

**Revelation 1: 10: "On the Lord's Day", Sermon # 8 in the series -
"The Faithful and True Witness, Delivered by Pastor Paul on
February 19th, 2006 in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

In my mind it is certainly appropriate that in the midst of this glorious vision of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, that John says these revealing words, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." What do these words refer to? Well some would like to link them to the Day of the Lord and say that John has been transported to the Day when Christ shall return, and it is from this vantage point that the vision is given to Him. But I think that this is straining the text too far. Although Christ's second coming has been mentioned in verse 7, the more immediate context suggests that it refers to John's situation and condition on the Isle of Patmos. He is going to receive a vision and a prophecy of immense importance for suffering witnesses in every generation until the Lord's return. And I believe that both he and the Spirit thought it good to record the Day that he received this vision. It is of significance, because the Day and the way that John received this vision is typical of the Day and the way that Christians everywhere in every generation will receive their greatest vision of Christ. It is by being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day which is a Day that should be observed by all Christians everywhere in all generations. To be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day is to recognize it as the Christian Sabbath; to be listening to hear the voice of the Lord with a view to receiving and retaining all that the Lord would say to us. This afternoon I want to ask this question. What does it mean for us as Christians today to observe the Christian Sabbath and to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day? I think that observing the Christian Sabbath and to be in the Spirit on that Day means the following 3 things:

1st- We recognize that this is the Day that the Lord has made.

2nd- We recognize that this is the Day that Jesus Christ is Lord of.

3rd- We recognize that we ought to keep this day holy in whatever circumstances that we find ourselves in.

1st- We recognize that this is the Day that the Lord Jesus has made.

I believe that what John is referring to here is the Day of the week that belongs to the Lord Himself. You will recall that the Sabbath Day was not something that began with the Law of Moses on Mt. Sinai. It was on Mt. Sinai that the Sabbath principle became enshrined as a command to be observed for all generations. "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, it

says in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do not work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. You notice that the reason that it did not begin with its inclusion in the Decalogue is that in the commandment itself it hearkens back to the creation of the world, and how the Lord blessed and hallowed the 7th day Himself. He did not need to rest from His own labors because the Lord does not grow weary or tired. He rested as an example to us. He rested because He wanted to show us what He expected and desired for us. We are to "Remember" this day because it is the Lord's Day. The Lord created all things in six days, and rested on the 7th. Therefore we ought to do all our labor and our own pleasure on the other 6 days of the week and then rest as well.

And in Deuteronomy 5: 15 we find that we are to remember something else as well. The Jewish nation was to remember that they were slaves in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought them out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord their God commanded them to keep the Sabbath Day. They were not only to remember back to the physical creation of the world by God, Who gave them and us the world that we live and labor in, but they were to remember that they were slaves in Egypt, forced to work continually so that there was no rest, no Day to be able to take off from the forced labor. But the Lord changed that for them when He brought them out, when He redeemed them from this bondage. So too, you and I who under the New Testament economy are not simply to think of the Sabbath Day as giving us physical rest from all of our labors so that we can appreciate God's creation and relief from our work. Surely this is a great blessing. But we are to "hallow" or make holy the day by remembering that, as Christians, we have been set free from our slavery to sin and Satan by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. This is the Day that the Lord Jesus has made.

Turn with me to Psalm 118 with me and you will see how Christ has made the Sabbath day a day for believers in Himself to rejoice in. Starting in verse 15 we see what a great day it was when the Lord Jesus finished and completed His work of redemption on the cross. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. This is what each believer finds when

He comes to Jesus Christ. He finds that he is not going to die eternally, but He is going to live eternally, and declare the works of the Lord. He rejoices greatly in the finished work of the Savior. When a person comes by faith to Jesus, he is coming to "the right hand of the Lord," this One who has done valiantly. When he says to God, "Open to me the gates of righteousness; and I will go through them," he finds the "gate through which the righteous enter." He calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus and he is saved. His language to the Lord and to others in the church is the language of verse 21. "I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation." Jesus Christ is the "stone which the builders rejected," and yet became "the chief cornerstone." "This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." All of Christ's labors and sufferings are recognized and rewarded by God with a new Day in which God may be praised and worshipped. A new covenant has been put in place. A new and living way has been consecrated for us through the veil, that is, the flesh of Jesus Christ. And this means in God's mind; a new Day. A new way means a new day. "This is the Day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." For, not only did He die for us who believe in Him, but He was also raised from the dead. And this is the basis of our faith and our life, and the church being able to triumph through suffering. We rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The ceremonial Sabbaths of the Jews were fulfilled in His work on the cross. The Primeval Sabbath's rest from the work of the creation by God finds its fulfillment in a New Creation in the hearts of fallen sinful men who believe in the work of Jesus Christ. But we rest also in the power of His Spirit and grace completing the work by His resurrection power. When He finished all this glorious work, He rose from the dead on the first day of the week. This Day was surely intended, by the Lord Himself, to be moved from the 7th to the 1st day of the week. The reason being, that in the Jewish Sabbath and the Primeval Sabbath there was 6 days labor and then came the rest. But Jesus having already done the "6 days labor", which completed His obedience and sufferings on our behalf, He rested from all His work, even as God did from His in the beginning. Now proceeds a new Day from all this. We worship God on the first Day of the week and then labor, because all that we do proceeds from our resting upon the finished work of Christ. This is shown forth well by the Lord's moving the Sabbath to the 1st Day of the week. The Sabbath principle is retained but the 7th Day is not. This is indeed a new Day in which we live, as New Testament Christians.

