

Jesus and the Fourth Commandment

Lesson for Sunday, August 28, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

- This month we have been discussing the importance of the local church, and the need to be faithful to the institution that Jesus died for.
- Last week we reviewed the fourth commandment to remember the Sabbath. What does the New Testament have to say? Don't we live in a different time now? We are not Jews, but Christians...
- Not surprisingly, the fourth commandment receives a lot of attention in the New Testament. Jesus came and confronted all the misconceptions about it that grew out of man's abuse of God's command. Let's look at what Jesus had to say...

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Jesus's **emphasis** (Mark 2:23-27) – *The **benefit** of man*
 - a. Read through the account to learn what was happening...
 - b. The Pharisees were Jewish religious leaders. They tried to live exactly according to the Jewish laws as outlined in the Old Testament. In their attempts to be right with God, they were very legalistic.
 - c. Jesus points the Pharisee's back to an account when David was on the run from King Saul. Jesus was using this example to show them the true intent of the law.
 - d. Jesus's point was clearly stated in verse 27. Mere external observation of the 4th Commandment by strict rules and regulations are meaningless if someone does not have the right attitude toward God and other people.
 - e. God looks into our hearts. Jesus' emphasis was not on overbearing restrictions, nor on mere external practice, but a provision *for man's benefit and blessing*.
 - f. This is demonstrated further in how Jesus refuted the Jews for condemning His healing of a man on the Sabbath in Luke 13.
2. Jesus' **practice** (Luke 13:10-17) – *The **needs** of man*
 - a. Jesus was continually attacked for healing on the Sabbath.
 - b. Over and over Jesus emphasized one thing: that the Sabbath is NOT about outward restrictions, nor about outward practice, but about God's compassion upon meeting the needs of man (John 5:1-18, 7:1-24, Luke 14:1-6).
 - c. God wants to prove that He can meet all our needs if we do things His way in faith and obey this command.
 - d. Dozens of rules had been crafted to keep people from working on the Sabbath, but those rules kept people from caring for God and for others on the Sabbath. Such rules imposed by people (not God) dictated that care for others should wait in the interest of keeping a set of rules.
 - e. The real breaking of the 4th Commandment is to exalt external restrictions over practicing your love for God and love for others.
 - f. *In every encounter Jesus faced concerning the Sabbath, He focused attention on the heart instead of external appearances and practices.*
3. The Sabbath in 2022
 - a. Last week we pointed out that the word "sabbath" simply means rest. It is not prescribing a specific day of the week.
 - b. In the times before Christ, the Jews observed the Sabbath on Saturday. So, should the Fourth Commandment be honored on Saturday or on Sunday?
 - c. From the beginning of time, the seventh day was set aside by God as a day of commemorating the completion of His Work of Creation and of fellowship with the Creator. If Adam and Eve needed that in a perfect world, how much more do we need it, several thousands of years of living in a fallen world?

- d. The Christian worship of the Sabbath on Sunday was changed by the model of the New Testament believers as a means of commemorating the completion of God's Work of salvation by the Resurrection of Jesus.
 - i. After Christ's Resurrection, which took place on the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1), we never find Christ meeting with his disciples on the seventh day.
 - ii. But he specially honored the first day by manifesting himself to them on four separate occasions (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:34, 18-33; John 20:19-23). Again, on the next first day of the week, Jesus appeared to his disciples (John 20:26).
 - iii. Some have calculated that Christ's ascension took place on the first day of the week. And there can be no doubt that the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was on that day (Acts 2:1).
 - iv. Thus, Christ appears as instituting a new day to be observed by His people as the Sabbath, a day to be henceforth known amongst them as the "Lord's Day."
 - v. The observance of this "Lord's day" as the Sabbath was the general custom of the early New Testament churches, and must have had apostolic sanction (Acts 20:3-7; 1 Cor 16:1, 2) and authority, and so the sanction and authority of Jesus Christ.
- e. Since the Resurrection, Sunday has been the Christian's opportunity to set aside one day for God, His Word, and His people. Gathering together for fellowship, encouragement, and worship is the new standard (Hebrews 3:13, 10:24-25).

APPLICATION:

- Today is "No Excuses Day!" (Thank them for being present.)
- What are some of the common excuses people give for not faithfully attending church?
- How would you respond to some of these often used excuses in light of what we have studied these past four weeks?