Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #121

By gathering here this morning, we are Affirming that: ***OUR Help is in the Name of the Lord, the Maker of …* Receive His Greeting:** Grace, Mercy, Peace & Love be yours from God the Father, *thru Jesus Christ His Son* ***Am.***

*Let us now Praise our God as we sing* ***Psalm* #134 “O Bless our God with one accord”**

**Call to confession** *This morning, we continue to work through the Law of God, and so, we will read our text as our call to confession. Please turn in your Bibles to* **Exodus 20:1-17**

**We will be looking at the 4th commandment again in the sermon (Vs.8-11), but for our call to confession, I particularly wanted to challenge you about vs.13:** You SHALL Not Murder. As with many of the commandments, most if not all of us naturally think that we have this one sorted. ***I haven’t murdered anyone – sweet. Kept one! Right?!*** But as we will see when we unpack this commandment in our series, the Core Principle of this commandment is to promote & protect life. So, you are not off the hook if you simply have not taken life… If there are any instances where you could have done more to protect and promote life (and you didn’t) ***then you have broken the 6th com.!*** More than that, Jesus explains that it is the heart attitude that really counts – the heart of hatred=murder. The heart of not caring much at all about the murder/loss of life in others = SIN! *Every single one of us breaks this commandment every day through our thoughts, attitudes & most likely – thru our inaction as well as our actions.* ***This is vitally important for you to understand in the current political climate in NZ. We have a wicked set of political leaders at this time who overtly desire to promote death on demand for our most vulnerable: infants & those who are disabled or old.* Our Government is seeking to legalize murder thru removing Abortion from the crimes act and legalizing Euthanasia.** *When you look to God’s Law – it requires you to be involved! Be informed and stand up for life. To refuse to act or to be ambivalent to such things is to be an accessory to murder. Strong language, I know – but God’s Word is clear on this matter, and we will be looking at why Christians ought to be pro-life on this coming Wednesday night at the joint Bible Study Evening. The session strongly encourages you to come. Even if you don’t normally attend a fellowship group – Please make a point to be there Wed. night!*

 *There is not one of us who is guilt-free in this matter (not even myself)… And so, we are reminded again that we need someone to take our place & save us from our sins.* ***And that person is the Lord Jesus Christ!***SO LET US seek Him in Prayer now: Almighty God, Please forgive us for our sins… Please forgive us for frequently failing to love and worship you as we ought in the ways that we love/serve others. Particularly this morning, we ask that you would forgive us for the ways in which we have broken the 6th com. We have hated without just cause, we have failed to stand up for life, we have stood idly by when others strayed toward death… and we have sinned against you! Please forgive us! Please give us a love for you which will be active in promoting life! USE us and all Christians here in NZ to be bold in standing up against the evil of this current govt. Please transform NZ thru the Gospel, and make us Salt and Light to not only witness, but also to preserve life in our country! ***In.J.nmAm.***

Our God is an Awesome God – one who saves and delivers us from sin and death! We belong to Him as slaves of righteousness! ***All that we are and own belong to the Lord – therefore, let us demonstrate that fact as we serve the Lord His tithes, & our additional freewill offerings(Deacons)***

*Let’s sing a portion of our text for this AM* **Song of Prep**: **#357 VS.1,3,5“This Day at thy Creating Word”**

**Text:** *Exodus 20:8-11 (already read) straight to prayer*  **Sermon Title: “The WHAT of the 4th Commandment”**

**\* Song of Response:** **#92 “How Good it is to Thank the Lord” VERSES 1,2,5**

***LORD’S SUPPER* FORM 3 *– Then Sing #353 1,2 then 3-4, #365 3rd sitting***

***Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, & God our Father,*** *who loved us & gave us eternal comfort & good hope through grace****, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. Amen***

***Doxology*: #117 “Praise Jehovah All ye Nations”**

# **Morning Sermon: “Keep a Day Holy… For What?!”**

Text: Exodus 20:8-11 Luke 6:1-11 Reading: **Isaiah 58**

**Introduction:** Children, do you ever find it hard to stop playing with your toys? Maybe you are playing a game with someone, or you are building something out of blocks and your mom/dad tells you to stop playing and come for dinner… Is it easy to stop right away? **You know that you should stop – but it is so HARD isn’t it?!**But you know, children… Adults are tempted to do the same thing! We too find it hard to stop our work, our play… We ALL just want a little bit more…

***The same temptation passes over to the Lord’s Day as well.*** God tells us to work 6 days and to take one day as a rest – Holy to God. **But we are tempted to ignore God’s call to come rest** *Because we only want to do just a little more work, or shopping or cleaning… or whatever it might be!* But just as children can get into trouble for not stopping and obeying their parents right away – so, we too can get ourselves into trouble with our Heavenly Father when we ignore His repeated calls to stop and rest on His Day!

