

Exodus Our Journey – 20b – Cease from Your Labors

1. Prayer
2. Review
 - a. Purpose of the Big Ten:
 - i. To show us that we are sinners.
 1. They don't make us right with God, they show us that we aren't right with Him.
 2. They show us our need.
 - ii. They were to be kept as a response to God's love not to gain it.
 1. They were not to be kept as the *condition* for receiving God's love – that had already been given.
 2. Notice, they were given *after* the deliverance from Egypt.
 3. Obedience is always the fruit of faith.
 - iii. They are the eternal moral code of God.
 1. They reflect His character and as we obey them, we are transformed into His character.
 2. They reflect the "owners manual" and show us how we might be truly happy.
3. Why a Sabbath?
 - a. Exodus 20:8-11 *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.*
 - b. This must be one of the most misunderstood commandments in the bible.
 - i. There are some who would argue that this law must be enforced as it was in the days of the Israelites.
 - ii. And there are others who say that only 9/10 of the commandments are relevant today, because the 4th commandment was for the Jews.
 - iii. Which is true? Let's look at some significant facts concerning the Sabbath:
 1. The Sabbath was a permanent sign of God's covenant with the Jews.
 - a. Exodus 31:16-17 *The people of Israel must keep the Sabbath day forever. 17 It is a permanent sign of my covenant with them. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but he rested on the seventh day and was refreshed."*
 - b. Every Sabbath, the Jews were reminded when they obediently chose to not work, to not gather food, to not gather firewood, etc. that they belonged to God.
 - c. Their act of obedience was a reminder, sometimes made with difficulty if food was scarce or money tight, that they belonged to God and that belonging to God took faith and sacrifice.
 2. The Sabbath helps us remember that it is God makes us holy.(special)
 - a. Exodus 31:13 *"Tell the people of Israel to keep my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you forever. It helps you to remember that I am the LORD, who makes you holy*
 - b. God gave them the Sabbath which set them distinctly apart from the rest of the world.
 - c. For hundreds of years Jews were ridiculed for being lazy for resting on the Sabbath day.

- d. Yet it was God's way of providing for them and setting them apart. (the meaning of holiness)
 - i. No other people group had such a provision in their calendar.
 - ii. No other religion had such a belief, that 1 day in 7 could one cease from labor...in an agrarian or a nomadic society, it would be suicide! If you didn't work 1 in 7, you would cut your calories by 12%, your income by 12%, and you'd be 12% hungrier, poorer and needier.
 - iii. It was a way of saying to Israel, "*The pagans around you work unceasingly to please their gods and to meet their needs. You will take one day off per week, whether you're in the middle of harvest or lambing season, and you will be successful beyond anything you can imagine.*"
 - iv. Neither you nor the pagans around you will be able to say you are successful because you work hard.
 - e. Your success will be entirely because of Me.
 - i. I will make you successful.
 - ii. Your own work will never be your ticket to success.
 - iii. The Sabbath says to us, "Your success will always be a gift from God."
3. **The Sabbath helps us remember what God has done for us.**
- a. Dt. 5:15 *Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out with amazing power and mighty deeds. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day*
 - b. When they celebrated the Sabbath, the Jew would recall when the Sabbath was instituted...in the desert, with the manna and God's provision. They would remember that God had set them free and that provided for them for 40 years in the desert!
 - c. Do you know of a practice that the church was commanded to do in perpetuity that was to help us remember what Jesus did on our behalf at the cross?
 - i. The Lord's Supper and it is celebrated when we gather together, in some churches, every single Sunday to remember you were once a slave to sin and how God brought you out with amazing power and love!

4. **Origins of the Sabbath**

- a. The Sabbath began with the Exodus, a 40 year journey of depending upon God
 - i. Some commentators try to explain that it began with creation (which we will look at in a minute) but I believe it began with the Manna during the exodus.
 - ii. In creation, God set up the principle of rest, but nowhere did He command Adam or any of his descendants to observe it. Its observance is not commanded until Exodus 16.
- b. Exodus 16:22-30 "*On the sixth day, there was twice as much as usual on the ground – four quarts for each person instead of two. The leaders of the people came and asked Moses why this had happened.* (they didn't know why!) *23 He replied, "The LORD has appointed tomorrow as a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. On this day we will rest from our normal daily tasks. So bake or boil as much as you want today, and set aside what is left for tomorrow."* *24 The next morning the leftover food was wholesome and good, without maggots or odor.* *25 Moses said, "This is your food for today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD. There will be no food on the ground today.* *26 Gather the food for six days, but the seventh day is a Sabbath. There will be no food on the ground for you on that day."* *27 Some of the people went out anyway to gather food,*

even though it was the Sabbath day. But there was none to be found. 28 "How long will these people refuse to obey my commands and instructions?" the LORD asked Moses. 29 "Do they not realize that I have given them the seventh day, the Sabbath, as a day of rest? (it is a gift not a burden!) That is why I give you twice as much food on the sixth day, so there will be enough for two days. On the Sabbath day you must stay in your places. Do not pick up food from the ground on that day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day

