

Christ Our Sabbath

By

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“So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted. And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. Then he said to them, ‘This is what the LORD has said: ‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.’” So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. “Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? “See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.” So the people rested on the seventh day.”

-Exodus 16:21-30

Last week we studied the miracle of manna in the wilderness. Contained within this passage though is the institution of one of the most important holy days in the Jewish calendar, the Sabbath. Unlike other holy days that occur once a year, this one happens once a week and communicates something very important for us. So in this study we will take a look at the institution of the Sabbath, its importance to the Jews, and how we should celebrate it today as Christians.

The Importance of the Sabbath

“And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.”

-2 Chronicles 36:21-21

This might sound strange to us today, but God seems to guard the Sabbath day more zealously than any other holiday, and many of the other commandments within Torah. In the above passage, God expressly tells His people that they will enter into seventy

years of exile in order for the land to have her Sabbath. This is also the only holiday that is mentioned in the ten commandments, it is celebrated in conjunction with every other holiday, and on top of that, every six years the Jewish people were supposed to celebrate a Sabbath year, and then every seven Sabbath years, or every fifty years, the Jews were to celebrate an additional Sabbath year called the Year of Jubilee, which we will talk more about later. Suffice it to say, the Sabbath seems to be an incredibly important day for God for God.

Once we understand this, we might be able to understand why Jesus got into so many conflicts with the Jewish leaders of His day over the Sabbath:

“For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”

-John 5:16

Without any context as to why the Sabbath was so important, this statement can seem odd. Why would they want to kill Jesus simply for healing someone on the Sabbath? The Jewish people had come to understand the importance of this holy day, but had become so zealous in their protection of it, they had forgotten its point. As the apostle Paul says later on about the Jewish people:

“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”

-Romans 10:2

Christ’s critique of the Jewish leaders was not that they lacked zeal or passion, it was that their passion was misdirected due to ignorance, and they were unwilling to heed correction from Him. In order to understand the importance of the Sabbath, I think we have to explore exactly how it was to be celebrated.

How To Celebrate the Sabbath

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

-Exodus 20:8

The central way that the people of God were to observe the Sabbath was to “keep it holy”. Holiness in the Bible means, essentially, “set apart”. What this means is that the Sabbath day was to be distinct from all the others. This gives us our first hint as to why this day was so important. In most societies, slaves were not given any days off. This means that all their days blended together in a type of monotony. The Sabbath acted as a way to differentiate the weeks, to keep them separate from one another. Without

these kinds of breaks, life can become fairly homogeneous and even tedious. This is one reason why the Sabbath produces “rest” for the people of God. But there is more to this rest that we need to explore.

No Labor

“But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” ’ ’

-Jeremiah 17:27

The most well-known way that the people of God were to celebrate the Sabbath was to abstain from work. Unfortunately by the time of Christ, this beautiful command was litigated until there were thirty nine ways in which someone could violate the Sabbath and it turned this day of rest into a strange day or legalistic work-arounds. But at its inception, this prohibition was relatively simple. For six days the people of God were to conduct their regular works, and on the Sabbath day they were to refrain from working, they were to “rest”.

This is why the Sabbath is instituted in the wilderness in conjunction with the Manna. Prior to the Manna, the people of God had been subsisting off of the food that they took from Egypt, in other words, the food that they gained from their time in slavery. In the wilderness God has provided His people with a way to “work” for food, that is in gathering up the Manna. And so on the sixth day of the week, He allows His people to collect a double portion of Manna so that on the Sabbath day they could simply enjoy the fruit of their labor instead of continuing their labor for their food. This helps us understand the most important principle of the Sabbath, that it was created to benefit mankind:

“Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” But He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: “how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?” And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. “Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

-Mark 2:23-28

The Pharisees of His day had polluted the Sabbath to be more work than it was rest, but Christ reminds His followers that the Sabbath was given to man as a blessing, not as a

“labor” to appease God. This doesn’t mean that God wasn’t upset when His people failed to keep the Sabbath, but like all the laws that God has given to His people, fulfilling the law of God is ultimately for His glory, but it is also for our good.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
-Romans 12:2

Unlike the Pagan deities who commanded unhealthy and even harmful acts of worship to prove the faithfulness of their followers, God has given His people a law that accords with their nature. To rest on the Sabbath day does honor the Lord of the Sabbath, but it also benefits mankind. Ultimately, the Sabbath was supposed to reveal the glory of the God of Israel to the pagans. In the plain and obvious benefits of resting one day a week, the pagan nations were to see the God of the Israelites as being the true God because of His goodness and His mercy.

