Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Lesson for Sunday, August 21, 2022

TEXT: Exodus 20:8-11

INTRODUCTION:

* Who had to memorize the Ten Commandments as a child?
* Ice Breaker: Divide the class into small groups. When you say “go,” see which group can write down the Ten Commandments the fastest (not word for word). Bonus points can be given for having them in the right order.
* Today we are looking at the fourth commandment. What does it mean? And, why is it important?

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Understanding the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-9)
	1. Read the text (you may even want to put it on the board). Ask the class which words appear to be critical to properly understanding the text. Then define the words below:
	2. “Remember”
		1. The Hebrew word for “remember” actually is in the sense of “mark” or “set aside.”
		2. The Israelites had been keeping time in weeks ever since the first week (Genesis 2:1-3). God desired them to recall why they should set aside one day as different.
	3. “Sabbath Day”
		1. The Hebrew word for “sabbath” does not mean “Saturday” or “seventh day”; it means “rest” or “intermission.”
		2. The institution of the sabbath (one day of rest, worship and remembrance of the Creator) was “made for man” but not as an arbitrary legalistic ritual performed on a specific day.
		3. The Israelites eventually perverted the Sabbath by adding laws and traditions that God did not originally ordain. Jesus rescued the Sabbath from their perversion to recall its true nature and intent (Mark 2:27).
	4. “Keep”
		1. God knew the potential for distractions away from focused attention on Him, His Word, and His way.
		2. Therefore, He is instructing us to keep or “guard” that day to perpetually set that day apart from the other six days of the week.
	5. “Holy” – Different and set apart for God’s purposes.
	6. “In six days”
		1. This verse points us back to the pattern established by God in the Creation Week (Genesis 1).
		2. Man was to work six days and rest one day because God did; in fact, God took six days, instead of a single instant, to finish His work of creating to make all things to be a model for humanity (Genesis 2:1-3).
	7. Now that you have properly defined the words, have the class rewrite the verse in their own words.
2. The Purpose of the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10)
	1. There are three purposes outlined by God for why we should honor the Sabbath.
	2. The first is that we cease from daily labor.
		1. The day was kept holy by ceasing all labor on that day. It was to be uniquely set apart to God.
		2. But it was more than just a day off. It was intended to cease for labor for the purpose of focusing on the Lord.
		3. How does this contrast with people’s opinion of Sunday today?
	3. The second reason is for God’s people to focus on Him.
		1. Truly observing the Sabbath was more than not working. It was dedicating one day to God and away from our own work, way, and pleasures. God wants to reveal to us the benefit of His rest and pleasure in our lives, not our own.
		2. Adam and Eve were made on the 6th day, and on that day, Adam named every animal. The next day was the first Sabbath, giving Adam and Eve time to meet with God and focus on their relationship with Him.
		3. God used that day so that they could know Him and His ways. God’s intention has never changed.
	4. The third reason is for God’s people to be separate from the rest of the world.
		1. Observing the Sabbath sets God’s people apart from those who believe in other gods – or no god at all.
		2. Faithful adherence to this command demonstrates in Whom you believe will provide for your needs. Either you trust that God can provide for your needs in 6 days of labor, or you trust that you can better provide for your needs with 7 days of labor.
		3. Those who truly work and worship as God intended are separated by faithful obedience to this command.
3. The Promise of the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13-14)
	1. By keeping the Sabbath holy, we show our love for God and His law, and He promises blessings and delight. Ultimately, keeping this commandment is not to be a burden of strict rules to follow, but be a delight and bring a benefit.
	2. Vs. 13: If on the Sabbath, we stop…
		1. Compare the first part of verse 13 with the end of the verse as you work through it.
		2. “Turn away thy foot”: Going our own ways; doing things that are against God’s way; doing things in a way that ignores God’s way of handling life.
		3. “Doing *thy* pleasure on *my* holy day”: Seeking our own pleasure; wanting to be pleased rather than be pleasing to the Lord.
		4. “And call the sabbath a delight…”: Speaking our own words; conversation that doesn’t edify others, or glorify God; words that speak only what you want to hear, convincing yourself and others to follow your own ways and your own pleasure.
	3. Vs. 14: Then God will promise to grant you…
		1. Pleasure (“delight”)
		2. Rest and Comfort (“ride upon the high places …”)
		3. Blessing for your life (“feed thee …”)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

* How have people’s attitudes toward Sunday changed in your lifetime? How have your personal attitudes changed?
* What are some ways today that we can become distracted from focusing our attention on God, His Word, and His Ways on Sundays?
* What are some examples of “going our own way” on the Sabbath? What about “seeking our own pleasure”? What about “speaking our own words”?

TO DO: Remember next Sunday and faithfully attend…NO EXCUSES!

NEXT WEEK: Isn’t the fourth command in the Old Testament? Does that still apply to New Testament believers?