

## INTRODUCTION

Last time, we considered how to know what NOT to do on the Sabbath Day, in order to keep it holy. Recall that I did not issue a list of rules, telling you precisely what you must not do on the Lord's Day. Instead, from a passage in Isaiah, I put to you this truth: On the Sabbath Day, we delight in the LORD, and honor Him rather than delighting in and honoring ourselves.

-The Sabbath is the Lord's holy day, so we find it delightful and honorable, and we act accordingly

-that is, on the Lord's Day, you observe a holy rest all day from your own works, words, and thoughts about your worldly employment and recreations

-your foot does not go all the same places; your eye does not look for all the same things; your mouth does not say all the same words; on the sabbath day as on the other six days

Based on that truth, in your own heart, and in your own household, you may legitimately decide what exactly you and your children do NOT do on the Sabbath Day.

Today I take up the corresponding question of how to know what to DO on the Lord's Day.

A few years ago, we learned together from the book of Ephesians that part of what it is to walk worthy of the calling with which you are called, and one of the means by which we keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, is to recognize that the church has one and only one Lord: Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We do well when we recognize that he is Lord, and no one else is, in all things pertaining to his congregation.

Our one Lord, Jesus Christ, told us that knowing what to do on the Sabbath Day hinges on recognizing that his lordship includes his being Lord of the Sabbath. He is the one whose word and whose example definitely determines what we are to do on the Sabbath Day. Much of the material in the four gospels is devoted to showing how he opposed the corrupt religious leaders who had set themselves up as petty lords over the Sabbath Day, lording it over the people, as if they had the right to determine what everyone should do on the Sabbath Day. Today we'll look in on that conflict, in two passages from the gospels, to learn that:

**In order to know what to DO on the sabbath day, we work from this truth: We recognize Jesus Christ as Lord of the Sabbath; not ourselves as lords of the Sabbath.**

TEXT - Matthew 12:1-13

## BODY

- I. If We Considered Ourselves Lords of the Sabbath, We Would Fall Into at Least Two Errors
  - A. We would make rules for ourselves that pertain only to outward actions (Mt 12:7a)
  - B. We would make rules for others that condemn the innocent (Mt 12:7b)

- II. If We Consider Jesus Christ Lord of the Sabbath, We Learn from Him What to Do on His Holy Day
- A. We get food ready to eat (Mt 12:1)
    - 1. we can keep things simple regarding food on the Lord's Day
    - 2. we can do much of the preparation beforehand
    - 3. but we have to do some of the preparing of food on the Lord's Day, or no one could eat
    - 4. no positive law, not even the sabbath commandment, should be applied in such a way that it makes people have to go hungry
  - B. We transport ourselves to the place of worship (Mt 12:1)
    - 1. many people today, and in most of history, have to walk, even a long way
    - 2. in some places and times, people have had to deal with horses or other animals to take them to the place of worship
    - 3. many people in the world today ride their bikes everywhere
    - 4. we here normally have to deal with automobiles (for which we are very thankful!)
      - a) we can do some things ahead of time
        - (1) we can wash the car ahead of time
        - (2) we can get gas in the car ahead of time
        - (3) we can check the oil and coolant ahead of time
      - b) but there are several things we need to do on the Lord's Day
        - (1) load up children and the food we're bringing
        - (2) of course, drive (and supervise the student drivers)
        - (3) unload everybody and everything
        - (4) deal with any problems with the car, and with other people's cars
  - C. We assemble to worship (Mt 12:9b)
    - 1. if you are very young, that means doing all it takes to be still and attentive
    - 2. if you are old, that means includes doing all it takes to get going
    - 3. if you are in the middle, that includes doing all it takes to help those who are very young or very old!
  - D. We worship and lead in worship and serve in worship (Mt 12:5)
    - 1. in the Old Covenant, the people worshipped in the temple, the priests led in worship, and the levites served, all on the Sabbath Day
    - 2. so in the New Covenant, we worship, we lead in worship, and we serve, all on the Sabbath Day
  - E. We prioritize mercy over positive institutions (Mt 12:7)
    - 1. in the days of the OT, it was right and good for Israelites to offer the required sacrifices; but it was not right or good for Israelites to remember to offer the required sacrifices while forgetting to show mercy to their fellow men
    - 2. so in these days of the NT, it is right and good for Christians to worship in the congregation, but not to do so while forgetting to show mercy to our fellow men
  - F. We do good for those who are in need (Mt 12:11-12)
    - 1. even animals
    - 2. much more our fellow men
    - 3. we are not empowered to solve people's problems miraculously, as was our Lord Jesus when he was here
    - 4. but we are empowered to address people's problems
      - a) by praying for them
      - b) by helping them in the usual means
      - c) e.g. I could not heal the injury to his hand. But I could do for him what he cannot do because his hand is injured.

