

The Sabbath and Christ's Example

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Today we're going to talk about the Sabbath and Christ's example. We're going to talk about the instructions that God gives us for keeping the Sabbath. We're going to look at them also from the angle and from the perspective of Christ's example and what He did in His life, **because:**

- He's our example
- He's our Lord and Master

He not only came to save us from our sins and to suffer for us. He did all of that, but He also came *to set an example* during His life of how we are to live our life.

That's why God came in the flesh, to show us what it is that He wants, what He desires for us to do in the flesh. That's why He lived as a human being, to experience, to have the whole human experience.

But part of this is what He did, again, not only on the Sabbath, but what does this have to do with the instructions that God has for us in His Word about the Sabbath Day and how to keep it.

Let's start in Psalms 94, because this is going to be the backdrop of everything that we're going to talk about. This is to remind us of certain things, because it's important for us to think:

- about our thoughts
- about our mind
- about what God says in His Word

Psalm 94:8: "Understand, you brutish ones among the people and you fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see? He who chastens the nations, shall He not correct? He who teaches man knowledge, shall not He know?" (vs 8-10).

This is important for us to think about it, to remember that it's God!

- that we don't be fools
- that we are aware
- that we become wise
- that we get wisdom from God
- that we are understanding that He "...planted the ear..." so that He hears
- that He "...formed the eye..."; of course He sees
- "...He teaches man knowledge. Shall he not know?"

God knows everything; what does He know?

Verse 11: "The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are vanity."

And that's the reality. A lot of our thoughts are vanity, because a lot of the thoughts just have to do with vain things, with things that perish, things that are here today and gone tomorrow. We worry about the things that we have to do, and though they may seem important to us, before God, they're really not what counts. They really are vanity. That's the thoughts of mankind.

That's the thoughts of all of us, unless we are doing what it says in Psalms 1, which says, **'Blessed is the man who is meditating on God's Law day and night'**; that is not vanity. Those thoughts are not vanity. We're meditating on His Laws, and we're meditating on His Plan, on how everything works together, everything that God is doing. Those thoughts are not vanity.

But here, in v 11, He's talking about the thoughts of man in general. He's talking to the fool, basically saying that 'you have to understand that if:

- He created the eyes; He can see
 - He created the ears; He hears
 - He knows what's going on
 - He knows that our thoughts tend to vanity
- That's where they go; that's where our minds go!*
- What are we going to eat?
 - What are we going to wear?
 - Where are we going to live?

All these things are vanity!

We ourselves are vanity. We are just like a breath that comes and passes away. That's what we are. God knows that our thoughts are vanity.

Verse 12: "Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD to teach him out of Your Law."

That's what we were talking about in Psalms 1. We don't have the time to go there. But that's what it says. It meditates on the loss of God day and night.

You and I, brethren, **are blessed! We are blessed because God does chasten us!** A lot of us are going through a lot of trouble, whether it's in the health area, financial area, family relationships area, etc. We are being chasten. The things that happen in our lives, they're no accident, because God wants to teach us out of His Law. That's what it says.

Verse 12: "Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD to teach him out of Your Law"

If we're here on the Sabbath learning from God, it's because we are blessed. Because God is

pulling us out of the world on this day to teach us out of His Law.

Verse 13: "That You may give him rest from the days of trouble..."

And that's what He wants to do. He wants to teach us, to train us, to make us faithful to the end, even if we have to go through martyrdom.

Verse 13: "That You may give him rest from the days of trouble until the pit is dug for the wicked."

There's still time until that happens, and then He makes us a promise:

Verse 14: "For the LORD will not cast off His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness..." (vs 14-15). *It will return to God!* The judgment will return to God who will judge everybody

"...and all the upright in heart shall follow it" (v 15)—***and we've been called to follow it now!***

We've been called to search those judgments in that righteousness *now*. This is just the background, the preamble of the things that we have to do.

Matt. 6 is just as a reminder, probably memory Scriptures for us. But it's important that we read them again:

Matthew 6:31: "Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?'"

Why? *Because those thoughts are vanity!* That's what we just read in Psa. 94. Those things are vanity; it says:

Verse 32: "For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things."

God knows our mind needs to be in God. It needs to be in

- His Laws
- His Commandments
- His Plan
- His Purpose
- the higher things.

He will take care of the rest of the things that are least, because God knows that we have need of these things.

He tells us what we are to do; v 33: "But as for you, **seek**... [and this means seek and *keep on seeking*] **...first the Kingdom of God...**"—*the righteousness of God!*

All His commandments are righteousness like it says in Psa.119. So, that's what we have to do. We have to seek first the very first thing that we do in the morning to pray, to come to God!

"...seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (v 33).

- they shall be given
- they shall be granted
- they shall be added to us

That's why He says, v 34: "Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself..."

