

Q & A Sunday – May 27, 2018 – Dean Wooley

Question: How important is the Sabbath??

Short answer - God set an example for us in Genesis and followed up with a commandment in Exodus to keep the Sabbath. When Jesus came, He upheld the Sabbath. In my view these make it very important. The challenge is knowing what it means to keep the Sabbath. And I believe that is more than coming to church on Sunday although that is part of it.

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Exodus 20:8-11

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Did God need the day of rest?? Was he exhausted from all that creating He'd been doing all week? I don't think so - He is God. I think He blessed that seventh day and made it holy (set apart) to give us the model He wanted us to follow. Rest from our labors. Setting aside a day to rest and to focus on God and our relationships with those we love should be important for us. A part of that for us is that we choose to come here on our sabbath to spend time in worship, prayer, fellowship to help us draw closer to God. But as I said it is only a part of it.

The Ten Commandments are repeated in Deuteronomy 5 and the 4th commandment is repeated in v12-15 but with a slightly different focus. Verse 15 says - Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath is a day to remember all that God has done for us!! It is a reminder that even though we work – all that we have comes from God and God alone! Our labor doesn't mean anything without God.

New Testament --

In Mark 2, the Pharisees call Jesus out about why his disciples are pulling grains on the Sabbath as they walk through a field. Jesus reminds them about David and his men who were starving eating the bread meant only for the priests. Mark 2:27-28

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

In the next chapter he heals a man on the Sabbath. His question to the Pharisees Mark 3:4

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts...

Keeping the Sabbath isn't supposed to be a burden but a gift of love - a day for showing mercy and a day for doing good. We get hung up on the definitions of what is work or what isn't work. The point is that it should be a set aside day to focus on Jesus as the lord of the Sabbath.

Our tradition is the Sabbath is Sunday. However in Romans 14

One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord.

The day isn't really important - what is important is that we make a day for our Sabbath. I could have tied this into the question I did last week where I talked about the importance of making and keeping time for your relationship with God your top priority - always. In the midst of a hectic week, spending time with God can easily fall to the bottom of our "to do" list or fall off the list completely. But the Sabbath is a day that literally reminds us: "Okay, for the next 24 hours you will be focusing on God and your relationships with your family and friends. No work is allowed."

This next statement is probably going to step on some toes or at least make you go "hmm?" (make you think)

I'm going to guess that many of us use our Sabbath to catch up on the things that we put off or couldn't get to during the week. Does this fit the model God gave us? We each have to figure this out and do what we believe God is telling us about how we keep the Sabbath. I know for me I have to re-examine it. I would offer each of you the same challenge - check out the scriptures about the Sabbath and seek the Lord about what to do with what you learn.

The Sabbath is important – don't overlook its significance!!