

Mark 8: 34-38; "The Other Bedrooms of Christian Discipleship",
Sermon # 61 in the series – "Astonished at His Teaching", Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 14, 2010,
in the Morning Worship Service.

We have gone upstairs in the House of Christian Discipleship and we have been looking at your bedroom. We have been looking at the fact that every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ has found rest for their soul when they first trusted in Him. When they became a Christian, they found that they had been given a spiritual room of their own; a room designed by God just for them; in which they might find rest and, in which according to God's will, they also find their physical pleasures related to marriage. We saw that all true rest and all legitimate pleasures come from God Himself. They come in the form of blessings. Even if a person never marries, we learned from 1 Corinthians Chapter 7; they are still able to find their highest pleasure with God. Some people, because they have this gift, are able to remain single all their life; being satisfied with having Christ alone; as He becomes their closest companion in a spiritual sense. I said to you that this is possible because spiritual pleasures are even greater and better than physical sexual pleasures, even though many people, even some Christians, have a hard time believing it is so. When a person believes in Jesus Christ they are resting in His finished work on the cross, and they are learning to work and labor for their Lord from that vantage point of rest. The works of a Christian are wrought in God. They are done to the glory of God, and with a view to pleasing Him. They are not done simply to please themselves. We do not have the right, as a Christian disciple, to live to ourselves. We live to Him who died for us and rose again. These other bedrooms up here on the second floor of the house of Christian discipleship, are the rooms where other people who are a part of your spiritual family live. There are other people living in this house and you, as a disciple of Christ should be able to have a right view of what they need. You should take an interest in their finding needed physical and spiritual rest, and in their finding true and holy spiritual and physical pleasures. This is a part of your being a faithful servant in your Master's house. It is just as needful as if you were a young person living in the same house with other brothers and sisters; that you learn to think about them and be on the look-out for their welfare. Because you are living in this same spiritual house with many other brothers and sisters, you ought to have a love and care for their well-being. They will have their own bedroom of Christian discipleship, but you should promote their highest welfare and well-being so that they too, might find their highest satisfaction in Christ. To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself, are the two greatest commandments that you are given as disciple.

Today we want to look at the truth that other believers and other people in general need rest and refreshment. I want to set before you the truth that you, as a disciple, can promote this in the lives of others by your setting a good example. The way that believers promote the right kind of rest and refreshment in the lives of people around them is to have a right view of work in relation to their own life. The best way to have a right view of work is by living out a sincere, Christ-like obedience to the 4th commandment. Yes, you heard me right. It is by living out a sincere Christ-like obedience to the 4th commandment. The Bible also says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." But it also says that on the Sabbath day you shall do no work. I would like to attempt to show you this truth in relation to both the Old Covenant and the New. If you remember the 10 commandments; and I believe that every believer ought to be able to recite the 10 commandments, and to know them by heart; you remember that the 4th Commandment is – "You shall remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." It is found in Exodus Chapter 20 and Deuteronomy Chapter 5. The fuller version of the commandment reads this way. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." "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." It is by keeping this commandment with your heart that you yourself will find rest for your soul and refreshment for both body and spirit. Let's look at this commandment from the standpoint of creation first, and then we will look at it in relation to Israel, and then we will look at it from the New Covenant perspective.

First of all – The Sabbath as God instituted it in the Beginning of the World.

Turn with me to Genesis Chapter 2. In the first chapter of Genesis Moses relates how God created the heavens and the earth in 6 literal days. And then he says in verse 1 of Chapter 2, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished." "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." Now, here, at the beginning of the world, at the end of the first week, God ended His work of the first and physical creation. He defined how time should be marked by days and weeks and the last day of the first week was the day upon which He rested from all that He had done. We must ask ourselves; was this rest which God took, something that He needed because He was tired and weary, having done so much in six days, that He just had to stop for a day? Well, obviously not, because it says in Isaiah Chapter 40, verse 28, "Have you not known?" "Have you not heard?" "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary." No, God rested on