This abstinence from labor also has cosmic implications though:

“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”
-Genesis 2:1-3

The God of the Bible is also unique in that He labors in the creation of the world. Most deities either emerge in an already formed earth, or “create” the earth as a by-product of a great conquest. As such, most ancient religions consider labor to be an unworthy task. Whereas the truly righteous and blessed live lives of ease and comfort, far apart from any manual labor. Our God on the other hand labors to create the heavens and the earth, and by doing so hallows all work. In fact, being made in His image and likeness means that we too were created to create. We can find purpose and joy in our labor and in doing so we are sharing in the being of God.

However, we also serve a God who rested. After He finished His work of creation, He rested from that labor. So while all other days of creation begin with sunrise and end with sunset, the seventh day does not. Symbolically this insinuates that the “seventh day” is ongoing as God had finished His work in creating the world and all of creation, including mankind, were called to share in the rest of God.

But mankind didn't abide in the rest of God, we wanted to labor to be like God, and so as punishment God says to Adam:

"Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

-Genesis 3:17-19

We no longer live in a completed work that encompasses perfect rest, we live in a world of labor and futility. The main reason why God could rest, was not because the creation didn't need Him to hold it together or to govern over it, but because it was good, it was perfect, it fully satisfied His expectations. The reason why we are not allowed to rest in the present world, is that nothing is good, nothing is perfect, nothing fully satisfies our expectations. No matter how much work I accomplish this week, there will always be more to do. And even the work that I have accomplished needs to be maintained, and since I am subject to death, all that I accomplish will one day be undone.

This is the labor that mankind is subjected to because of the fall. We are not free, but we are held captive by death. Both the death of the things that we create, and our inevitable deaths that will leave our work unfinished, and eventually will bring all our labors to dust and ashes. Think for a second about laboring for food. The bulk of our work is simply to buy food, shelter, amenities, and medicine, to take care of our bodies. And yet, no matter how much we labor for the best resources, time will eventually bring our labor to nothing. This is a good way to understand the symbolism of the flood:

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

-Genesis 6:5-8

Noah's name literally means "rest". He didn't provide a rest for his children in the sense of them not having to labor ever again. In fact their labor increased because they had to rebuild the world after the flood. Instead Noah gave the world rest from their futility. The flood threatened to wash away all the labor of man and God up until that moment. By

building the ark, Noah gave their labor meaning that stretches up to the present day. We will talk more about this later when we talk about the rest that Christ seeks to give His people, but in giving the Jewish people a Sabbath, God was calling them to learn this truth. That they were celebrating a rest that existed in the garden of Eden and a rest that will be restored by Christ. Because of this it makes sense that Pharaoh, who represents the spirit of Satan, would first oppose Moses for trying to give the Israelites rest:

“And Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!”

-Exodus 5:5

When we forgo a Sabbath to finish “this last project” or to get this “one last thing done”, we are laboring in the futility of the present moment. The fact is, our work is never really done. Mankind has to be commanded to rest, because without the command we would continue to labor under the delusion that our work could ever be “complete”. On the Sabbath day we rest, not in the completion of our work, but we rest in the hope that all things will be made right in Christ.

Reset

“In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. ‘And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor’s hand, you shall not oppress one another. ‘According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. ‘According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you according to the number of the years of the crops. ‘Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God.”

-Leviticus 25:13-17

As stated before, the Sabbath was not just one day a week, but it was supposed to take place once every seventh year, and the final culmination of the Sabbath was the Year of Jubilee that happened once every fifty years, or seven Sabbath years. In this ultimate manifestation of the Sabbath we can see more clearly the purpose of this holiday. In this year, debts were forgiven and slaves were set free. It was a perfect picture of our previous point, that the Sabbath pointed to a future rest that God Himself would restore to the earth. The Year of Jubilee seems to be what the prophet Isaiah was referencing in Isaiah 61, which Jesus quotes in Luke 4:

“And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

-Luke 4:17-21

Once again, we will talk more about Christ's role in all this later, but you are probably already seeing a powerful connection between Christ and the Sabbath. But for now let's focus on a strange facet of the Year of Jubilee, that all land was returned to the original family owners. The Sabbath day was to be a day of reflection and even a reset for the people of God. Think for a second about a project and this might make more sense.

