

**Revelation 1; 10; "On the Lord's Day" (Part 3), Sermon # 10 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 12th, 2006 in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

I have been lingering around this same verse for the 3rd week in a row because I believe this subject to be of immense significance to the forward progress of the gospel in all generations. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." And John received this book of The Revelation on this blessed Day for a reason. He received it on this Day because it had already become, in the New Testament church, the Day which the Lord Jesus had made by rising from the dead after accomplishing the work of redemption. This Day had already become in the Church, the Day in which all true Christians should worship God and receive from God, the good spiritual things that the Lord intended to give to them, when they gathered on the 1st day of the week, because it was on that Day that Christ rose from the dead, having finished the work of the 2nd creation. It was that work which forms the basis of all God's Elect being regenerated and being given all the blessings of salvation that would make them part of His new creation. Listen to the words of Ignatius who was an immediate friend of the apostles, who was martyred at Rome not more than 15 years after the death of the Apostle John: "Those who have come to the possession of new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath (the seventh day), but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again, by Him and by his death." He calls the Lord's Day the "queen and chief of all the days of the week."

I told you last week that the old 7th day Sabbath was related to the 1st creation, the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days, God the Father resting from all his works of the physical creation to give man the indication of his will for him, that he would rest from his labors, one day in seven in order to obtain needed rest, and more importantly to find time to worship God. The old 7th day Sabbath was enshrined forever in the 10 commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai and its position in the Law shows it to be binding forever as a moral precept given to men for their good and for God's glory. But the law could not give life to fulfill its own glorious precepts to men under the Old Covenant. The Lord Jesus Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, and fulfill it He did. Everything ceremonial and judicially strict about the Sabbath Day, Jesus kept and fulfilled. Everything related to keeping that Day holy, Jesus studiously observed. He went about doing good on the Sabbath Day. He healed men's bodies and He preached to them the truth. He

was devoted to God and to His worship and His people in a perfect way. And when the Lord Jesus died on the cross He "wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us." "And He took it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." Then the Apostle Paul says in Colossians 2: 16 and 17, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is Christ." And so the old 7th day Sabbath is gone because the Old Covenant is gone, Christ having fulfilled it and having brought in something new and better, He gives us by His own authority and work, a new Day. The Day has changed but the Sabbath is preserved as are all the 10 commandments for the Christian to keep. But our commandment keeping, it must be remembered, is in relation to Christ himself and not anything related to the bondage and condemnation of the legal dispensation. Christ is risen and the Spirit has been given. "John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." What a glorious place for the Apostle to be, even though he was banished to the Isle of Patmos. John had remembered that it was on the 1st Day of the week that his blessed Lord was raised. He remembered that it was on the Day of Pentecost, which was the 1st Day of the week, that the Spirit had been sent down to the church to give saving, converting power and unction to Peter's preaching so that 3,000 souls were saved after hearing that one sermon. John knew that this Day was the Day of all the days of the week that God had made a Day of His power and glory being seen by His church. And this is why John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" and thus was ready and able to receive this tremendous vision and prophecy.

Now this afternoon I want us to think together about some of the practical implications of this Day in relation to what the Bible teaches. What does our Lord expect of us on this Day? What should we do with this Day? How should we remember it?

**1st of all- We should remember that this Day is a Day of rest from all our earthly labors.**

Remembering that work is good, and that it is an institution of God from before the Fall, remember also that it is all too easy to get caught up in our work to such an extent that we do not rest from it. Work can be an all consuming thing, and especially if we are trying hard to make financial progress, and trying hard to provide for our families and pay off our debts. But let us consider that it is God who gives us the ability to make money; it is "He who gives you the power to get wealth," it says in Deuteronomy 8: 18. It is not "your power and the might of your hand which do so." "Six shall you labor and do all your work, but the 7th day is a Sabbath unto the Lord your

God." "In it you shall do no work." Many Christian men realize that "diligence is the precious possession of a man," as it says in the book of Proverbs, and they apply that principle in regard to their work, but they do not apply it to the Lord's Day. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might," it says in Ecclesiastes 9: 10. But it also says in the very next verse, "I returned and saw under the sun that - The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill..." Diligence to guard the Sabbath from our working is also the precious possession of a man. Sometimes we think that we have to be working all the time to succeed at something. And sometimes we allow ourselves to think that our work is more important than giving God the time that He has commanded that we give Him. One day of the seven is not too much to give God, but some people will allow their work to encroach on the Lord's Day. What does this do? Well I believe that what it does is to rob God of what He so richly deserves; our full attention and worship, in this Holy way that I will be describing. The only way that we can honor God on His Day, in the right way, is to deliberately say to yourself, you wife, your children, and those who may want to mow your lawn for you on the Lord's Day, "I will not permit God to be robbed." Certainly we can do this in a kind and loving way, realizing that some may have never heard the 4th commandment and do not understand the reasons why such a thing should be done. It gives good opportunity to witness to the truth of the Bible and your faith in Christ to explain to your relatives and people around you, even your employer or others who want you to work on this day, that it is your intention to obey God in this commandment. Jesus says in Matthew 5: 19 - "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Could it be that most Christians in our day think that the 4th commandment may be the least of these commandments of the Moral Law, and indeed that there is no obligation to keep it at all? Then why is it set amidst the 10? Are the 10 commandments optional now that we are not under the law but under grace? I think not!

