

Washington

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"To Keep it Holy"  
Scripture Lesson:- *This is another in the series on the Com.*  
Text:- Exodus 20:

Introduction:- This text, is a call to remember.

It is therefore, a recognition of our proneness to forget. There is a scientific sense in which we never forget anything. Every thought we think, every dream we dream, writes itself indelibly upon the tablets of our mind. But while from the scientific standpoint we never forget anything, practically we forget almost everything. Seldom a day passes that we do not bewail the fact that our memory is so treacherous.

"Sabbath" means "rest," and the meaning of the word gives a hint as to the true way to observe the day. God rested after creation, and ordained the Sabbath as a rest for man. He blessed it and hallowed it. "Remember the rest day to keep it holy." It is the day when the body may be refreshed and strengthened after six days of labor and the soul drawn into closer fellowship with its Maker.

The truth of the matter is that there is nothing, however trivial or important, that we do not tend to forget. We forget our privileges and our opportunities. We forget our responsibilities and our obligations. We forget the vows we have made. We forget each others names and faces. We forget our friends. Sometimes we forget our foes. We even forget our own loved ones. We

forget the things that are seen. We even forget God, "in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways." But be the causes what they may, this is a forgotten day. Therefore we need this urgent call, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy!"

What are we to remember about the sabbath? We ought to remember that the sabbath is God's gift to man; that it was given, not for the benefit of God, but for the benefit of man, ourselves. It fits into human need. It is, like every one of these rules; none is for God's benefit; all are for ours. We realize, of course, that our sabbath is not the same as that observed by the Jews. Theirs was the seventh day of the week, while ours is the first. The early Christians began to worship on the first day of the week, because Jesus rose from the dead on that day. By and by, this day of worship was made also a day of rest, a legal holiday. This took place in the year 321.

Our Christian sabbath, therefore, is not a matter of positive command. It is a gift of the church. The church not only gave us our sabbath; it also gave us our New Testament. It gave us the new world that was born of the spread of the Kingdom of God. We are therefore, to think of our Christian sabbath as a day set apart under the leadership of the Spirit. Of course, the vital matter is not what day we observe, but that we observe one day in seven. This one day, which is for us the Christian Sunday, is God's gift, that we are to receive with Thanksgiving.

There are those who accept God's gift only to misuse it. There are those who misuse the sabbath by making it a day of repression rather than expression. Jesus found that the Pharisees had fallen into this error. They had changed the sabbath from a day of joy to a day of gloom. This they had done by hedging it about with hundreds of rigid rules. There were more than fifteen hundred ways in which a man might break the sabbath. For instance, one could not kindle a fire on the sabbath. If a man's ox fell into a ditch on the sabbath, he might pull him out; but if the man himself fell in, he had to stay there. If he should take a sup of vinegar for food, that was alright; but if he should take a sup in order to help his aching tooth, he had broken the sabbath. If he was bitten by a flea, he was compelled to permit the little pest to keep up his annoying work. To undertake to catch him, was to be guilty of the sin of hunting.

In later years the Puritans fell into somewhat the same error. There is the story of a certain sea captain who was gone from his home for two years. When he returned after two years his wife met him at the gate, and he kissed her. But it was not lawful to kiss one's wife, on the sabbath. Therefore, this wicked captain was put into the stocks for his lack of reverence for this holy day.

It was against such use of this day of privilege that Jesus blazed with hot indignation. He reminded the Pharisees that they were trying to fit man into the sabbath, and forgetting that man was not

made for the sabbath, but that the sabbath was made for man. With Jesus, always, the supreme values were human values. Man is not made for the state, but the state is made for man. Jesus was and is against any use of the sabbath that fails to make human need of supreme importance. We, furthermore, have made of the Christian sabbath a rather dark day. It is the day when our highways are most congested with traffic. It is the day when we send the greatest number of wounded into our hospitals. It is the day when we send the largest number of slaughtered to our morgues. It is the day when the largest crowds flock to our theatre retreats. It is the day when we have our largest crowds to our ball games. It is the day when some men try to get enough exercise to last them through the next week. We have used God's holy day, not for rest, but for the hardest kind of work. Then, too, making a holiday out of Sunday is not the highest use that can be made of it. Man is more than an animal. He is even more than a highly intelligent animal. He is an immortal soul. Sunday is intended to minister to the needs of the whole man; to the physical and temporal and also to the needs that are spiritual and eternal. To make a holiday of Sunday, is to misuse it.

### III.

How then are we to use Sunday? It is to be a day of rest. Of course, rest implies work. Man was intended to be a worker. Work was not sent upon us as a curse, but as one of life's greatest blessings

A curse that is a curse indeed is idleness. Every man ought to have to work. But while work is an unmeasured blessing, man is not to work all the time. He needs one day in seven in which to rest. Man can do more in six days than in seven. To disregard this fact is to lower vitality and efficiency. It is to bring frayed nerves, broken bodies, and premature death.

This day of rest was intended especially to protect those whose time was not their own. The old slaves used to sing a song that came out of their experiences of sabbath rest and sabbath joy. The chorus to that song was, "Every day will be Sunday by-and-by." To the slaves, Sunday was a day when the heavy load was loosed from their shoulders. It was a day so sweet and restful that when they thought of heaven, they thought of it as a place where this joyful and restful day would last forever.

Then it is to be a day that offers an opportunity for worship. Now, just as universal as our need for rest, is our need for worship. To worship aright, we need a bit of leisure, a bit of time.

"Be still and know that I am God." Life is too hectic for most of us. We do not have time to appreciate the beauty in the world of nature. It is through worship that our stained lives are made clean.

It is as we worship that we are recommissioned and rededicated to high aims and purposes. It was while the disciples were worshipping that Jesus said, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

It was as they were worshipping that they were empowered for their task. "He breathed on them,

and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Spirit".  
To worship is to grow spiritually strong. "Even  
the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young  
man shall utterly fail! But they that wait upon  
the Lord, shall renew their strength." Jesus knew  
the value of worship. "He went on the sabbath into  
the synagogue, as was his custom."

Conclusion:- ~~it is through worship that we~~  
~~are able to keep it holy. This is God's~~  
~~command. Don't think you can do as~~  
~~you please & get by with it.~~  
~~If you break his commands~~

The highest use of Sunday, then, and far the  
most rewarding, is to make it a day of worship and  
rest. Worship and rest, these two go together. When  
we cease to worship, the pull of the world is likel  
to rob us of our day of rest. When we cease to rest  
we are likely to cease from our worship. Everybody  
then, needs this holy day. We cannot manage life  
rightly without it. We need it for ourselves. We  
need it because it gives us our best opportunity  
to teach religion. When we forget this day, we  
are on the way to forgetting God. When we forget  
God, we turn our backs on life and lose our souls.  
Therefore, not as an end, but as a means to the  
high ~~and forgetting~~ end of being and doing our  
best, we ought to remember the sabbath to keep

it holy. <sup>conclusion</sup> This is God's command.  
Don't think you can do as  
you please & get by with it.  
If you break his commands

you yourself are broken by them. You cannot trifle with God & His Commandments. You may say, I have broken many of the commandments & have not been punished. Remember God does not settle all his accounts in October, a reckoning is sure to come. Are you ready to step in God's scales & be weighed on this Com.?

I do not know what will become of this Nation if we keep on breaking the Sabbath. France undertook to wipe out the Sabbath & has nearly wiped itself out. No Nation has ever prospered that has trampled the Sab. in the dust. Do we want our nation to go the way of the dead nations of the past? No! Then we must have courage to obey God's Commandments.