the 7th day because it was the right thing to do; to show and teach His highest creature Man; the one made in His own blessed image and likeness; that this rest was necessary to His glorifying God His Maker. God instituted the Sabbath by His own example, so that men would observe His way of looking at things, and follow it. The work of the other 6 days was good; but the rest of the 7th day was positively blessed. He blessed that day, and sanctified it; set it apart and made it a holy day. And He did so in relation to all His work in creation. He is saying to you and to me and to all men, fallen or redeemed; rest on 1 day in 7 is necessary, and it is right, and it is good, just as all of God's works and words were, in the creation. All that God does is perfect and He saw that there needed to be a holy rest from all work unless it is a work of mercy and necessity, on a certain day of the week. To work 7 days a week is not right; it does not glorify God. Indeed, as we shall see, it is a sin against God when we think that we need to do so, to promote our own work and welfare. God wants us to be able to see all things good, as coming from Him. The Sabbath is one of those good things.

Now Secondly – We want to see the Sabbath that was given to the nation and people of Israel.

Now, we need to remember that this day of rest, this Sabbath of creation was instituted by God before He ever gave the law on Mt. Sinai. Many people think that the keeping of the Sabbath is a legalistic thing. But I would suggest to you that anyone who kept it before the Mosaic Law was given, did not think of it this way. If they were wise, they thought of it as a delight, because God had shown them what was wise and good for them, by His own example, and some of them, no doubt, were thankful for that revelation and observed the day. It was good for the renewing of their physical nature. God's example was plain to those who had the revelation concerning God's creation of the world. But Romans Chapter 1 states that "professing to be wise," the people of that day became fools. And, it says a little later, that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and they worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever." They evidently forgot the Sabbath and God's hallowing of that day. And after the flood, we do not find that any of the Patriarchs were said to have observed the Sabbath on a weekly basis. This does not mean that the Patriarchs did not keep it. I believe that they did. It simply is not directly mentioned, as it was reserved for the Israel of God to be given the further and more particular revelation of God's moral and ceremonial will, which was His revealing His Sabbath when the people of God became a Covenantal people. It was given to the Old Testament Church in the Wilderness. We see that even here, the beginnings of the observance of the Sabbath came about before the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. It came about in relation to the people being given the Manna. The giving of the miraculous bread from heaven and the Sabbath are directly linked. Which for us today, under the New Covenant means that Christ and the Sabbath are directly linked because He was the true bread come down from heaven.

But turn with me to Exodus Chapter 16. The Lord had redeemed His people from their bondage in the land of Egypt. And it was because of their unbelief in relation to His ability to provide and satisfy them by His great and miraculous power, that he led them into their wilderness wanderings. The first verse says, "And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. "Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." "And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full!" "For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.' "And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law. Or not." "And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." Look down, now, at verse 22. "As so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one." "And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses." "Then he said to them, 'This what the Lord has said: Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord.' "Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning." "So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it." "Then Moses said, 'Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field.'" "Six days shall you gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none." "Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather but they found none." "And the Lord said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?' "See!" "For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days." "Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." "So the people rested on the seventh day."

Now I show you this to attempt to convince you that when God had given all the children of Israel the Sabbath Day, He did so as a test of their whole obedience; whether their whole life would be brought into conformity to His law regarding the time that they labored and gathered, and the time that they rested. They did not keep it; but Christ did. And it is because Christ kept the Sabbath day perfectly, we have a New Day related to a New Creation. We who live in New Testament times, have a new day of the week to worship God on. It is true that there are 6 days, under both covenants, in which we both do all of our earthly work. Our day of rest is different because Christ has fulfilled the Law and everything related to God's purpose and intention of the giving of the Sabbath in the Beginning. It was so that every man might find rest; spiritual and eternal rest; forgiveness for all of their sins, and being clothed with a better righteousness that we could have ever

rendered under the Law. The New Covenant Sabbath is a new day of perfect and complete redemption from all sin and spiritual poverty. It is the fulfillment of all the hungering and thirsting for righteousness since the Fall of man occurred. It is our day of rest instead of the seventh day, because Christ has fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law; including all the ceremonial and judicial implications of that Law, on our behalf. This New Covenant Sabbath was instituted when our Jesus went to the cross and suffered there on our behalf as a sinless sacrifice. And on our Lord's Day, as the central part of this rest, we come together to worship God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the bread of life. And we rest from our earthly occupations that we might delight ourselves together as a congregation in our God. And we spiritually live off of the bread of the Word of God that we have gathered during the week. All that we have worked to gather; both materially and spiritually; we honor Him with when we come to worship God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who have given us such a great salvation. We assemble together to give back to Him in praise and adoration and worship, the glory due His name for supplying us with every good thing materially and spiritually. We offer Him our hearts, our tithes, our songs, and our prayers.

