

THIS IS THE LORD'S DAY: WHAT ABOUT IT?

JOHN 20:11-23

By Dr. Gary G. Dull

INTRO: **ONCE AGAIN WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GATHER TOGETHER ON THE LORD'S DAY...SUNDAY! WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?** You may say, "Pastor I am here at church and that should say something about what the Lord's Day means to me." Well, yes, it does. But, even in light of that, **WHAT DOES THE LORD'S DAY REALLY MEAN TO YOU?** Is it just another day, but in addition to the other things you do, you go to church? Is it a day off for you to do personal things that you do not have other time for? Is it just as another holiday for picnics and family gatherings? Deep down in your heart of hearts, **WHAT DOES THE LORD'S DAY MEAN TO YOU?** In past generations, THE LORD'S DAY meant a whole lot to our ancestors, INCLUDING ME. It was a time to get up early in the morning, dress up, go to Sunday School and church, have family dinner together, rest, go to church again in the evening, and then set around and relax after the evening service, which usually got over somewhere between 8:30 – 9:30. In addition, I can remember times when we would travel to another church after the evening service to have a singspiration about once a month. That often started anywhere between 9:00 and 10:00 and went for an hour or so. THE LORD'S DAY was a day when most stores, and in some towns, every store was closed, including grocery stores, drug stores, and gas stations. In fact many restaurants were even closed. THE LORD'S DAY was a day when Christians who loved the Lord did not go to ball games, play sports, or attend school activities (Most schools did NOT have activities). But things have changed somewhat in the past 45 years. **WHY DO YOU THINK THAT CHANGE HAS OCCURRED?** There could be a number of reasons, but at this point in time, I don't intend on attempting to figure out those reasons. However, my goal today is for us to TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE LORD'S DAY FROM THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE to see if our attitude toward Sunday is that which is in agreement with the Word of God.

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EVSINCE THE TIME OF THE EARLY CHURCH, BELIEVERS GATHERED ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, SUNDAY, TO WORSHIP. BUT CONSIDER TWO THINGS:

1) WHAT THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK IS NOT.

a) It is not the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath Day was a Jewish Day of Rest. Robert Boyd states: *"The Sabbath was the first and most important of the sacred Jewish festivals. The seventh day signified rest, because in it God had rested from all his works of creation. From the beginning it had been set apart for religious services; and by a special injunction it was afterwards observed by the Hebrews as a holy day. They were commanded to sanctify it for special purposes – in honor of God as their creator, and likewise as a memorial of their redemption from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 20:8-11; Duet. 5:12-15).*

b) It is not the Christian Sabbath Day. Actually, there is no Christian Sabbath Day. Biblically the concept of the Sabbath Day ended at the RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. Note Matthew 28:1. In the Greek text, "Sabbath" is plural... "IN THE END OF THE SABBATHS."

2) WHAT THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK IS.

IT IS A MEMORIAL TO THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND HIS VICTORY OVER SIN AND DEATH. IN THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE, IT IS A NEW DAY

FOR A NEW PEOPLE BELONGING TO A NEW CREATION...A DAY OF COMMERATION, JOY, SERVICE AND SPIRITUAL REST SET ASIDE TO THE LORD.

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I. THE PATTERN FOR THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

(Established from the pages of scripture)

- A. It is the Day Christ Arose from the Dead – Mark 16:9
 - From the early days of the church, Christians met early on Sunday morning to Honor Christ and His redemptive work.
- B. It is the Day the Disciples Met – John 20:19
 - From this text the practice of Christians meeting on Sunday evening to honor the time Christ met with His disciples after His resurrection was established.
- C. It is the Day Spiritual Services were Conducted – Acts 20:7
 - 1. The Breaking of Bread – Communion.
 - 2. The Preaching of the Word – Exhortation.
- D. It was the Day Believers gave their Offering – 1 Corinthians 16:1,2
 - You will note that “EVERYONE” was to be involved.
- E. It was the Day John received Great Revelation – Revelation 1:10,11
 - John’s revelation came as He was focusing on Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

(Following the above pattern of scripture)

- A. The Pattern we see.
 - 1. To Honor Christ
 - 2. To Meet with Other Believers
 - 3. To Conduct Worship Services
 - 4. To Hear from the Lord
- B. The Process we follow (In light of the above pattern).
 - 1. To Go to Church
 - 2. To Meet with Other Believers
 - 3. To Conduct Worship Services
 - 4. To Hear from the Lord

ILLUSTRATION:

III. THE PRACTICE OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

(The practice is biblical and personal)

- A. The Pattern of Scripture shows the practice of the First Day of the Week, being set aside for the Lord, worked tremendously as the early Christians were edified and encouraged.
- B. The Practice of the First Day of the Week must address two significant issues:
 - 1. The Matter of Legalism
 - Many keep the First Day of the Week as a day for the Lord in a legalistic way. That is, THEY ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP SPIRITUALITY OR FAVOR WITH GOD THROUGH FLESHLY EFFORTS. **This is not pleasing to the Lord.**
 - 2. The Matter of Love
 - a. For Christ’s Redemptive Work

-It is only reasonable to consider that when one truly LOVES the completion of the REDEEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST as He AROSE on the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, efforts will be made to honor the day.

b. For Christ Himself

-It is only reasonable to consider that when one truly LOVES CHRIST, setting aside a day each week to honor Him is not too much to do when we remember what all He did for us.

-Consider: Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-8

ILLUSTRATION:

IV. THE PROMISE FOR THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

“OUT OF A PURE LOVE FOR CHRIST AND HIS REDEEMPTIVE WORK, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE ENABLEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, I WILL PROMISE THE LORD THAT I WILL SET ASIDE SUNDAY AS A DAY TO HONOR HIM AND HIM ALONE, IN ALL OF MY ATTITUDES, ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES.”

A. This is a Personal Promise (Between you and the Lord)

B. This is a Practical Promise (Relating to a truly consecrated life)

C. This is a Profitable Promise (For you, for other Christians, for the unsaved, and most importantly, FOR CHRIST).

ILLUSTRATION:

LESSON: CHRIST LOVED YOU ALL THE WAY FROM HEAVEN TO THE CROSS TO THE GRAVE TO THE RESURRECTION. LOVE HIM ALL THE WAY TO SETTING ASIDE THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK FOR HIM. IS THAT TOO MUCH TO CONSIDER?