God's intent for the Sabbath is much more than these two things. Without question the Sabbath is a day to rest from work. Nothing about this has changed. We have six days, just like everyone else, in which to work but the last day is for rest.

And worship is an essential part of the Sabbath too because it brings God's people together not only for their encouragement and blessing but for the encouragement and blessing of the rest of the church. And some of these misunderstandings hinge on the idea of what is the church. Church itself is one that we have kind of lost over the years. We think of the church as the building that we go to for worship or Bible study or when we need something. Many Christians across the planet can tell you about their church, but if

they ever reference the building they are in as the church they miss the point.

The church was never intended to be a building. The real church is the *people* of God.

A similar misunderstanding is revealed with how the Pharisees observed God's command for the Sabbath. They missed the point of why God commanded the Sabbath just as the church building misses the greater understanding of what the church is. The Sabbath isn't about the rules and how you should exactly follow them. The Sabbath is all about relationships. It's not merely the chance for you to stop working and lay around the house. It's about you being refreshed and filled through your relationship with God.

Jesus' own words from our Gospel today reveal this truth to us. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." This shows that the Sabbath and its observance are intended to benefit mankind. They are an opportunity to rest and be refreshed through our relationship with God. We see the relationship being a part of Sabbath observance in the two accounts of Jesus acting on the Sabbath. In the first Jesus' disciples eat while walking through the grain fields. Jesus defends the actions of his friends against the attacks of the Pharisees.

In the second account, Jesus goes even further to help someone in need. While in the synagogue, Jesus heals a man whose hand was shriveled. He knew that the Pharisees were looking for a reason to accuse him if He did anything unlawful on the Sabbath. When Jesus healed the man He didn't do anything unlawful but He did confront the Pharisees understanding of the rules. He said, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" If the Pharisees had answered the way their understanding of the law required they could only do what the law said, neither good nor evil. Not in relationships but in rules.

The Pharisees were thinking that they could find their Sabbath by following the rules. You don't do work and you'll have rest. But they won't find rest that way. Just like you won't find rest just by sitting in front of the TV or relaxing on the couch. Yes it may be relaxing and restful occasionally but the genuine rest won't come.

If you're looking for rest you'll find it in a relationship with God. You'll find it here, in worship. Or you'll find it in God's word. Or in prayer. But why settle for one? You can find the rest you are looking for in all of these because God uses the Bible to lead us into the life He wants for us. The life we don't deserve but so desperately need. And even though it's right there before us, we run away from it and do everything in our power to avoid resting God's way. We do it because it's scary.

It's scary because when we listen to God and have a relationship with Him that we actively engage in it will change our lives. The way we behave will be different. The things we think will be different. We won't be the same as each other by any means but we will love one another like Christ does. We will care for one another like Christ does. We will find our rest in and with God. Because our energy and restoration will come from Him. It won't come from TV or books or relaxing because even those things don't fulfill our need for rest. The only thing that can give us true rest is God and the relationship we have in Him.

So, everyone take a breath. Close your eyes. Get comfortable in your seats. Here is where you can find true rest through your relationship with God which is ours through Jesus Christ. Let's pray.