God knows that our thoughts are vanity. He knows that. And we know that the thoughts of God are so much higher than our thoughts. This is in preparation for what we're going to study about the Sabbath and Christ example. *We have to know and understand our inclinations as human beings to go to vanity! Our thoughts to just go to vanity:*

- instead of going to God
- instead of going to His Word
- instead of going to His Laws and His Righteousness and the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah 55:8: "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways," says the LORD. 'For *as th*' heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (vs 8-9).

Why? Because we know that we're only thinking vanity. He told us that. That's why we read Psa. 94. That's why we read in Matt. 6, *because God knows this!* God knows that our thoughts are vanity, that we go automatically to the things that we have to take care of day in and day out.

It's important that we take care of those things. But **IF** that's where our mind goes, absent everything else, **THEN** we have to change those things. We want to have the thoughts of God.

God says that His thoughts are not our thoughts, or His ways our ways. But at the same time, He does want to give us His thoughts. He wants to give us and show us His ways. That's what God wants for us to have. **And it begins with the Sabbath!**

Isa. 58 is where there are the most clear instructions as to how to keep the Sabbath. A lot of people ask: **How do you keep the Sabbath?** Especially when they're new in the faith.

God gives us those specific instructions on how to keep the Sabbath; it's amazing that in Isa.

58:13-14 it's not hundreds of laws and regulations like in the Talmud.

It's not that we're going to read them and we're going to see that they're pretty general. But also very specific, in a sense. Because God wants for us to keep the Sabbath this way.

He says; Isaiah 58:13: "If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy Day... [your own desires sounds like your own thoughts] ..*from* doing your own desires on My Holy Day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him..."

How do we honor Him? *We have to read this carefully and understand everything that is here!*

"...**not doing your own ways...**" (v 13).

He already said, "**If** you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires... not doing your own ways... [**that's how we honor Him**] ...**nor your own desires, nor speaking your own words**" (v 13). ***That's how we honor Him!***

There's a promise: v 14: **Then** you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it."

But let's think about these three things, because if we're not doing on the Sabbath Day to honor God, because it says honor Him. If we're not doing our own ways, then whose ways are we supposed to be doing on that day? I think the answer is obvious. ***It's God's ways!***

Not "...**pursuing your own desires...**" (v 13).

Then Whose desires are we to be pursuing on the Sabbath Day? *God's desires!*

Not "...**speaking our own words...**"

What words are we to speak? *We are to speak the words of God on **His** day. So, on **His** day:*

- **IF** we speak **His** words
- **IF** we pursue His desires
- **IF** we do His ways

and

- forsake our own
- withhold our foot
- turn our foot from the Sabbath, from trampling it

that's why it talks about the foot

- **THEN** we will delight ourselves in the Lord!
- **THEN** we will have that close relationship with God

and

- He will give us His thoughts
- He will show us more of **His** ways

It's a cycle, a beautiful cycle that repeats; it continues progressively higher and higher to understand more about God, ***because that's a promise!***

When He signs His name, He says, "...for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it" (v 14). This is very important that we:

- *don't* do our own ways
- *don't* pursue our own desires
- *don't* speak our own words

Those three things we need to keep these things in mind!

Now we're going to go into the New Testament and we're going to read some things in John 5, because what do these instructions for the Sabbath Day have to do with the example of Jesus Christ and what He did?

This is what we're going to study today for the remainder of this message, because Jesus did something amazing and He was always doing. He was always about His Father's business! Let's remember that. That's what He said even from youth when they found Him in the temple.

It's like, 'Don't you know that I need to be about My Father's business? And that I need to be in My Father's house?' That's what He was doing. He was there and He was teaching. We hear something from Jesus that is very, very important.

This is after they were accusing Him, because He healed on the Sabbath. They were accusing Him for having done that on the Sabbath. It's like, 'Couldn't you have done that on some other day?'

John 5:17: "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I work.'" *Just to make them upset!*

Not recognizing that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. He's the One that set apart the Sabbath Day and blessed it and sanctified it. He was the One Who was talking with them. Jesus told the Jews, because they were seeking to kill Him:

Verse 19: "Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner.'"

It's amazing when we stop and think about it. Jesus Christ never lied, not even once. *Never!* If He, who was the Lord God of the Old Testament, He

came in the flesh and He divested of His Divinity to do this, He says,"...the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner."

He's saying, 'I don't have power to do anything. Whatever the Father does, that's what I do.'

Verse 20: "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder."

It's amazing because He's basically saying, 'I don't do My works.' That's one of the things that we read about the Sabbath; not doing your own works, not doing your own desires.