### **2ndly- We should remember this Day is a Day to be kept Holy**

Not only must the Sabbath be a rest from our own work, it should be a rest from our own pleasures and our own words. To keep the Day holy means that it must be set apart for God's purpose. That means that we should not thrust our own pleasures upon this Day and be continually speaking words in our conversations with other people that indicate that our heart is really somewhere else. If we are more interested in worldly games of cards than we are in speaking to one another of things related to the Lord, on this Day; how

does this profit the Lord, His people and His kingdom's advance? If we would rather watch a worldly movie with God's people after the services of the church than share with them the spiritual concerns and thoughts that relate to our prayers and our devotional readings, what does that say to God? I think that it says that we have not really come to understand the purpose of the Day. And perhaps we have not come to really understand true Christianity. God has given us a Day in which we may delight in spiritual things. Why impose upon it with the regular interests and entertainments of the world?

Turn with me over to Isaiah 58 and you will see what the Lord is expecting from us. Verse 13 reads this way. If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken." Now this is truly a very great witness to people both inside and outside of the church, to both believers and unbelievers when they see this kind of attitude and actions coming from you. There is no greater witness to the truth of God and His Word than a delight in honoring God. This means that as you are entering in to Saturday evening that it is your delight to think of what God might think in relation to what you have planned to do that night. You are thinking, "How can I honor God in my preparation for the Lord's Day? What kind of thoughts and activities will put my mind and heart in the right tenor for tomorrow's worship? When I awake in the morning, do I think about what it will mean to give myself to God in worship? Do I pray that the Lord would be honored in my singing and my giving, and my listening to the Word preached? When I am at church do I consciously attempt to think of spiritual topics of conversation with others so that they are built up in their faith? Or am I always speaking of worldly topics of conversation and things which will make no significant contribution to my growth in grace. What am I reading and thinking about in relation to God and Christ and the Bible which I might be able to impart to others at the right time when I come together with them on the Lord's Day? Do I speak of my desire for the salvation of my loved ones and acquaintances when I am with others on the Lord's Day? Do I think of the welfare of the souls of people around me? Am I delighting myself in the prayers of God's people? Do I still want to discuss spiritual things with others between services and after the services of the day? Do I think of how I can show mercy to the poor on this

day, or those who have never heard the gospel? Oh what a blessed day the Lord's Day is, if we would just make use of it in the way that God intends.

Let us resolve together as a church to think more about this commandment and how we can keep it to the glory of God. It is a command giving us opportunity for devotion to Christ and to God that we do not have on the other six days of the week. How often I have heard of those who do not have time for reading good books. You have it on the Lord's Day. How often do we think of how long it is to our birthday or to Christmas when we have the Lord's Day every Sunday? The Lord stands ready to give you presents of spiritual blessing and truth and you are ready to look to the world for a blessing. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He has done for you. He has died for you and He has risen from the dead to give to you a very great salvation. And it says in Hebrews 2: 3 - "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" When each Sunday comes, it is the golden opportunity to pay attention to your own soul's needs and sanctification as well as promote the same good thing in others. It is the golden opportunity to focus your attention upon God Himself as the One who would speak to your soul through the preaching of the Word and your reading the Bible and other good books. Will you not learn to please God by doing this? Surely it cannot be pleasing to God if you neglect these precious gifts and times of His appointment in favor of some ridiculous worldly pleasure that leaves Him out of it, and that leaves behind the process of reflecting and meditating upon His Word behind. Let us stir ourselves up to the holy activities of promoting His cause and kingdom both within the church in the stated services of the church, and also in good works and good deeds which we might do in relation to those outside. I mean occasionally visiting the sick, the widows, and orphans; I mean various types of evangelism that we could do together as the Lord would lead; I mean that we could think of how we could encourage each other in a truly spiritual sense that would create more interest in the glory of Christ and His gospel, and thus much profit to His kingdom come about because of His blessing upon us.

Think of every Sunday as the birthday of Christ. Do you not feel sad when you forget the birthday of someone you love? You say to yourself, "How stupid I am, that I cannot remember something so simple." But every Sunday is the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We have no commandment in the Scripture to celebrate His incarnation; but we do have a command to observe the Lord's Day, carried over in the 10 commandments and modified and purged of its ceremonial elements. Christ is saying to you, O believer, "This is the Day that I have made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it." "I was dead, but now I am alive forevermore!" He is the

"firstborn over all creation" in His resurrection from the dead. Acts 13: 29 - 33 says this. "Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings - that the Promise which was made to the Fathers, God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: "You are My Son, today I have begotten you...." You see it is true. The first Day of the week is Jesus' birthday. He was begotten that Day from the dead and is alive forevermore! Every week you can celebrate what He has done for you if you will observe His Day. Our keeping it holy is much more than a Jewish Sabbath of the Old Testament. Our Christian Sabbath is not only saying, but also experiencing the reality, in our souls, that Christ has come, He has finished the work of redemption, He has been raised from the dead, and our whole salvation and sanctification depends upon His gracious work in our hearts. That is what you are declaring and experiencing most of all, on the Lord's Day. It is Christ's work and His resurrection power that makes The Lord's Day a Day of vision and glory and power so that He might be honored and His kingdom progress in a fallen world. Let us remember this precious truth as the Sabbaths go by. There will only be so many of them and then shall come the blessed eternal Sabbath which the Scriptures have promised.