 (**Review**) ***In recent sermons in this series,*** we have been looking at the first table of the Law (first 4 commandments): ***which can be summarized***: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength…* ***And the fourth commandment explains how to Worship God with all your strength!***

Last week, we looked at the When and the Why of the 4th commandment, and we saw that Christians worship on the FIRST day of the week, not the 7th… and we saw that it was a day to Worship God with all our strength and rejoice in our redemption... Why celebrate a Christian sabbath? Because we love God and want to delight in and worship Him and find His refreshment & Peace! ***That being said, we still need to know What are we to do, How are we to do it… WHAT does his look like practically?!*** That is what we will turn to, today!

 ***We will continue to use the same theme/summary of the 4th commandment’s primary principle:***

 ***Arrange your life so that you might take one day of holy rest and worship each week.***

We will apply this in concrete terms this week by asking and answering this question:

1. **What do we do on Sunday?**

*(And Lord willing next week, we will ask and answer the Second question)*

1. **How do we prepare for Sunday?**

*Our question for this week is this:*

# **WHAT Do we DO on Sunday? (REPEAT)**

*Our confessions summarize the biblical teaching about the Sabbath by explaining the three major activities of the Lord’s Day (which will be our 3 points this AM):* **(1) Worship (2) Rest, & (3) works of Necessity & Mercy**

We see the first two categories straight away in how the commandment begins: **Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy, Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is a Sabbath of the Lord your God.**

*Now, the Word Sabbath – means rest.* **Remember the Rest Day to keep it holy.** *Here we see the MAIN PRINCIPLE of this commandment:* ***Take one day of Rest as Holy to God for every 6 days of work!***

*BUT What does it mean to observe a day of* ***rest Holy to God****?* By the Words **Holy to God** we understand that this is to be a **day of worshipful rest.** We don’t all have time every day to spend hours in prayer, bible reading, and singing God’s praises… And God knows the daily demands on your time, so in order for you to find the time to properly refocus your attention on Him each week – **He has set this 1 day in 7 pattern so you can Worship and Rest.**

**So: How do you set the day apart for Worship?** In the Psalms and in the OT system of worship we read of the morning and evening sacrifice. Based on that general idea of worshipping 2x a day… **Our session here**, *and the historical church* **has set aside time for a morning and evening service**. We gather together to participate in the sacraments; to pray, sing, and fellowship together; and to hear God’s word read and preached. *And we are commanded in Hebrews* ***not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together… which is a reference to being involved in the membership and corporate worship of a local church… You keep Sunday “holy” by taking every available opportunity to worship and fellowship w/ God’s people*** *both publically and privately.*

SO, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN PRACTICALLY? ***It means you*** ***don’t act like worship is a chore.*** You are given the blessed opportunity to worship God in freedom with fellow believers… **So, you need to make a choice to do that to God’s glory from your heart, with all your strength!** God has given us this one day to re-focus, to make up lost time in worship and praise. **Revel in it.** I KNOW IT IS HARD WORK TO WORSHIP GOD in a Zealous way. Raewyn can tell you… there have been many times that I just do not FEEL like worshipping, or that I didn’t FEEL like preaching. *But God doesn’t call you to follow your feelings –* ***Rather*** we are taught – duty first, and feelings follow. **If you make Worship a priority and come both Morning/Evening (and train your children to do the same) then you will find greater delight, refreshment and joy in Worship!** *If you skip it, you will miss out more!*

***THE SECOND SUB-POINT UNDER WHAT WE DO ON SUNDAY is that this is ALSO to be a day of REST (1st a day of Worship, then a day of REST)***