When we get stuck in a work problem, we tend to try to fix our mistakes, and adjust to the various decisions that we have made throughout the project. In our frustration we might miss big problems within our own work and labor to merely support our previous errors. If we took a minute to take a step back, we might see that we have wandered far from our original intent and we need to start over. This is what the Sabbath was supposed to do. By giving the people of God a rest from their labors, they could reflect on their work and maybe see how they were going in a bad direction.

This might refer to our literal jobs, but it can also refer to our families, our spiritual lives, or just our lives in general. Without a Sabbath, there is no reset, no time of reflection to see if the current course is the best one. Just an unending monotony leading to nowhere in particular.

Gathering

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.”

-Leviticus 23:3

Which leads to the next point, if the Sabbath is about resting from labor, what were the people of God supposed to do on this day? The answer is given to us here, the Sabbath was a “holy convocation.” This is a fancy word that basically means that the Sabbath was about gathering. As such, the Jewish people have always held the Sabbath to be a

day of friends and family. It is a day to set aside distractions and focus on the people who mean the most to you.

This is again hard to do, but incredibly important. Since family members see one another in passing, usually for breakfast and dinner we can make the mistake that we are connected. The same is true for friends. We might see friends at work or communicate in brief messages throughout the week, we can feel connected when we really aren't. The Sabbath day was supposed to be a day devoted to family and friends, a day of connection and intimacy.

This might help us understand one of the strangest, and most arduous, prohibitions that modern Jews observe, refraining from technology on the Sabbath. As with all good things, this has been taken to an unhealthy level, but the instinct I think was sound. Technology can represent a major distraction. When I am home with my family, and I have access to my phone, I can give into the temptation to send one text, or call this one person real quick, to send a fast email, or to look something up really quickly online. All of these little distractions take me away from my family. Even with the car, I can pick something up "real fast" at the grocery store, or get something done really quick at the office. Once again distracting me from the point.

So while I don't see any Biblical basis for why I'm Jews have to hold this hard line on the Sabbath, I can also recognize the wisdom of this prohibition. God knows that we need a day free from distractions so we can focus instead on connection.

Worship

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

-Exodus 20:8-11

But more than anything, the Sabbath was a day to worship God. This is also why God's rest on the seventh day is repeated here in the fourth commandment. This day of rest was meant to experience the rest of God. To remember, as Augustine of Hippo put so well:

"Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rests in Thee."

-Augustine of Hippo - "Confessions"

Our true rest comes in living as we were made, to glorify God and to enjoy Him. It is for this reason, though it isn't explicitly stated in Scripture, that Jews have traditionally gone to synagogue on the Sabbath to worship God. As stated before, the Sabbath was created for connection and intimacy, and there is no greater rest, and no greater intimacy that we need than what is found in our relationship with God. So the people of God have always taken the Sabbath to worship their God.

Christ Our Sabbath

"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."

-Colossians 2:13-17

But what does this have to do with us? In the above passage, the apostle Paul declares that the primary purpose of the Sabbath was to prepare the people of God for the ministry of Christ. These things were but shadows of the works of God wrought through His Messiah, but now that Christ has come, we can delight in the substance. This is exactly what Jesus professes when He explains the miracle of the Manna in John 6:

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. "For I have come down

from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

-John 6:27-40

Two amazing promises are made here about Christ's ministry, one we can have right now, one is in the future. First, Christ claims that the labor of the law is complete in Him. As stated before, no earthly work is ever really done, and that includes our righteousness. No matter how much virtue we accumulate, and no matter how successfully we fight our sin, there always remains more work to do.

This is one of the main things that the original Law was supposed to communicate to the Israelites. That even though they could have a relationship with God through the commandments, there was a labor to that relationship. The constant washings, the constant sacrifices were always a sign that no matter how much they did, it was never enough to reach heaven.

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year."

-Hebrews 10:1-3

The works of the law could not perfect the conscience of the Jews. While they did make a way for the Jews to have a relationship with God, that relationship was incomplete. It was only through the sacrifice of Christ that what was promised in the Law could come to the people of God.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

-Hebrews 10:10

So when Jesus tells His followers to *"not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you..."* This is the promise that He is claiming to fulfill. That no longer will man have an incomplete relationship with God that is dependent on our constant efforts, but that we can have a

perfect relationship with God through the completed sacrifice of His Son. This is why Christ also says: *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

It isn't our labor that makes us right with God, but our dependence upon the labor of Christ that was finished on the cross. Just as God invited man to live in the rest that He provided through His finished work in the creation, so Christ asks us to rest in His finished labor on the cross:

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

-Matthew 11:28-30

But like Adam and Eve, this rest was not a laziness devoid of any work, but a rest in a completed work. The creation of God in the Garden was perfect, it didn't break down or corrode. Man wasn't there to perfect the work of God, but to work within His perfection. This is why Jesus ends His statement with the famous phrase: *"My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* The Christian is still called to bear a yoke and a burden, but it is light, because it is complete. It isn't subject to futility or death. It is an eternal work founded on His infinite sacrifice. Just as a gardener doesn't create the trees, but it beautifies them, adorns them and prospers them. So we are called to cultivate the work of God in our own lives, to reveal His beauty and glory within us.