And I must say, that if we do not honor Him with our time given to Him in worship; then we have not kept the intent of the 4th commandment. "There is a Sabbath, a rest, that remains for the people of God", as it says in Hebrews 4: 9. When we keep the Sabbath Day, we are engaging our mind and our heart to the truth that salvation is not of our works; rather, it is of the Lord. For we have entered in to Christ's finished work; we have entered into rest. And we find real spiritual rest for our souls. We bring none of our works into it, as the basis of our being accepted by God in our worship; only the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Our God and our Christ created the world in six days and rested on the 7th day. God the Father sent the Son into the world to accomplish the work of redemption on the cross; and those who believe in the Son become a new spiritual creation. The New Heavens and New Earth of the spiritual creation were instituted on the day that Jesus rose from the dead. And that is why the Christian Sabbath is observed on Sunday, the first day of the week. The day changed, but the Sabbath is still kept by Christians who will carefully read their Bibles. And are new creations in Christ Jesus and so we cease from our 6 day work so that we will be blessed and refreshed, even as God was after His six day creation of the world. We cease from our own dead works, trying to be justified in the sight of God, and we enter the rest of God by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You will see this truth of God's being refreshed by the Sabbath if you will turn with me to Exodus 31, verse 12. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.'" "You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you." "Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among His people." "Work shall

be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord." "Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death." "Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant." "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." This is something that we did not read in the Genesis account. The Sabbath was given to the children of Israel as a perpetual covenant. That is; they were a distinct and separate people from all the people in the world, in that they rested and they worshiped God on one day a week, in the way that He specified in His Word. And the reason that God gave them this command was so that they would be a holy people, He would be refreshed by their worship of Him. And the outgrowth of this would also be, that they would be a refreshed people as well. This is something which no false god can give. Now, is there anyone here this morning who is a true believer in Christ who does not want this same thing? To be holy and to be happy; to be holy and to be refreshed and renewed in your physical and spiritual strength; this is the reason that God commanded them in this very strict way. A person who did work on the Sabbath, was to be put to death. Why? Because God is ultimately very serious about work and rest. He does not want a lazy people. Six days you shall work. And He does not want a people who think that their work is the basis of their livelihood or their salvation. All blessing is His to command. He commanded the children of Israel upon penalty of death to rest, lest they see their own works as the basis of their salvation and their meaning in life. He does not now command the New Covenant Christian to observe the Sabbath based upon penalty of death from the civil magistrate, but upon the penalty of eternal punishment if you do not by faith enter in to Christ. If you do not enter in to Christ by faith, you have not entered in to God's rest. And if you will not observe the Christian Sabbath, you will invariably find yourself working on the Lord's Day, or doing things that do not relate to spiritually to giving Him the day. You will find yourself doing what you would usually do on the other six days, on the Lord's Day. You will find a hundred things that need to be done that God does not think need to be done on this day. This, the Bible is telling us is a sin. And the reason that it is a sin is that you are robbing God of the time that He has asked you to give to Him.

