

TEACHING GOAL

To understand what God requires of, provides for, and prohibits from His people who would remember His day.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?
- A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.
- Q. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?
- A. The fourth commandment forbids the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning of the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

S.C. 60-61, L.C. 117-119, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 90

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Acts 20:6-12

Support Passages: Exodus 16:22-30; Psalm 92; Isaiah 66:23; Luke 4:16; Leviticus 23:3; Ezekiel 23:36-39; Colossians 3:16-17

BIBLE STORY

Nehemiah 13:15-22; Nehemiah forbids merchants to enter Jerusalem on the Sabbath.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night," (Psalm 92:1-2, ESV)

APPLICATION

Our attitude toward the Sabbath is of great importance if we are to keep the Sabbath-day holy. If we are to please God we must delight to spend the whole time (except what is taken up by necessary and merciful things) in public and private worship of God. Delight! Not grudging, complaining service to God which is not really service at all.

SUMMARY

Eutychus provides an example of what not to do on the Sabbath. He fell asleep during the sermon and tumbled to his death from the window sill where he was sitting. Paul brought him back to life and restored him to the fellowship of the church. We learn from this that we must prepare ourselves to hear the word of God attentively with a good night's rest. As we have learned, the word Sabbath means a resting, however, we are not to construe this to be idleness. We are to rest from employment and recreations that are lawful on other days in order to worship God properly. If we exhaust ourselves during the week so that we spend the Sabbath in bed we profane the day by idleness. Then we use the Sabbath to benefit only the body but the soul is not refreshed and God is not worshipped as He requires.

We also profane the Sabbath if we employ ourselves with activities that prevent the worship of God. Nehemiah found himself in just such a situation. It was under Nehemiah's governance that Jerusalem was rebuilt, the wall dedicated, the Temple cleansed and worship restored, foreigners removed, and tithes restored. Nehemiah observed that some were treading wine and bringing merchandise into Jerusalem for sale on the Sabbath. To the nobles of Judah he said, "What is this evil thing that you are doing, by profaning the Sabbath."¹ He put an end to this practice immediately in order to sanctify the Sabbath but then the merchants began to spend the night outside the walls of the city waiting for the gates to open on the day after the Sabbath. This too was a distraction to the proper worship of God and after being threatened with force, the merchants no longer came near Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day. Thus the Sabbath was restored to the people of God.

During the days of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, they were not to collect Manna on the Sabbath. Normally, if the Israelites collected too much Manna it would become foul or would melt when the sun grew hot. But to prepare for the Sabbath they collected enough for two days, however, the Manna did not spoil or melt on the Sabbath as it did on all the other days. Moses said, "See, the LORD has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day."² Like Israel, we are to similarly prepare for the Sabbath that we minimize the preparation of food. We should buy gasoline for our automobiles before the Sabbath. We should not travel unnecessarily. Television, newspapers, sports events and such like all distract us from the proper worship of God on that day.

What should we do on the Sabbath? We should spend the whole day doing what the Sabbath was designed for; worship and rest. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."³ We should assemble ourselves together

for the purpose of worship and encouragement. (Hebrews 10:25) You are to, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you are called in one body; and be thankful." You should, "Let the word of Christ dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."⁴

According to its title, Psalm 92 was written as a song for the Sabbath day. In this Psalm we find delight, praise and thanksgiving to YAHWEH. "It is good to give thanks to YAHWEH ... For Thou, O YAHWEH, hast made me glad by what thou hast done, I will sing for joy at the works of Thy hands." This is what we should do on the Sabbath and we should delight to do it. May God give us His grace and peace as we remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, as we subject ourselves to the faithful preaching of God's word together with the saints.

¹ Nehemiah 13:17b

² Exodus 16:29-30

³ Mark 2:27

⁴ Colossians 3:15-16