Pentecost 2 Deuteronomy 5:12-15
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"Observe the Sabbath Day" – EVERY DAY!
I. Every WEEK take time for public worship.
II. Every DAY take time for personal worship.

Dear Christian friends,

"Honor your father and mother. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery." It's hard to miss the BASIC MEANING of those commandments. But the **third commandment** is different.

God here ordered. the **OT Jews** not to work on the ***"Sabbath"*** day – Saturday. But WHAT ABOUT US NT Christians? The **7th Day Adventists** insist that we must STILL **not work** on Saturdays and we must worship on Saturdays. Other churches say SUNDAY is the **NT Sabbath** and that we must not work on **Sunday**. Luther explained the 3rd Commandment without referring to ANY DAY of the week. "We should fear and love God that we do NOT DESPISE preaching and His Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it." There is plenty of CONTROVERSY and CONFUSION about God's will for our lives **according to** the 3rd Commandment.

"Observe the Sabbath day," God ordered His OT people. Today may God help us to learn – ***"Observe the Sabbath Day"*** – EVERY DAY! 1)Every WEEK take time for **public** worship. 2)Every DAY take time for **personal** worship.

I. Every WEEK take time for public worship.

God's OT law was VERY CLEAR. ***"Six days you are to …perform all of your regular work, but the seventh day is a sabbath rest to the LORD your God. You are not to do any regular work."*** Remember that ***"Sabbath"*** is the Hebrew word for rest. In Leviticus God put it this way, ***"The seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly."*** According to OT law Saturday was a day of NO WORK – **a day** for PUBLIC WORSHIP.

With the 3rd Commandment God got rid of MOST EXCUSES for **not going** to church (so to speak). The **Jews** couldn't do **anything else**! You couldn't go shopping – catch up on the cleaning, etc. ***"Even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest on the seventh day,"*** God commanded. Breaking the Sabbath carried the DEATH SENTENCE. **One time** a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath. God told Moses, ***"The man must die."*** Working and NOT TAKING TIME for God was a snub of God. it was telling God, "I have BETTER THINGS to do than spend time with You." That is IDOLATRY – putting other things BEFORE GOD in our lives.

"You are not to do any regular work, you or your son or your daughter or your male or female servant or your ox or donkey or any of your livestock or the alien who resides inside your gates." The Sabbath law applied to everyone WITHOUT EXCEPTION. There was no, "I'LL REST but you go work. Mom can go to church – I'm staying home **to cut** the grass." The WHOLE FAMILY was to be involved in the WEEKLY WORSHIP of God.

Many saw the Sabbath as a SACRIFICE **they made** – a BURDEN to be endured – **just as** many people today see going to church as a CHORE and a BORE. That kind of thinking MISSES the whole point of **worship** and the **Sabbath**. MORE than resting the Sabbath was about ***"remembering." "Remembering"*** how God had created a perfect world in six days. ***"Remembering that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm."*** The Sabbath was ALL ABOUT ***"remembering"*** God's mighty acts of the **past** and His gracious promises for the **future**. With the **Sabbath law** God made sure His OT people TOOK TIME EVERY WEEK to ***"remember"*** Him and His mighty deeds **on their behalf**. More important than the ***"rest"*** for the BODY was the ***"rest"*** for the SOUL.

AT THE HEART of worship still today is ***"remembering"*** God's mighty acts – ***"remembering"*** what Jesus all did to save us. Jesus is ***"Lord of the Sabbath"*** – the GIVER and FULFILLER of the Sabbath promise. We heard Paul in the epistle reading, ***"Do not let anyone judge you in regard to …a festival or …a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were coming, but the body belongs to Christ."*** As Israel ***"rested"*** and ***"remembered"*** how God HAD DELIVERED them from Egypt they were to remember God's promise of a **Savior to deliver** them from sin, death and hell. As they ***"rested"*** and ***"remembered"*** the PERFECT WORLD of creation they were to remember God's promise of ***"a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness."*** The Sabbath rest every week was to KEEP ISRAEL FOCUSED on God's promise of the **coming Savior**.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," Jesus invites us. EVERY WEEK as our worship focuses us **on Jesus** with its HYMNS and **liturgy** – with God's WORD and **Sacraments** – God gives rest to our souls. We come "into the presence of God" burdened with the **sin** and **guilt** of another week lived in this world. We are assured and comforted that FOR JESUS' SAKE God has forgiven all our sins. "By the PERFECT LIFE and INNOCENT DEATH of our Lord Jesus Christ God has removed our guilt forever." We come to church BANGED UP by **life** and **its hassles** and God refocuses us on Jesus AS LIVING PROOF of His love for us – of His faithfulness – of eternal life in heaven. TRUSTING in Jesus we can breathe a BIG SIGH of **relief**. "God is my dear Father, the Friend who loves me most." God uses WEEKLY WORSHIP not to bother and **bore** us but to REFRESH – RENEW – REVIVE us.

