

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Psalm 139:1-3.**
- B. I do not believe that the Sabbath day is binding on Xians today--it is part of the old covenant not the new covenant.
- C. Neither do I believe that Sunday is the Xian Sabbath. There is no NT basis for believing that.
- D. But I do believe that the principle of the Sabbath is very important and is a NT teaching. Let me explain in our lesson this morning.
- E. The fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8-11).
"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."

I. HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN.

- A. If I had been doing it--if these were Swango's ten commandments--it probably would have been #47 or maybe #202. Sure it's important to get some rest, but alongside murder and adultery and coveting it doesn't seem all that important.
- B. Why in the world would the Lord make a law emphasizing rest? Answer:
because if you consistently ignore the principle of the Sabbath in your life, somewhere along the line the bills will come due. Things will begin to breakdown in your life. That breakdown will be either physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, or marital. But something will break!
- D. *But there are so many needs! There are so many things to do!*
We rationalize our conduct by saying that God "needs" more and more of me to get the work done. But the truth is I NEED MORE AND MORE OF HIM.
- E. As the church continues to grow, and as the condition of families becomes much more hectic, as the demands on our time from our jobs becomes increasingly intense: And I'm not going to get it in 1-to-3 hours a week at the assemblies, or in short 1-minute bursts between appointments.
- F. Back in the early and mid-70s, there used to be a college major called *Leisure Studies*. The thinking was that with the onslaught of computers and other time saving devices that Americans would need to know of things to do with all their spare time. Yet, what happened was that instead of cutting the work load we found that we can do 3-5 times as much as we used to.
- G. One thing is certain, we can never be successful enough to provide ourselves with abundant living. We will never accomplish or accumulate enough to feel comfortable with where we are. We will only become more weary. It is not wrong to strive to achieve. But it is wrong to let work and busyness demand the ultimate commitment from us. The essence of the 4th commandment is, "**Do not let work become your god.**"

II. A TIME TO REFLECT.

- A. Everyone likes the 23rd Psalm. But do you remember that line in v2? "**He makes me to lie down in green pastures.**" Why does he "make us?"
 - 1. Because He wants time with you.
 - 2. Because He wants to walk with you.
 - 3. Because He wants to share His heart with you.
 - 4. Because He wants a relationship with you.
- B. I can hear God saying, "If you think you can live your life without taking time to let Me renew and restore you, you are mistaken--and I am not pleased!"

- C. Even Jesus told His apostles to get some rest (Mk. 6:31).
And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)
- D. And notice that the phrase "He makes me lie down" comes *before* the words "He restores my soul." We must learn to stop and enjoy a Sabbath with God on a regular basis. Restoration is neither quick nor cheap.
- E. No matter where we are in life, giving ourselves over to workaholism or nonstop activities can be a great temptation. Overwork is celebrated by some and demanded by others. We say to ourselves, "If I could just do a little more, the job would be back on schedule, or the bills would be up-to-date, or I'd be a cinch to get the promotion." I think the Sabbath is the time when we stop and remind ourselves:
 1. Of who God is.
 2. Of the terrible price He paid to buy us back from Satan and sin.
 3. Of what He has promised to do in us and through us.
 4. Of what He wants to accomplish in our hearts and lives.
 5. Of the place He is preparing for us for all eternity.

III. A TIME TO REST.

- A. Everything needs time to rest.
 1. Shoes will last longer if they are not worn everyday.
 2. Bowling pins will last longer if they are not used everyday.
 3. Soil will become more productive if given a chance to rest.
 4. And to reject God's rest means we have rejected God!
- B. Notice this beautiful little verse in Psa. 139:1-3.
O LORD, Thou hast searched me and known me. [2] Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou dost understand my thought from afar. [3] Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways.
Isn't that tender? He shows me where to stop and rest! But what if I brush right on by Him and refuse to stop? What if I think I know better, and that I really don't need to rest at all? That would be pretty foolish, wouldn't it? We are always the losers when we try to run ahead of God, striving to maintain a faster pace than He desires.
- C. Example: an American business man was leading a safari in Africa using some of the native men to carry the provisions. But the American boss was going much too fast day after day for his African helpers. Finally they just quit. When the American ask his African friends what was wrong one of them replied, "We have been going too hard and too fast, and we must let our souls catch up with our bodies."
- D. Ever wondered why some people have trouble staying awake during the Sunday AM sermon? It might be the preaching, but I really think that it is because that is the only time some people stop and get some rest. Some people can be physically, bodily in church but "checked out" mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. But if we will make the Lord our priority, abide in Him, and walk in step with Him, He'll help our hearts to catch up (Rom. 15:29; Gal. 5:25).
(Rom 15:29) And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.
(Gal 5:25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

IV. THE GAIT OF GALILEE.

- A. We have so little time left for God. Our lives are so very full, and yet so very empty. We have no room for Him in our thoughts, in our schedules, or in the fabric of our lives. The question is then, "What in the world do I do about ? Do I keep going along with the flow of the world and let them continually erode away my personal times or relationship with the Lord? See Psa. 127:1,2.
Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The

watchman keeps awake in vain. [2] It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved *even in his sleep*.

B. I quote from Ron Mehl;

In His love, I believe the Lord is saying, "You work night and day. When you're not working, you're playing so hard you exhaust yourself. You're busy, busy, busy; with no time for God, no time to evaluate your heart and life. You think that by running at that pace, you'll get ahead. You think that if you don't cram every excess hour with work or entertainment, that you will somehow miss out on life and be the loser." But the Sabbath principle is the exact opposite! The fact is, time set aside for the Lord is never lost time. God knows what a great impact time alone with Him will make in our lives. He tells us, "When you stop working, I'll do My greatest work."

C. Does God have a chance to look into your heart? *When?* When do you give Him time to do so?
See Psa. 90:17; 139:23,24.

(Psa 90:17) And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; And do confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands.

(Psa 139:23-24) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; [24] And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

D. The Living Bible states Psa. 25:14 in a most beautiful way,

"Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence Him. With them alone He shares the secrets of His promises."

V. THREE BLESSINGS OF REST.

A. First, it is a **safeguard**.

1. The Sabbath was given to constantly remind us that there is more to life than work.
2. Honoring the Sabbath principle prevents us from abusing ourselves. I am persuaded that many of us are dishonoring our bodies by the constant stress we are asking them to bear. Keeping up a frantic pace with no relief will inevitably take its toll on our bodies.
3. God wants us to be people of character who have families of character. And he built into His creation a rhythm of work and rest to safeguard those families from neglect.

B. Second, it is a **reminder**.

The Sabbath principle is not merely refraining from work; it's refraining from work so we can do something holy. It's a reminder to keep God in our lives. It is a time when we can filter a week's propaganda through God's unchangeable principles for living a life of character.

C. Third, it is a **sign**.

1. The Sabbath was to be a reminder and a safe-guard to the Israelites, but it was also to be a sign to the nations (Ex. 31:13).
"But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.'"
2. It was to indicate that Israel prospered, not because of the industry of its people, but because of the blessing of its God.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. People of character resist the temptation to compromise their values in order to secure their future. They have a lifestyle that says to onlookers, "It is God I trust to provide for my life."
- B. The Sabbath principle raises a signal to the world that above my work, above my hobbies, above my interests, above my pursuits, there is a majestic God who has first claim on my life.
- C. Let's come back to the principles of the Ten(der) Commandments.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.