



EXODUS - CHAPTER 16 (PART 2)

The Benefits of the Lord's Day

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Aldo who is planting a church in Los Angeles.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

Have you ever been on one of these vacations? The kind where every moment of every day has an agenda that often involves getting up early so everyone can enjoy the

vacation activities. First of all, the word alarm clock and vacation don't belong on the same trip. When there's an alarm clock involved it's the kind of vacation that comes with rules. It's the kind of vacation that makes you say, "I need a vacation after that vacation." Because we live in a culture now that works hard and plays hard — there is no rest.

In an age when it is often and rightly proclaimed that Christianity isn't primarily about rules but about a relationship with the

Living God, no subject is less understood than the biblical idea of Sabbath, a word which simply means rest.

- **Voddie Baucham**

In Genesis chapter 2, the first book of the Bible, God created the world in six days and on the seventh He rested from His work, not in the sense of resting like we need rest, but in the sense of stepping back to look His work, like an artist admiring his finished

painting. Then He blessed the seventh day, a day set apart for His people, a day that sets His people apart.

Well, if Christianity isn't primarily about rules, then what do we do with the Sabbath? What does Sabbath mean for Christians today? What did it mean for the nation of Israel in Exodus and does that have any bearing on Christians today?

- The word Sabbath is mentioned 116 times in the Bible.
- It's written about 56 times in the New Testament, which is over half. That should tell us that it must mean something for Christians today, so we should find out.
- In the Old Testament, nowhere is the Sabbath mentioned more times than the book of Exodus, the 2nd book of the Bible. It goes Genesis then Exodus.

That's why today we're going to be answering the question — What are the benefits of the Lord's Day, which is what the Apostle John called the Sabbath for Christians?

Let's pick up in our story where we left off. If you remember, the people of Israel complained that they would have been better off if they had remained in bondage to Pharaoh, because they claimed they were starving in the wilderness, that God had intentionally brought them out there to kill

them. In spite of their atrocious character assassination of God, God graciously answered their grumbling with a test, to show them that He could be trusted no matter what their circumstances. He sent manna, a food that appeared with the dew every morning. But they were commanded to only gather enough for that a single day. Jesus taught us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Still, some of them didn't trust the Lord and gathered more than they needed for the day.

But in the morning they found the manna rotted and full of worms.

Then, Moses told them they shall not gather the manna on the Sabbath. They shall gather it six days a week and on the sixth day they can gather enough to carry them through the Sabbath, the last day of the week. This is where we pick-up Exodus chapter 16.

Exodus 16:22-23

22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 he said to them, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord;

1. Worship is a form of rest.

Most of the time when we think of keeping the Sabbath, we think of the Ten Commandments. Interestingly enough, at this time the Ten Commandments had not been given to God’s

people yet. So, even before the Ten Commandments were given there was a reverence for the Sabbath because God had blessed it, making it holy, a day separated from the other days of the week. “The first time that God blessed anything, he blessed a day for us to share in his rest.” (Jared Wilson)

Days exist because that's how long it takes the earth to rotate. Months exist because that's how long it takes the moon to revolve once around the Earth. Years exist because

that's how long it takes for the earth to revolve around the sun. But why do weeks exist? They do not correspond to anything in nature in the way we just described. The answer is: the week exists because of **Genesis 2:2**, "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done."

This is what theologians call a "creation ordinance," which means that keeping the

Sabbath is not only about keeping the 4th command. It's about being created in the image of God. God created for six days and on the seventh day He rested from His work. This set a pattern for humanity. Unfortunately, we live in a culture that doesn't look to God for how to live any longer. Even as Christians, sometimes culture drives us more often than biblical thinking.

Three common reasons Christians struggle keeping the Lord's Day:

- 1. Cultural pressure (Culture says, “We don’t regard your God. We don’t take God seriously.” So, when the Lord’s Day isn’t observed, Christians are basically saying the same thing, “We don’t take the Lord seriously either.”)**
- 2. Our own recreational agenda (It’s not about rest anymore. It’s about recreation.)**
- 3. Fear of legalism (We’re not under law, but under grace. Paul told us all days are the same. But he didn’t mean they are the**

same in a secular sense. He meant every day is the Lord's, but that doesn't override the Sabbath principle we find in the New Testament.)

Sundays are about rest. Two kinds of rest specifically. First, simple physical rest, which is for everyone created in the image of God. Everyone needs rest physically.

- Our pace of life leads to burnout.

- We talk about keeping the Sabbath, but really, it's the Sabbath that keeps us. The Sabbath keeps us holy. It keeps us human.

Taking a nap after church is a holy thing. How many other days a week do you nap? Without guilt. God made rest part of the fabric of life. Our lives are out of rhythm outside of God's intentions for us.

Second, it's a rest for the Christian in a very theologically specific way. We no longer labor

(work) to gain God's approval or favor by trying hard to be moral. That struggle is futile, in the sense of earning God's favor with our behavior. Why? Well, when do we know we're good enough?