God's will for us **according to** the 3rd Commandment is that we take time EVERY WEEK for public worship. ***"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'" "Let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly." "Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing."***

God has set us free from the OT SABBATH LAW of Saturday rest and **worship**. We are free to worship God on WHATEVER DAY we want. God never changed the Sabbath **to Sunday**. God never orders us **not to work** on Sunday. Those may be good traditions but they are NOT DIRECT ORDERS from God. The important thing is that we take time EVERY WEEK to **publicly worship** our Savior God. To not faithfully worship God – to SKIP church – is to SIN against the 3rd Commandment by despising **preaching** and **God's Word**. Our weekly worship habits SHOW HOW MUCH **God** and **His Word** really mean to us.

We must be careful here. We can get hung up on WHAT DAY we worship God and just focus on PUBLIC worship. We can slip into **thinking** that I give God ONE HOUR a week and the rest of the week is mine. We can think that ONE HOUR a week **with God's Word** is ENOUGH for us.

II. Every DAY take time for personal worship.

The purpose of **worship** is GOD GIVING REST to our souls through His Word and Sacraments. The gospel proclaims Jesus is our GOOD SHEPHERD – GENTLE SAVIOR – LOVING LORD – CONQUERING KING. As the gospel focuses us on ALL JESUS DID to save us – His life of **perfect love** and obedience – His innocent death on the cross to pay for our sins – His triumphant resurrection from the dead – **as** the gospel proclaims Jesus' MANY PROMISES to us – God gives rest to our souls and strengthens our faith.

"Six days you are to …perform all of your regular work." It WASN'T JUST on **Saturday** that the **Israelites** needed to sit down and **take a break**. The Sabbath law was not WORK NONE STOP Sunday through Friday and then crash on Saturday. The body can't take that. EVERY DAY the body needs time to **eat** – to relax – to **sleep**. GOING WITHOUT proper rest and **eating** takes its toll on a person's body and health.

The same can be said about our SOULS. We need God's Word to **give rest** to our souls EVERY DAY of the week. Not regularly being in God's Word **at church** AND **at home** TAKES ITS TOLL on us. Our faith in Jesus – our LOVE FOR Jesus – become lukewarm **at best**. Our priorities **get messed up**. We fall for the **world's** IMMORALITY. It's easier for the devil to **tempt** us. Our lives center **more and more** on what our sinful natures want. We DRIFT away from Jesus and can eventually lose our faith **completely**.

So ***"observe the Sabbath"*** EVERY DAY! Every day take time for PERSONAL worship. This too is GOD'S WILL for our lives **according to** the 3rd Commandment. In the next chapter God orders the Israelites, ***"These words that I am commanding you today are to be on your heart. Teach them diligently to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*** Peter encourages us, ***"Like newborn babies, crave the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow up with the result being salvation. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."***

With the **OT Sabbath law** God ordered the Israelites to TAKE A BREAK and TAKE TIME for His Word. God set THEIR PRIORITIES for them. Life is NOT ALL ABOUT the job – **making money** – golfing – fishing, etc. ***"What good is it if a man gains the whole world but loses his soul?"***

With the **3rd Commandment** God orders us to REVIEW OUR PRIORITIES. Where do God and **His Word** FIT IN in our lives? A **so**re we SO BUSY that we don't have ANY TIME AT ALL **during the day** for a personal devotion? We're not talking about **six hours a day** reading our Bibles. But what about a REGULAR 10-15 minutes EVERY day? What about reading one or **two chapters** of the Bible EVERY day? What about using the "Meditations" daily devotions? ***"Observe the Sabbath day"*** EVERY day!

Psalm 1 pictures the man who ***"meditates day and night"*** on God's Word. ***"He is like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and its leaves do not wither."*** Just as a **tree needs** a REGULAR, STEADY SUPPLY of water to grow and thrive – **especially** IN THE HEAT of summer – **so** our souls need a REGULAR, STEADY SUPPLY of the **gospel** to grow and thrive.

God's will is clear. ***"Observe the Sabbath day"*** – EVERY DAY! May God bless us AS WE DO just that! Amen.

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