- G. We teach and learn from the scriptures (Luke 13:10)
  - 1. it is a kind of work to teach from the scriptures, but it is work that we are authorized to do, and are delighted to do on the Sabbath Day
  - 2. implied: if one is teaching, many are learning; this also is work, sometimes a good bit more demanding work
- H. We give animals the necessary care (Luke 13:15)
  - 1. earlier we read Jesus mentioning animals falling into some sort of trouble on the Sabbath Day
  - 2. here He mentions animals simply needing some care every day
    - a) livestock needs lots of care that does not have to be done on the Sabbath Day
    - b) but some livestock in some settings needs care every day; in the US this often has been called doing “chores” or “choring”
- I. We set people free from the bonds of Satan (Luke 13:16)
  - 1. we are not empowered to do miracles as Jesus did that day
  - 2. but we can preach and profess the gospel, that people be set free from spiritual bondage
  - 3. we can relieve suffering by the usual means, which I said something about a few minutes ago
- J. We seek and receive the setting free (Luke 13:14, 16)
  - 1. there is a sense in which just observing the Lord’s Day, just keeping the Sabbath Day holy, is a seeking deliverance from the Lord
  - 2. but we also, on that day, when we intentionally set aside other things, can devote ourselves to seeking deliverance
- K. We rejoice in the glorious things done by the Lord Jesus (Luke 13:17)
  - 1. every Lord’s Day in the assembly of the saints, and especially some times more than others, there is great occasion for rejoicing in the glorious things Jesus Christ has done
  - 2. examples in this congregation
    - a) several years ago, when the Ows had just started coming here, Rita spoke up and told that there was a problem with the baby she was carrying, and that the doctor had recommended abortion, but that in fear of the Lord and love for the unborn baby, there was no way they would do that
    - b) a few years ago, it had been years since anyone in this congregation had professed faith in Christ and got baptized, when first one young person, then another, then another professed faith in Christ and was baptized
    - c) a few months ago, the deacons reported on the results of the collection for the poor saints, the pastor’s family in San Angelo
    - d) it has happened numerous times that a brother reports that his wife is expecting, or someone reports that a new baby has just been born

### III. Our Confession's Summary of What We Do On the Lord's Day

- A. ...are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.
- B. Exercises of worship, both public and private
- C. Works of necessity
- D. Works of mercy

### IV. Legitimate Authority Exercised Regarding the Lord's Day

- A. A man does rule his own household; parents do rule their own children
- B. Legislatures do make laws for their jurisdiction

## CONCLUSION

If we considered ourselves lords of the Sabbath, we would fall into at least two errors:

- We would make rules for ourselves that pertain only to outward actions (Mt 12:7a)
- We would make rules for others that condemn the innocent

If we consider Jesus Christ Lord of the Sabbath, we learn from him what to do on his holy day

- We give animals the necessary daily care
- We get food ready to eat
- We transport ourselves to the place of worship
- We assemble to worship
- We worship and lead and serve in worship
  - We teach and learn from the scriptures
- We prioritize mercy, and so we do good for those who are in need
- We set people free from the bonds of Satan, and we seek and receive that setting free
- We rejoice in the glorious things done by the Lord Jesus

In order to know what NOT to do on the sabbath day, and what to DO on the sabbath day, we work from these principles:

We delight in the Lord and honor him rather than delighting in and honoring ourselves.  
We recognize Jesus Christ as Lord of the Sabbath, nor ourselves as lords of the Sabbaths.

Dillon - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - 1 Peter 1:3

Willie - Scripture Reading - Revelation 19:11-16

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - 1 Timothy 6:13-16

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 218 "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (First Tune) - Alvin lead

-please consider playing in key of F (see attached)

Angie - Trinity 432 "Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners"

Journey - Trinity 192 "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted" - Alvin lead

As we study the fourth commandment, the commandment requiring one day of sabbath-keeping, remember that all sabbath-keeping finds its ultimate fulfillment in the resting of Jesus Christ from His work, and the Holy Spirit's causing us to find rest in Him for all eternity.