- i. The Sabbath is not about trying to meet your own needs, but learning to let God meet them for you.**
 - 1. The Sabbath for the Jews meant entering into God's divine provision.
 - 2. Observing the Sabbath for these Jews, especially during the Exodus, required extraordinary trust in God, that God would meet their needs for food.;
 - a. For a nomadic, shepherding society, this required taking a significant step of faith.
 - 3. Imagine just making enough to get by at your job, working every day that you can, and grabbing all of the overtime you can get. You have just enough to meet the bills.
 - a. And then God says to you..."I want you to stop working 8 hours a week."
 - b. You want me to cut my earnings by 7% ?
 - c. Are YOU going to pay my bills?
 - d. And God says, *rest!*
 - i. You know the story of the contest between two axemen, to see who could cut the most wood in a day. Every hour one would sit down for 10 minutes while the other just kept on cutting. Yet the one who stopped once each hour won the contest. He spent those 10 minutes sharpening his axe and restoring is strength, while the other wore himself out swinging a dull axe.
 - e. Are you fighting to make every cent, afraid to give to the Lord, afraid to trust Him to meet your needs? Try Him! He desires that you learn to depend upon Him instead of yourself.
 - f.

5. Creation and the Sabbath

- a. During the first 6 days...
 - i. God was working so as to establish a relationship with man
 - 1. By creating an environment to sustain man (Gn 1:1-25)
 - a. During the first six days of creation there were light, air, grass, herbs, and trees; there were the sun, the moon, and the stars; there were fish, birds, cattle, creeping things, and beasts
 - b. All of the creation before man's creation was preparatory
 - 2. Then God created man. (Gn 1:26-27; 2:7; 2:21-25)
 - 3. If you look carefully at the creation account of Genesis, man was the object and purpose of creation.
 - 4. **The purpose of the first six days was to ESTABLISH a relationship with man.**
 - 5. God was "finished" only after He had created man.
 - ii. On the 6th day, Adam and Eve appear to have been created late in the day.
 - 1. Neither had lived a full day before they entered into God's day of completion.
 - 2. Their first full day was God's 7th day of creation.
 - 3. To put it simply, Adam and Eve were created to live in and enjoy God's rest of the 7th day... and until sin entered the world, they did so.
- b. **So, what happened on the 7th day:**

- i. Genesis 2:1-3 *Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*
- ii. God didn't rest because He was tired.
 - 1. The Hebrew word, "shabath", which is translated "rest" does not really refer to a requirement to sleep or take a break due to weariness.
 - 2. The word for rest in Genesis means to "stop or cease."
 - 3. In numerology, the number seven means "completed."
 - 4. God rested because He was finished.
- iii. I wish we didn't have to use the word "rest" because it is not the literal word here. We should substitute the word "*cease from our labors.*"
- iv. On the 7th day...God did not do anything further to *ESTABLISH* the relationship with man.
- v. **What God did on the 7th day...He sought to ENJOY His relationship with man.** This was the rest God was establishing. That of enjoying man.
 - 1. Do you know what we call our act of enjoying God? Worship!
 - 2. That is what you and I were created for. It is why we pause one day of the week!
 - 3. We pause to encounter God in a dynamic way and enjoy His presence!
 - 4. It is the purpose for which we were created!
 - 5. This principle is vital to our understanding of the Sabbath!
- c. **Did you know that God is still working?**
 - i. Jesus did a significant reinterpretation of the 4th commandment, and to understand what it means, we must understand what He meant.
 - ii. John 5:16-17 *16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. 17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."*
 - iii. (Linear present middle indicative,) The Greek construction of the passage means "keeps on working until now" without a break on the Sabbath.
 - iv. God is working, but not at creation, but at something entirely different as we will soon see.

