

Theology Simply Explained — WSC57 The Fourth Commandment for Christians

Pastor walks his children through Westminster Shorter Catechism question 57—especially equipping them to show from Scripture how so far from being abrogated in Christ, this commandment is especially for Christians. WSC57: Which is the fourth commandment? ***The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.***

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

So this week's catechism question is number 57, which is, which is the fourth commandment and the answer is, The fourth commandment is, remember the Sabbath day to keep it. Holy six days, show that labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God in it.

Thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter. Thy manservant nor thy maidservant nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger. That is within thy gates, four and six days. The Lord made heaven and earth the sea and all that in them is and rested the seventh day.

Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it now over the next several questions, and answers in the Catechism, we're going to be hearing about what this requires and what day it is, how to sanctify it. And what is forbidden in it. And the reasons that are given.

So, there's a lot of content coming up, but the question of which is the first commit, sorry, which is the fourth commandment is an important question in part because it is still a present tense question. There are many people who because our hearts want to be Lord of our own time.

Lord of our own pleasure. We want to think that life is consecrated unto us and that even our relationship with God himself is one in which God has been consecrated for our sakes, which is true to some extent. When you think about Jesus saying he has consecrated himself to die for us in John 17 as he's praying and then that God would sanctify us in response to his work but we exist.

Not only for God because he is. Holy but to find our delight in God because he is holy and he has made that clear from the beginning. It's not something that started at Sinai. It's not something that started with Moses. The Sabbath day is something that he consecrated and he blessed so, or to put it in the language of Exodus 20, which is reflected in our catechism question, Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

So, several things to notice the first is, it's not what was the force? Commit, Fourth commitment. It's what is the fourth commandment? Now, if all of humanity as a perpetual moral commandment are to keep the Sabbath day to remember and consecrate that, which God has consecrated and blessed than we do expect.

And that's exactly what we see that there will be special applications when the Lord takes for himself. A covenant people. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, or the Sabbath of God, that's true. But notice the wording, the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

And so if all people are to keep Sabbath but the Lord has brought his people into special covenant relationship with them within then we should expect that the Sabbath keeping of the people of God, is going to have unique expression and that there would be unique applications. This took place and in Israel in a couple of different ways, it didn't just have the weekly Sabbath.

They had several high Sabbaths. During the year, they had even Sabbath years and Sabbath years of Sabbath years, the year of Jubilee and and so forth. So they had particular applications or extensions of the Sabbath principle, which now that we're not under Moses are Sinai, those are gone. And so Colossians 2 for instance says, don't let anyone judge you on the question of Sabbaths and it's plural there indicating that.

It's those special ceremonial status but also on the weekly Sabbath, the being the covenant people of God, made a special application of the weekly Sabbath which is for them. It became a holy convocation and so there wasn't just their own remembering in order to keep holy what God has made.

Holy and blessed are blessed and made holy, but doing so, in such a way that recognized the day as a holy assembly, so does this continue now. Well, not in exactly the same way, but because we're not under Moses. But it does of course continue under Jesus. As we've already said the Sabbath is a perpetual moral commandment that comes out of the creation that comes out of who God is and to and what we are.

Even apart from our being redeemed and covenanted to him and part of his visible church on the earth etc. But there's expectation, when you look at the expected transition between God's from, especially a transition from God's people, under Moses, to God's people under Jesus, This is especially you see in places, like, in the middle to late chapters of Jeremiah and Jeremiah, 29 through 31 in there, and there's a little bit of it and Ezekiel, but one of the great places where you see it is and what's called the servant songs, the suffering servant in the last third of Isaiah or it, that suffering servant is Jesus.

And there's looking forward to the one who will keep covenant. Whereas Israel has been faithless. The servant will be faithful and the redemption and covenant that the Lord gives through the servant and even established as in his church in his visible church in that servant will obsolete. Put an end to the mosaic administration.

So, one of the things that we see belonging especially to the time of Christ is Isaiah 56. Isaiah 58, the keeping of Sabbaths which we're glad to see because if you read the Old Testament you realize that Israel never really did a good job of keeping any of God's law.

And so it's not like the Sabbath was really kept, and then Jesus came and it's not anymore. The biblical theology of it is the Sabbath was hardly kept at all and even then not well from the heart. But then Jesus comes and finally by his grace and his transforming, the heart has given hearts of flesh.

Instead of hearts of stone his assembly his church on earth which he leads from his throne in heaven, as our priest. Not just our king and as our prophet, not just our game, his church on earth finally starts keeping Sabbath as it was. Always meant to be kept a day of consecration to the Lord a day of delight in the Lord, a day of being with the Lord, a day of hearing the Lord.

So the Lord Jesus comes in the gospels and he's keeping Sabbath that way. He's still keeping the Old Testament day the the seventh day which of course for well.

Adam and Eve was their first full day, which God had established for them that they would immediately have Sabbath before they ever had work a Sabbath day before they ever had a work day.

So Jesus is going to synagogue, but he's doing things like gathering, his people to himself and teaching them to find their delight in him and to know him as the Lord. And one of the greatest claims to deity he ever made was when he identified himself as the Lord of the Sabbath because the Sabbath had been consecrated as holy unto Yahweh.

And so when Jesus identifies him as the Lord of the Sabbath saying I am Yahweh, the Sabbath is about being with me about being gathered, to me about delighting in me about hearing me address you this of course did not fit, what the Pharisees thought the Sabbath was about which was They thought the Sabbath was about being so miserable in doing.

Only those things you didn't actually feel like doing that, God would be impressed and give you a treat was actually the mindset that you see. Not at the end of Isaiah 58, which is the Jesus mindset of call the Sabbath of delight. So you call it a set that delight first because you don't actually delight in it yet.