This leads to the final point, that Christ promises the Resurrection: *"That everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* As stated before, another reason why our current work is labor is because of death. Nothing that we accomplish remains, all is dust and ashes in the end. But the resurrection changes all that. In Christ we know that our lives don't end with our deaths, but they extend into eternity with Him. Now our works are complete and eternal in Him. While there is much to say about that point let's end with an exhortation of how Christians can keep the Sabbath holy today:

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience."

-Hebrews 4:9-11

Christian Sabbath

"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside

to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.”

-1 Timothy 1:5-11

It is important to remember that the Law was not merely to show us our need for Christ, it is also there to govern the hearts of sinners. Meaning that once we have discovered our need for Christ and found forgiveness and new life in Him, this doesn't make the law pointless. As Paul says above: “...*we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person...*”

The Law does not perfect us, and Paul is preaching fervently against that error, but it does govern the person who is not righteous. Even though Christ has made us righteous through His sacrifice, our rebellious and sinful hearts remain. As such, we do profit from the Law of God and we should strive to keep it. As spoken above, the fourth commandment in the ten commandments is the Sabbath law. Which begs the question, why don't Christians celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday like the Jewish people?

The answer is actually fairly simple. First, one of the main things that the apostles contested against was the early heresy of the so-called Judaizers that gentiles needed to become Jews in order to be saved. This isn't true, as such the church is not bound to keep the Sabbath on Saturday with the Jewish people, just as we are not bound to keep the other Jewish holidays commanded in the law. However, this doesn't mean that Christians shouldn't keep a holy day for Christ that functions in the same way that the Sabbath did for the Israelites.

This leads to the second and more important reason, the Christian lives in a new creation because of Christ. The first creation was spoiled due to the sin of man, and so the Jews, living in that first creation were to keep Sabbath at the end of the week, when God finished His original creation. But when was the work of Christ complete? It wasn't on the Sabbath when He was crucified, but instead on Sunday when He was raised from the dead. This constitutes a new creation that the Christian enjoys with Christ.

This is why historically, Christians have celebrated the Sabbath on Sunday and not Saturday and we can see this switch in the New Testament:

“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”

-Acts 20:7

Notice that the disciples came together to break bread on Sunday and not Saturday, this is repeated in 1 Corinthians 16, and in Revelation 1:10 the apostle John was said to be “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” namely Sunday. I believe that the reason why this isn’t explicitly stated in the New Testament is that the New Covenant is the Covenant of liberty:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

-Galatians 5:1

Part of the liberty of the New Covenant is that God did not prescribe specific cultural customs and holy days, He allowed the church to develop these things on our own. But, part of being free means being responsible. Now that I am an adult, I am free when it comes to what I eat, meaning that I don’t have any rules about diet given to me by an authority figure. However, this doesn’t mean I can eat whatever I want, but merely that my liberty must be guarded through personal responsibility.

“...as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.”

-1 Peter 2:16

While we are not guarded by a Sabbath law like the Israelites, we ought to be guarded by personal responsibility to recognize our need for such a day. Throughout the west there have been laws prohibiting work on Sunday going all the way back to Constantine in 323 AD. In America these laws were called “blue laws” and they were in effect from before the founding of our country until the middle of the 20th century, with some elements still in effect in many states. For instance, some states don’t let you buy cars on Sunday and many others don’t allow you to buy alcohol. While I might find it strange that it was actually legislated, this isn’t that different from businesses shutting down for Christmas or Thanksgiving, which in effect represent a Sabbath that corresponds to a current holiday.

So while I think that this can easily become legalistic, we must avoid the other extreme of believing that the law has no wisdom that we are responsible to incorporate into our conduct. One of the reasons why I have no interest in having church services on other

days of the week is for this reason. I would like the body of Christ to be in sync. That we have a chosen day of the week in which we rest and give our attention to God and our families. In doing so the modern Christian can orient themselves to receive the blessings that the Sabbath gave to the Jews for so many centuries.

“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”

-Romans 4:5-8