6. Rest Lost:

- a. Why did an ordinance have to be established for the Sabbath in Exodus, when in creation it was not established as anything more than a principle?
 - i. A principle is changed to an ordinance or command because something has changed in the relationship of the parties to the principle.
- b. The Sabbath principle was established before man's fall.
 - i. With Adam's sin, came a change in the way man had to survive.
 - ii. You might recall that Adam and Eve suffered the cursing of the ground and the pain of childbirth, and death as a result of their sin.
 - iii. Gn 3:17-19: "*Cursed is the ground...by the sweat of the brow shall you eat bread*"
 - iv. **The consequence of the fall was that instead of being focused upon God, Adam was now completely preoccupied with his survival.**
 - 1. The ground had been cursed.
 - 2. The ground would no longer be abundant.
 - 3. As a result, Adam would no longer have the freedom to enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with God.
 - 4. Rather than sweet communion with God, he found sweat and the need to work non-stop for survival.
 - 5. The quest to survive hinders us from enjoying a relationship with God.

- c. When man sinned, he was excluded from God's REST but God began His WORK of redemption to restore man back to himself.
 - i. We read that "[The Lord God MADE garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them](#)" (Gen 3:21).
 - ii. Explain Atonement, covering, nakedness.T
 - 1. The death of that first animal, while not mentioned explicitly in the Genesis account, was the acorn of the great truth which, through the following centuries, would grow into the great, spreading oak of righteousness by faith.
 - 2. It pointed forward to Christ's substitutionary life and death for lost mankind.
 - 3. Naked Adam and Eve were clothed (atoned: covered) with robes made from the skin of the lamb - a substitute who gave his life.
 - d. **Rest in what another has done! A substitute!**
 - i. Jesus is the One who offers us this rest.
 - 1. To every soul He cries, "[Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.](#)" Matt. 11:28.
 - 2. The rest is found in Him, because in Him the works of God are completed.
 - 3. On the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished," thus showing that in His cross we find that perfect rest that comes alone from the finished work of the Lord.
 - 4. This rest is gained by faith.
 - 5. By faith we receive the finished, perfect work of the Lord as our own. "
 - 6. [This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.](#)" John 6:29.
 - 7. [The rest that Jesus gives is rest from sin AND from our works for our own righteousness.](#)
 - a. The heavy laden whom He calls to Him are those who are burdened with the weight of their sins. All men are burdened, "for all have sinned."
 - b. Our best works are utterly worthless
 - c. It is by the works of God, therefore, that we are saved, and not by our own.
7. The Sabbath therefore, becomes a living metaphor of salvation.
- a. The Canaan rest they were moving toward, the "promised land" that God promised them was actually a picture of their salvation from sin.
 - i. (see Hebrews 3:7 10 [That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' 11 So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'](#))
 - 1. The generation that left Egypt and later refused to enter Canaan because of fear of giants in the land, ended up wandering in the desert for 40 years until all who had refused to enter were dead.
 - 2. Israel failed to enter God's rest because they failed to leave behind their own works and walk by faith.
 - 3. To the Christian, the Sabbath is not the ceasing of all physical work that the rest of the O.T. illustrates.
 - 4. [What the believer in Jesus has ceased from are the futile works through which mankind tries to establish a relationship with God.](#)
 - a. It is the believer's concern and quest for his *eternal* survival that has ended.
 - 5. Christians learn that it is through the Finished work Jesus Christ that they enter into His rest.
 - 6. It's only when by faith we enter God's rest and submit ourselves to his finished work of salvation that we finally find rest.

8. Summary and Closing

- a. There are two kinds of Rest:
 - i. *You rest because of your work.*
 - 1. You are tired.
 - 2. You rest so that you may rebuilt your energy so that you can continue to work.
 - ii. *You rest from your work when the job is finished.*
 - 1. Because the work is done, you rest in contentment.
 - 2. This is what God is saying. Jesus' last words on the cross are telling:
 - 3. IT IS FINISHED.
- b. Which are you doing? Are you weary? Tired? Worn out? Are you ready to come to Christ and find the rest for your soul that only He can give? Quit running from God. He is waiting for you. He calls your name. Come and find rest.
- c. Let's pray.

a.

9. 1st Day

- a. The early church changed the Sabbath from Saturday to the first day of the week. Why?
 - i. There was a need to separate from the strictly Jewish observance of the Law.
 - ii. There was an understanding of the fulfillment of the Sabbath commandment in the cross, so that it no longer was to be met in the letter of the law but rather the spirit of the law.
- b. Acts 20:7 **20:7**. And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, [Paul](#) discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow. And he continued his speech until midnight.*
- c. **1 Cor. 16:2**. On the first day of the week, let every one of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him: that when I come, the collections be not then to be made.
- d. **Colossians 2:16** Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day