But God says it's a delight so you call it a light and then he transitions from call it a delight, to take delight in the Sabbath and if you take delight in the Sabbath then you will delight yourself in the Lord. So that's the Jesus attitude way of Sabbath.

That's the way the Sabbath was meant to function for us that we call it a delight and delight in it and delight in the Lord from the creation and all the way through. But they hadn't, they had had the mindset, that's at the beginning of Isaiah 58, which is the Feasts of the Lord, which, of course, were special Sabbaths in, in the Jewish calendar.

Like we said and would include the weekly. Holy Convocation of that, the Lord's feasts and fasts were times of misery that you would use to manipulate heaven that you would make your voice. Heard on high by striking heaven, with your, with your Sabbath, keeping which God calls to strike at heaven, with a wicked fist was a horrible thing.

There are still, of course, people who try to wear their Sabbath, keeping like a gold star that shows how wonderful they are. And now everyone else should be like them and God should really be thankful that he's got people like them who make themselves. So miserable in his account but that is not That is not proper sabbath.

Keeping in Jesus identifies himself as Lord of the Sabbath. He says it's a day of for finding out that you come to Jesus and you receive mercy and you receive good. And so it's especially a day for doing people, the good and the mercy of enabling them to gather with Jesus as well as possible.

You move from the gospels, especially to the book of Hebrews. And in the book of Hebrews, there are those who want to go back to some of the Moses things because the Moses stuff, had outward outward glory in physical tabernacle or temple, and sacrifices, and it appealed very strongly to the senses and especially to our eyesight.

So the things in Moses were things that you could see with your eyes but they were far less glorious than that which was invisible. So the book of Hebrews starts out with Jesus, being the brightness of God's glory, in the exact imprint of God's nature. And of course you can't see him because after he redeemed us, he went and took his seat in heaven.

That's how the book of Hebrew starts, but the point in the book of Hebrews is that the Jesus glory that you can't see, is infinitely greater than the Moses glory. That could be seen on earth.

And what's happening on the Lord's Day is there's this heavenly gathering in Zion where Jesus addresses us from heaven. He who is still a consuming fire. He who is still the same Lord that he was when he came down upon Sinai. He was the same Lord that he was when he when the offerings were made before him with the 70 elders and Aaron Nataba by who and Moses.

And the blood was poured on the altar and the blood was poured on the people. And so they were, they were doused at the blood and then they sat down and they had the meal, They saw the Lord their God and they ate, and drank, they had the meal that came from the sacrifice, those things looked forward to Jesus who is still that glorious.

But now he has doubt our body is not with blood but with water and sprinkled, our hearts clean from an evil conscience and the meal that he gives us reminds us that he has opened a way through the curtain where we go with him by his body, by his the new and living way.

That is his flesh as consecrated by his blood. And so Hebrews, Hebrews 1 is connecting forward to Hebrews 10 11 12, Hebrews 10 taking that incident on the mountain, making application of how the that dousing with blood and that meal in Exodus 24 looked forward to baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In the New Covenants, I don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together and then you have that chapter, that's in the middle between chapter 10 and chapter 12 chapter 10, you know, the one that we just quoting or referring to hearkening back to Texas. 24, chapter 12, talking about gathering in Zion gathering with the Angels gathering, with the souls of just made, perfect gathering with God.

Our Father gathering with the mediator, whose blood speaks better than Abel and he addresses us from heaven. And he uses that addressing us from heaven to preserve us and bring us into an unshakable kingdom. And we worship with reverence and all because he is a consuming fire, He is like that glory.

He is the one who displayed himself in that glory cloud. That was a consuming fire at the top of the mountain that Moses went into the midst of at the end of Exodus chapter 24 and so there's one day a week that we are invited into the holy assembly where we sit under preaching The preaching through, which he is bringing us at last when we have ceased from our works.

In this world into God's rest. Now we are to find rest in Jesus. That's true. We haven't yet. Come into the rest that Hebrews forest talking about where we have ceased from our works in this world. But one of the things that happens in the Sabbath is you set aside temporarily those works in this world from which you have not yet ceased.

And so Hebrews 4 says that until we have entered his rest, a Sabbath-keeping remains on which you hear his voice and you should hear not with hard hearts. But with faith. So the Sabbath keeping of the gathering of the church in heaven, in the Lord, Jesus is the highest and the highest expression of the keeping of the fourth commandment and what the keeping of the fourth commandment, from before the fall, and then between the fall and Moses.

And then through the entire Mosaic administration, all of those things were looking forward to what the Bible itself. Now calls the Lord's Day the day on which

those who are part of His church on earth, gather with the invisible church in heaven and sit under the Word of Jesus Christ who addresses them through a preacher.

It's in this gathering that he sings his father. Sprays. Hebrews chapter 2. It's in this gathering that he mediates. Our prayers brings us to the throne of grace together. Let us come to the throne of grace. This is the great reason why we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together because the forsaking of the air assembling of ourselves together is the breaking of the fourth commandment in.

Its highest best fullest form in all of Scripture, which is the holy assembly of the Lord Jesus on earth that he leads from heaven. So one of the things that doesn't get covered in the shorter catechism but that is important for us because our so many who make this error and perhaps probably hopefully not just because our hearts always resist the law of God.

And so our minds are easily darkened or swayed against those things from God's law that are true. But some people really have run into a continued pharisaic, sort of keeping not the delighting in the Lord, not the holiest assembly. That is enjoying him whom we know to be Lord of the Sabbath.

The holy One and yet has become a man. So that he might redeem us and we might dwell it dwell with him, but you need to know and you need to be able to reason from the scripture as a whole how it is. That the fourth commandment is a is a present reality.

It's not. What was the fourth commandment? That's what is the fourth commandment.