That's what He said. ***'Do the works of God. Do the desires of God.'*** That's exactly what Jesus did. That's exactly what He said. He said, 'I don't do My pleasure. I don't do my things. I only do what the Father shows me.' This was on the Sabbath, and that's what He was doing. ***He perfectly fulfilled those words in Isa. 58; perfectly fulfilled them!***

Let's go to v 30, because we're going to see that this is amazing. The things that are here are truly profound when we think about it. What does it look like for somebody to keep the Sabbath the way that God intended it in Isa. 58?

- not pursuing your own pleasures
- not following your own ways
- not doing your own works. Your own desires
- not speaking your own words

Verse 30—*Jesus said:* "I have no power to do anything of Myself; but as I hear, I judge... [He was hearing from the Father] ...and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father Who sent Me."

He took it to the nth degree, because everything that He did was according to the will of the Father. He was hearing constantly what the Father told Him to do. He said, again, that He had no power to do anything of Himself. ***The very Creator of the world!***

Why would we think that we have power to do anything of ourselves? Because our thoughts are vanity! In our vanity we may think that we are able to do this or that or the other, but it all amounts to nothing.

- ***IF*** it doesn't come from God
- ***IF*** it's not His ways
- ***IF*** it's not His will

THEN it amounts to nothing

But it is something amazing when we really think about it, that that's what Jesus did. In v 30 where He says,"... but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just..." That's what He was saying.

Isaiah 50:4—He says: "He... [the Father] ...awakens *Me* morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as one being taught." ***That's what He was!***

God the Father taught Jesus Christ, and Jesus did His will perfectly. Christ's example is so profound in this that:

- He perfectly did those instructions in Isa. 58
- He perfectly kept the Sabbath
- He was in perfect harmony
- He wasn't doing this just on the Sabbath

But God knows that we need to go step-by-step, that we need to be trained every day more to let go of ourselves so that we can be filled with God.

John 8—Jesus was talking with His disciples, and then He was also talking with the Pharisees."

John 8:25: "Then they said to Him, 'Who are You?' And Jesus said to them, 'The One that I said to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him, these things I speak to the world'" (vs 25-26).

That the perfect example of what God tells us to do on the Sabbath, 'not speaking your own words.' It says that ***IF*** you don't speak your own words, ***THEN*** what words? Whose words? ***God the Father's word!*** And that's exactly what Jesus did.

Jesus said, 'He... [God the Father] ...Who sent Me is true. And what I have heard from Him, these things I speak to the world.'

Amazing! Amazing, because He did it. He never lied. That's exactly what He was saying when He said He didn't trust in His own humanity. He didn't trust the flesh. ***He committed Himself always to God.*** What He heard from the Father, that's what He spoke to the world.

Verse 27: "***But*** they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that ***I AM***...' " (vs 27-28).

Same words as in Exodus, that He told Moses, 'Tell him ***I AM*** sent you. Then you shall know that ***I AM*** and that I do nothing of Myself.'

It's an amazing thing that ***He is;*** the same ***Self-Existing One*** Who told Moses, '***I AM!***' But at

the same time, He does nothing of Himself. Why? *Because He was in the flesh!*

He was doing, being the perfect example of how we are to live our lives. ***Let God live our lives, His life in us!***

He says that, 'I do nothing of myself.' And the Sabbath is the perfect time and place to be trained in this. That's why the commandment is there. That's why it says, 'Don't speak your own words.'

Why? *Because we are to speak the words of God!* That's what Jesus did. That's exactly what He did. "**...as the Father taught Me, these things I speak**" (v 28).

That is exactly how ***we are to be***, brethren! We are to speak the words of God, starting with the Sabbath, but eventually taking over everything:

- that He would guide our steps
- that He would give us wisdom
- that He would fight the battles for us

That's what all the men of faith in the Bible did!

Abraham—'whatever you say, LORD.' You know, He would give a command; Abraham obeyed

Joseph—same thing. The LORD was with him, guiding him in his decisions. When he was a slave, when he was put in prison, then when he was the first in command, God was guiding and giving him the words to say, and the thoughts, the ideas and the revelation. The Lord God was doing that!

God is not a respecter of persons. He wants to do these things with us if we let Him. **IF** we start with the Sabbath one day a week:

- when we don't speak our words
- when we don't do our pleasures
- when we don't do our will

But we do what God wants! Because it says, "...these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me.... [and He's with us, too, brethren] ...The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him.(vs 28-29).

The Father does not leave us nor forsake us ever, because it's a promise. ***He will never leave us!***

Verse 30: "As He spoke these things, many believed in Him. Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, '**If** you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples'" (vs 30-31).

That's what we have to do, continue in His Word, which is what it says about the Sabbath. Not speak your own words, but 'speak My words.' His words are in the Bible, that we would be thinking

about them, that we would be speaking with the words of God.