If the Sabbath Day were not a command meant to be obeyed in all generations, by all men, then why would God have deliberately set it down among all the moral commands of the 10 commandments? Which one of them would a true Christian disciple desire to set aside? Is this the least of the 10 commandments? But Jesus says in Matthew 5, verse 17 – "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets." "I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of

heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Which commandments is He talking about? He goes on to explain the spiritual meaning of two of the 10 commandments; so at the very least He is talking about the 10. He doesn't say that He abolished any one of them; not even the 4th. I would say that most people would think of the 4th commandment of the 10 to be the least of the commandments. But God evidently thinks of the Sabbath day very highly. And He thinks very highly of the person who keeps the day. You think that God is trying to put you in a box in giving you this commandment? He is trying to open the door for you, to His presence and fellowship with Him. And He is trying to get you to think of how you should see the need of people around you for rest. Look at Exodus 23, verse 10. "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat." "In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove." "Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the sons of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed." Look at all the things and people that the Lord would have the children of Israel, under the Old Covenant think about, in relation to the Sabbath. The land needs rest, the poor need food; even the beast of the field were cared for as a result of the Sabbath. The ox and the donkey need rest; the son of the female servant needs some attention, and even the stranger who comes to you. The Hebrew man needed to stop working and think of the need of people, and even animals, to rest. There were a number of Sabbaths under the Old Covenant. In the New, we only have just the one. And yet everyone needs rest whether they know it or not. And you, as the head of a household need to see that they get it. If someone comes to mow your lawn on a Sunday, you should tell him that this is the Lord's Day and that you will gladly let him come back tomorrow and mow. You who are hard workers in business and school, you need to so arrange your time that you rest from these labors and do not infringe upon the time that you should give to God. You should go to bed at a reasonable hour and you should not set a bad example of staying up too late on Saturday night. The Sabbath, to be observed properly, requires thought and preparation. It is other people that you should think about besides yourself. What good is it, if you stay up late and come to church the next day and are practically asleep in the service. Does God receive anything from you? Are you really able to give God the glory that He deserves? But the person who prepares himself or herself; the person who will truly observe the Sabbath day will be a blessing to many people around them because they are trying to please God by faith in resting from their own works and their own pleasures.

You may be saying to yourself; this is all very Old Covenant; all this talk about the Sabbath. Is it not simply a Jewish ordinance? Well turn with me over to Isaiah Chapter 56 and we will see that it is not. Here we have a passage here which speaks not about Jews but about the sons of foreigners and eunuchs; those who

would have been excluded from the worship of God in Old testament, Old Covenant times. "Thus says the Lord: Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed." "Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." "Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord speak, saying 'The Lord has utterly separated me from His people'; nor let the eunuch say, 'Here I am, a dry tree.'" "For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." "Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants—everyone who keep from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant." "Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer." "Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." "The Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him." The prophet is speaking about Gentiles and predicting the ingathering of the New Testament Church when he speaks of foreigners and eunuchs and outcasts. He is speaking of those who thought that they could never enter the Church of the living God because of their defects and deficiencies, or those who knew that they were not Jewish. Anyone with such defects was barred from participation in the worship of God under the Old Covenant. But in the book of Acts, we find the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch. We find the Lord Jesus saying, "Go out into the highways and by-ways and compel them to come in. All of us who are Gentiles were once strangers and aliens from the covenants of promise; but through the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have joined ourselves to the Lord. We who thought that we could never have spiritual children and were a dry tree have come to have sap of grace, and are looking to be fruitful. All this is connected with the sincere Christian disciple learning the importance of keeping the Sabbath. God does His greatest works and gives His greatest blessings to those who understand this vital principle of rest and work.

Turn over a page to Isaiah 58, verse 13, and you will see what God is looking for in the observation of the Sabbath. "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your 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." Why is it that many Christians are not "riding the heights" spiritually in our days? Is it not because they are following their own ways, finding their own pleasure, and speaking their own words? In Luke Chapter 6, and verse

5, we find our Lord Jesus uttering these words: "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." He does not say that He was the Lord of the Sabbath, but that He presently is the Lord of the Sabbath. Let us see, today, the connection between the Sabbath and our ability to minister and to love our neighbor as our self. If we have found rest in keeping the Sabbath, then we will be much more ready to minister to the needs of people around us who very much need the strength and help and salvation of Christ. Will you become the hands of Christ. The Pharisees persecuted Jesus because they thought that He was not keeping the Sabbath when he did good works and healed people. But He was Lord of the Sabbath. We do not need to be Pharisees, but Christ-like in our observance of the Lord's Day. Thank the Lord it is so, and set a good example of making this day holy and resting from your regular work.