

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

33 – The Sabbath

Announcements:

7/20 @7:00 -

*Corporate
Prayer*

7/21 @6:30 -

~~Grace Group~~
~~CANCELED~~

7/24 @8:30 -

Sunday School

7/25 @6:30 -

*Men's Discipleship
Chapter 19*

ICE BREAKER: What do you do to “recharge your batteries”?

READ: Matthew 12:1-8

One of my commentaries on this passage ends with this exhortation (that I wholeheartedly agree with!): “If you came to this text expecting me to write about whether Christians should keep the Sabbath or not, whether you should feel guilty or not about watching sports on Sunday, you won’t find it here because I believe this passage is not about that. Here we are not to ask, are we as Christians to keep the Sabbath, or if so, how do we? Rather we are to ask, who is Jesus?” However once we ascertain what this passage is telling us about Jesus and who he is, we can try and dive into the questions about the Sabbath. I will preface with one thought: this is a HUGE topic with highly passionate thoughts on either side, so this will be a very surface level discussion to get our hearts right to ask questions about the Sabbath.

The first question that many of us may probably be wondering is: why is the Sabbath such a big deal? From the point of view of this passage we could ask: Is it really that big of a deal that the disciples “harvested” some grain to eat on a Saturday? From the point of view of our lives we might ask: does it really matter much about my points of view about the day and nature of a “day off”? To answer that question let's put the command to observe the Sabbath in its context. Would you ever find yourself saying: is it really that big of a deal if I worship other gods (i.e. break the 1st commandment)? How about: Does it matter that much what I believe about the morality of MURDER (i.e the 6th commandment) We could go on and on with topics like Idol worship (2nd), adultery (7th), lying (9th) etc. So the reason that the Sabbath, and what we believe about it, is so important is because it is part of the foundational ten commandments that God gave his people (4th commandment, in case you are wondering). This was not some obscure jewish law like taking a shovel to cover your excrement outside the camp (Deut 23:13) -- it was foundational -- and as such must be important to us, no matter what our final verdict on it is.

DISCUSS: Why might the command to remember the Sabbath be included in the Ten Commandments? What does its inclusion tell us about God and/or ourselves?

Once we determine THAT the fourth commandment is important to us we can start to ask questions about WHAT is being communicated. As we saw earlier in Matthew, most particularly in the Sermon on the Mount, the heart is what is most important when we are looking at these things (we see it here too, when Jesus quotes Hosea 6 saying: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice”). So what is the heart of this commandment? I would argue it is twofold. One is God's creative purposes and the second is who we are. In Exodus 20 when Moses is relating the Ten Commandments there is a note under the fourth. WHY are we to remember the Sabbath? “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day”. The idea of a Sabbath was modeled for us all the way back to the beginning, The idea of Sabbath is communicated not just in the WORDS of God, but also in the WORK of God. Which leads us to the second thought: what does this mean to us? And here is the beauty. Exodus 20:11 tells us that God didn’t just take a day off, he didn’t just stop working, he RESTED. The same language is in Genesis 2:2 “On the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he RESTED.” God does not need rest, he is the Almighty Lord of Heaven and Earth. So what's going on? The central aspect and truly the heart of the fourth commandment is our fundamental need for rest.

DISCUSS: So now we can start to get to an answer of how Christians are to live out the fourth commandment. It has been a LOOOOONG time so let's re-read Matthew 11:28-29. How can context inform how we are to apply this command to our lives?