That's what God wants! He wants to inspire the things that we say. He wants for us to do the things that He moves us to do on the Sabbath Day:

- to meditate on His ways
- to seek His help
- to understand He says we are to continue in His words

Then we are truly His disciples, and we are His disciples and we are following His example. ***What He did is He kept the Sabbath perfectly all the time***, and not only the Sabbath, all the time. His life was an offering, ***a freewill offering*** to God the Father all the time.

Verse 32: "And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free."

Why? Because He Himself said in John 14, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'

IF we know Him, **IF** we know Jesus Christ and we know God the Father, and we're guided by Them through the power of the Holy Spirit:

- we will know Them
- we will know the Truth
- they will set us free from bondage to sin

Now that we are preparing for the Passover, it's important that we keep these things in mind, of the example that Jesus Christ set.

Verse 33: "They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to anyone....'" What do You mean by saying, "You shall become free?" Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a servant of sin. And the servant does not live in the house forever; *but* the Son lives forever. Therefore, if the Son shall set you free, you shall truly be free'" (vs 33-36).

He's talking about Himself. What did He say before? *I can do nothing of Myself*. That shows that He's the operation of God the Father through Jesus Christ. That's what it shows; **the Son shall set us free!**

- it's only through His blood
- it's only through His sacrifice
- it's also through His example

We have to be converted from the inside out! We have to be transformed!

Then He says; v 37: "I know that you are Abraham's seed... [He's not denying that] ... but you are seeking to kill Me, because My words do not enter into your *minds*."

Why? Because God knows that the thoughts of man are vanity, and that they are much lower than His ways. He was in another level. He was in a completely different wavelength altogether.

Think about what the instruction of the Sabbath,

- not pursuing your own desires
- not doing your own works
- not speaking your own words
- not doing your own pleasures

Verse 38: "I speak the things that I have seen from My Father, and you do the things that you have seen from **your father**.'.... [that's what they do] ...They answered and said to Him, 'Our father is Abraham.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham'" (vs 38-39). *Doing the same things, which is:*

- believing God
- obeying God

Verse 40: "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has spoken the Truth to you, which I have heard from God; Abraham did not do this."

- they were seeking to kill Him
- they were evil
- their thoughts were vanity

It was in vain because they actually did get to kill Him. Even that was just vanity for them. They did not accomplish what they wanted. Christianity grew even more. The Plan of God was going to be carried out. They were just tools in His hands. It was vanity to seek to kill Him. *They did!*

Verse 41: "You are doing the works of your father.' Then they said to Him, 'We have not been born of fornication. We have one Father, *and that is God.*'"

But they were shown with their works that their father was not God. They were showing that their thoughts were lower than God's thoughts, and they were rebellious against God's commandments. And then Jesus tells them:

Verse 42: "Therefore, Jesus said to them, '**If** God were your Father, you would love Me, because I proceeded forth and came from God. For I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why don't you understand My speech? **Because you cannot bear to hear My words**'" (vs 42-43).

For us, brethren, *we have to hear the words of God!* We have to understand that the example of Christ. The beginning of that, the genesis of that, *is in the Sabbath*, and that's how God planned it. He said,

I'm going to sanctify these days so that I can have fellowship with them on these days, and I'm going to show them, I'm going to train them to deny themselves:

- to not seek their own pleasures
- to not speak their own words
- to not seek their own desires
 - that they would actually seek My ways
 - that they would do My desires
 - that they would speak My words

That's what God wants, and that's exactly what Jesus Christ did day in and day out. Not only on the Sabbath, *especially on the Sabbath*, but He always did it. He always did it.

- He said that *He had no power to do anything of Himself*
- He said that *He spoke nothing of Himself*, but what only what the Father gave Him and those are the words that He spoke

That is a level that sometimes is hard for us to comprehend, as human beings, but that's the level that God wants us to be. He wants to be one with us. He wants to be really living in us. **Conjoined!** That's the whole prayer in John 17, when Jesus said that they may be one ***in Us***, and We want to be one in them.

But in order to do that, we have to meditate on His Word. We have to do what it says in Psa. 1, to be meditating on God's Law day and night:

- in all His goodness
- in all His works
- in all the works that He's doing in our heart and in our mind
- in our relationships, even with those around us

but especially in our relationship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ!

To understand the magnitude of this example, the magnitude of not only the example, but everything that is contained in those instructions for the Sabbath, because that's how God designed it.

This is not by chance, brethren; ***this is not by chance!*** It was carefully planned and specifically designed, because in those three instructions for the Sabbath Day, in those promises, it's all encapsulated, because that's exactly what Jesus Christ came and showed how to do.

This is the example of Christ, how He not only kept the Sabbath, but how that's the key to our growth and our relationship with God.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 94:8-15
- 2) Matthew 6:31-34
- 3) Isaiah 55:8-9
- 4) Isaiah 58:13-14
- 5) John 5:17, 19-20, 30
- 6) Isaiah 50:4
- 7) John 8:25-43

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 1; 119
- John 14; 17

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