Now, I don't want to give you the impression that a struggle for righteous living is futile, because that's not what the Bible teaches. What the New Testament teaches us is that morality is useless as a way of getting on God's good side, because (again) when do

you know that you're good enough? And then how do you keep that good standing if you happen to do something bad the next moment. That's why Jesus said:

Matthew 11:28-29

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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.

Christ has come and purchased our rest, and becomes our resting place. The burden of saving ourselves is lifted. There is rest for our souls.

When we put our trust in what Jesus did, that He died for all our sins, that He paid the penalty for our personal rebellion against God so we will never enter into God's judgment, then we can rest. We have given up trying to work for our salvation, because we have faith

that Christ has secured it by dying and rising again from the dead. We receive our salvation as a gift. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Christ now is our Sabbath, He is our rest.

Hebrews 4:9-10

⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered

God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

This is why the day of the Sabbath changed for Christians. The Sabbath for Israel was Friday evening to Saturday evening, the last day of the week (Saturday). Since Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Sunday, we celebrate the joy of having our sins forgiven by Him. The day of worship changed for Christians, but not the truth of the Sabbath and keeping it holy. Sabbath has

a deeper meaning now for the born again Christian.

The seventh day marked the victory of the first creation, the Sabbath for Israel. The first day marked the victory of the new creation with the resurrection of Christ. That's why Sunday is now our Sabbath and the commandment is still applicable.

Mark 2:28

28 So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

Why would Jesus tell us He was Lord over something which no longer applied?

The Sabbath is for expressing Jesus' rule and authority, not Moses'—it is for worshipping Christ. The Sabbath reminds us that we no longer carry the burden of our sins.

Just as the Nation of Israel looked forward during the Sabbath for the day they would enter the Promised Land and finally rest from wandering, we (as Christians) look forward during Sunday worship for the day of our eternal rest, the day we will no longer have to fight sin and battle the thinking of a twisted and crooked generation.

Exodus 16:23-26

bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be

kept till the morning.””²⁴ So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it.²⁵ Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field.²⁶ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.”

Sabbath to the Lord, to remember and rest in Him. Now, remembering involves more than

just a thought. Remembering involves celebrating.

2. The Lord's Day is about celebrating.

If you remember your anniversary, you better hope you do more than just give it a thought, because you'll soon find out, it's not the thought that counts if you don't celebrate it.

And something else about celebrations — they are a shared experience. The sentence, “I sat alone celebrating my birthday,” is a sad sentence. Celebrations by their very nature are group happenings.

Exodus 16:27-30

²⁷ On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none.²⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?”

They went out looking for God's blessing while ignoring His Word.

29 See! The Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” **30 So the people rested on the seventh day.**

3. The Lord's Day has been given to us for our blessing.

Because during the week we are beaten down and we often become weary of doing good or we stumble and fall and doubt ourselves: "I'm such a lousy Christian," we scold ourselves or judge someone else: "He's a lousy Christian."

Sundays are about a rhythm of life. The Lord's Day reminds us of who we belong to — both Christ and His people.

And here's something most Christians today probably don't even consider about Sunday worship... Sunday worship is a witness to the world.

Exodus 16:31-34

³¹ Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. ³² Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Let an omer of it

be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.”³³ And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations.”³⁴ As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept.

4. Sundays are a weekly testimony to the world around us.

We treat Sundays differently than everyone else. Why? Because Jesus Christ died and rose again on the first day of the week. We have experienced the risen Christ. Our corporate gathering witnesses to every passing car or jogger that something is going on with the Person of Jesus. And even if they mock us in passing, when they are in crisis

they know where to turn. And God is here. And He is here in a way that He is not when you are alone. Where two or more are gathered... God's presence is always greater when we are gathered as a body.

Exodus 16:35-36

³⁵ The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan. ³⁶ (An omer is the tenth part of an ephah.)

5. Sundays point to the end of history and the ultimate fulfillment of all God's purposes.

This manna sustained them until they reached the Promised Land. If Christ is our manna, our bread from heaven, then He will sustain us until that final day when we reach the Promised Land, the new heaven and the new earth in His final Kingdom.

Notes: We remember three things on Sunday - that God created this world and rested, that God has begun his work of new creation, and that we rest in Christ's work on the cross for our salvation.

To keep something holy is to dedicate it completely to the Lord. Sunday should be a different day for you than all the other days. If it's not, you're disobeying this commandment.

And that work of redemption and new creation was finished decisively on the cross. And three days later Jesus rose from the dead to celebrate the victory he had won and the new creation he had decisively obtained and inaugurated. Now he could take his seat with his Father on the throne of the universe and enter his Sabbath rest.

“And the meaning of that day is that Jesus is risen and Jesus is Lord and Jesus is Creator and Jesus is Redeemer and Jesus is the only place of rest for the soul. It’s a day for

worshipping Jesus. It's a day for saying by what we do and don't do that Jesus, not our work and not the money we get from our work, is our treasure and our meaning. It is a special day for the honor and the glory of the Lord." (John Piper)