2ndly- To observe the Christian Sabbath and to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day means- That we recognize that this is the Day that Jesus Christ is Lord of.

Turn with me to Mark 2: 23-28. Here we find 2 very important principles given to us by our Lord in regard to what it means to "be in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day. It says, "Now it happened that Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him, 'Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?'" But He said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?'" Here is the first principle. "And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The first thing that we need to learn about the Sabbath command in order that you and I would be in the Spirit on this blessed day, is that God did not give this command to bind us up. He gave us this command to free us up to be able to rest and be refreshed and strengthened, both physically and spiritually. The disciples plucking the heads of grain, Jesus says, are not breaking the Sabbath command. These men were following him and learning from Him and they needed strength. They needed to be refreshed. They needed to be with Jesus. He was able to tell what they needed. This was not work that they were doing, harvesting this grain. But the Pharisees were so intent on trying to define what sinful working on the Sabbath was, that they would nit-pick their doing this on the Sabbath. They thought that man was made for the Sabbath, and that these disciples of Jesus must be kept in an overly scrupulous bondage to what they thought was keeping the commandment.

This is sometimes what Christians have done to each other or what they do to themselves in relation to this commandment. This commandment like all the other Ten, must be kept with a heart understanding of why it was given by God. It is given for man's good, what would be of greatest blessing and benefit to both the body and the soul of man. When will Christians in our generation learn this vital lesson? The Lord has given us a day. It is for our refreshment, our strengthening, and for our good in every way. Why will we devote it to trying to make it burdensome to one another? I declare to you today, that if there are members of this congregation that think that 2 services are burdensome and they use this day to their own interests and pleasures, and will not keep it holy; it is to their own hurt. It will hurt them because they have not seen

the blessing that God intends for them yet. God would meet with them Himself, to strengthen both body and soul, and yet they think that they know of some better way. God is not looking to bind you up. He is looking to free you up and to strengthen you by your "being in the Spirit." Fleshly and earthly and man-centered pursuits will not do this. You may think that they will, but you are deceived.

The second principle of this passage is found in verse 28. "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." The Lord is the One, and really the only One to be able to tell us that the Sabbath should be observed, and how it should be observed. It says here in this verse that the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath, not was the Lord of the Sabbath. He says that He is the Lord of it. He is Lord of it to expect that we will receive this day as a gift from Him based upon His perfect keeping of the Law of God. He then expects you and I to receive God's Word to us on this day with a holy reverence and to do good to others as we have opportunity. Jesus went about doing good and, often it is noted, that it was on the Sabbath day. This sets us the finest of examples. In Luke 6: 6 it says, "Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Arise and stand here.' And he arose and stood. Then Jesus said to them, 'I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?' And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus." This passage is very revealing. It shows us the importance of teaching on the Sabbath, and, coupled with it, deeds of help and healing. By His own example Jesus shows His Lordship and what He would have us to be doing on the Sabbath. There will always be some religious people who actually think that both are wrong. The Bible should not be taught, but rather some good stories or funny anecdotes; and people should not be made whole by the Lord's power. Rather, they have to be kept in some sort of bondage to the idea that wonderful things cannot take place in the hearts and bodies of people in the name of Jesus. It has to be rather some kind of self help program, some new technique or teaching of a proud man to be the focus of people's attention. But the Lord always knows better than proud Pharisees the beauty of mercy in the sight of God

and man. Let us today ask ourselves if we have this same kind of kind spirit at work in our hearts.

3rdly and finally- We recognize that we ought to keep this day holy in whatever circumstances that we find ourselves.

We really take so much for granted in terms of our peace and prosperity don't we? Take a look at John. If anyone could have used the excuse not to worship the Lord on His Day, it would have been John. What does a man do in a situation like this? He can say, "Well, I am suffering tribulation here; I am far from the church or even from having the two or three with me that Jesus promised that He would be in their midst. I will just have to consider that every day is going to be the same, every day is boring. Every day has enough trouble of its own. But this was not what John did. Instead he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." He would be praying that the Lord would come and manifest Himself to him. He would be listening to hear the voice of the Lord with a view to receiving and retaining all that the Lord would say to him. And, oh, how the Lord came to him that Lord's Day! You see, you never know what you might miss if you neglect or forsake the assembling together with the Lord's people on the Lord's Day. You might stay home and miss the Lord coming to meet with your soul, to do you good. Please do not mistake my meaning. The Lord can meet with us anywhere and on any day of the week, and we ought to desire this greatly in our devotions to Him. But He often reserves His greatest manifestations of His power and presence for His Day, among His people. This should cause us great expectancy, that if we are faithful to observe His Day by a constant attendance upon Him and His Word, that He shall be faithful to surprise us with the power of His light, and grace, and truth; to truly refresh and strengthen us and equip us to go forth to serve Him zealously.