

August 21 2016

### **Scripture Lesson**

*Psalm 103*

*Isaiah 58:9-14*

*Luke 13:10-17, p. 952*

### **Sermon**    *Honor The Sabbath*

In the times of Jesus, honoring the Sabbath was a serious matter. The religious leaders of the day followed the commandment that is given to us in Exodus 20:8-11. It reads: Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work; you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it. So when anyone did something to break the commandment they were dealt with.

Susan read from Luke the story of Jesus teaching in the synagogue. There he sees a woman bent over who had been dealing with this ailment for 18 years. He immediately calls her over and tells her that she is free from her ailment. He laid his hands on her and she immediately stood up and began praising God.

The leader of the synagogue was indignant and begins telling the people that there are six days in which to do work and healing is considered work. This angers Jesus and he calls the leaders hypocrites saying, "Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?" He continues by saying, "And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" If we take care of our animals on the Sabbath, why shouldn't we take care of our neighbor, aren't they at least or more important than our animals?

Obviously the leaders of the synagogue and Jesus were not on the same page. Why do you suppose Jesus felt He could cure the woman from her ailment on the Sabbath? He knew, I am sure, that the Sabbath was a sacred day and that there was a commandment that spoke about working on the Sabbath. Perhaps it could be because of the commandment that Jesus lived by which can be found in Mark 12:30-31 is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

Jesus did not want the woman to suffer any longer. Can you imagine what it must have been like to be bent over for a good portion of your life? Your

perspective of the world would definitely be different from anyone that was able to stand upright. Unless you turned your head a certain way you couldn't look straight ahead, you would pretty much be looking at the ground all of the time. Then there could be the pain factor. She didn't ask for any help even if she happened to recognize Jesus and had heard that he could heal. He called to her and when she was healed she praised God. She was thankful for the blessing of being healed. What better way is there to honor the Sabbath.

So how do we as modern people honor the Sabbath?

There are certain jobs or professions that call for working on the Sabbath. Can you imagine what it would be like if there were no doctors or nurses working on Sundays or any hospitals that were open? What about policemen or firemen? Then there are the production workers where their mill, factory etc. have to run 24/7 so someone has to be there to operate the machinery. Hopefully there is a time on another day of the week where they can reflect on their faith and God's love.

As a child growing up, we didn't go to church but Sunday was a different day for us. We had our main meal in the middle of the day instead of at night and we had a light meal in the evening. It was almost always fried chicken for the main meal and we had popcorn for supper in the evening and usually some kind of fruit. So in our own way, we were honoring the Sabbath.

Going to church on Sunday gives us a time to be with God, honor him and worship him. But what about the ministers who lead the service, aren't they working on the Sabbath? Where would we be without them?

What do you do to honor the Sabbath? Because you are here, I would guess that part of it is being at church on Sunday mornings. What else do you do? Do you rest and spend the time in meditation to honor the Sabbath more like the people of Jesus's time did? Do you take a day off from the daily grind of your life during the week and find quiet things to do or spend the day outdoors enjoying the nature that God has provided? Are you like Jesus was that day in the synagogue and help out someone in need?

I think there can be a balance between the two commandments and the life that we lead now. We can honor the Sabbath and we can help our neighbor too. If we are one of those who have to work on Sundays, we can find another time to honor the Sabbath and to honor God. If we have Sundays off, we can go to church to honor the Sabbath and to honor God. We just need to remember those two commandments and do our best to honor them in whatever way that we can. It is personal choice what we do but the most important thing is to do, honor the Sabbath and love our neighbor as yourself.

So to close, here are some quotes to give you food for thought.

Henry Ward Beecher, 19 century - "A world without a Sabbath would be like a man without a smile, like summer without flowers, and like a homestead without a garden. It is the most joyous day of the week."

Ansel Adams, 20<sup>th</sup> century - "Sometimes I arrive just when God is ready to have someone click the shutter."

Alexandra Elle, 21<sup>st</sup> century - "The Sun will rise and set regardless. What we choose to do with the light while it's here is up to us. Journey wisely."

Charles M. Blow, 21<sup>st</sup> century - "There is no wrong time to do the right thing."

Alice Walker, 21<sup>st</sup> century - "Anybody can observe the Sabbath, but making it holy surely takes the rest of the week."

Amen.