Sunday is the Christian’s Sabbath (a stopping of work) of/to the LORD our GOD. **So, it is not just a rest, it is one dedicated to God.** And God goes on to explicitly detail that not only are YOU not to do any work, neither is your family, nor your servants/slaves or employees, neither are you to use *foreigners who do not worship God* to work for you on the Sabbath day – NOT even your animals should do your work for you on the Sabbath! **This is an extensive and complete Rest – and since it is done *To the Lord our God* – it means that it is *a spiritual act of worship* to rest in this way!**

 Now, almost immediately, we begin to ask questions: “So, hang on a minute… if this is a complete rest, and I can’t work, nor can I have people work for me – not even non-Christians… Where are the boundaries here? Are you telling me that shopping on Sunday is a Sin? IS going out to dinner on Sunday a sin? IS doing my job on Sunday a Sin?!”

AARGH!?!? **And I would say, “Calm down, breathe… and let’s work through this!”**

And REMEMBER – WE are NOT looking for the boundaries of where obedience ends and sin begins. That is like flirting with the edge of a cliff! Have any of you ever seen those YouTube videos of people who film themselves walking along the edge of high-rise buildings? They are crazy! People try to make a living *FILMING THEMSELVES* doing stupid and dangerous things on the edge of death with no safety ropes! We shake our heads at such people, but we far too often copy them when it comes to God’s law – we want to dance on the edge of obedience just millimetres from sin. ***But as we have seen before – we need to be looking for the SOLID Ground (the Safe place) in the centre of God’s will (not near the edge).***

So, that is what I want to focus on this morning: Let’s focus on the clear teaching here!

1. You must rest from your work 1 day in 7.

**Does that mean that all work on Sunday is sinful?** No… Because what am I doing RIGHT NOW? I am working! And those of you who don’t like public speaking know how hard this is… So, I worship and Work on Sunday, but I keep in the center of God’s will by taking Friday as my day of rest – I stop everything that has to do with my work and I trust that God will take care of all of you until Saturday when I will check my email again! 😊 We will also see from our third heading this morning that there is such a thing as works of necessity and mercy.

But the clearest teaching is that (if at all possible) you should NOT do your job on Sunday. Are you a businessmen? Then you shouldn’t do business on Sunday. Are you a homeschooling Mom? Then you rest from your homeschooling and cleaning work on Sunday. Are you a student? Then you shouldn’t study your normal schoolwork on Sunday – **take a rest from your labours and trust God to provide!**

 Interestingly enough, it has been proven many times over that taking a break from something each week, will actually make you sharper and better at your study, your job and your skills will advance. Too much work without proper breaks ruins you. God knows what He is talking about: ***You should not work on Sunday, and we will deal with exceptions of valid work particularly later.***

The second clear teaching here is this:

1. Others can’t work for you!

You can’t take a rest from your work by enslaving others to keep it up for you. You can’t make your kids work for you, or your employees or someone else. Everyone has to take a rest on the Lord’s Day. The most powerful aspect of this is what I already indicated… God says, your sojourner who stays with you cannot work either! And this referred to foreigners who moved to Israel to live. They would not necessarily be true Israelites by circumcision for then a different word would be used. These also are not foreign slaves purchased by Israelites. ***These are non-believers living in Israel.* You can’t even allow non-Christians to work for you on the Lord’s Day?** Why? Because vs. 11 – This is a Creation Ordinance of God! And in Deuteronomy God gives an additional reason why… You used to be slaves and God saved you and gave you rest – ***therefore, all those who work for you must rest as well!*** The center and safe part of God’s will is this: Don’t do anything where people have to work for you on Sunday if you can help it.

***So, God is forbidding shopping on Sunday. You should not go out for dinner on Sunday. This is Not an additional Saturday! It is the Lord’s Day!***

 Some of you almost immediately want to ask: “But What about emergencies?! Are there no exceptions?!” As I already explained – I work for you on Sunday and that is honoured and blessed by the Lord for HE has commanded certain works to be done even on the Sabbath. ***THAT idea brings us to the 3rd category of things that God commands and allows to be done on His Day***:

**First Worship, Then Rest, Then:** ***Do Works of Necessity and Mercy***

When we read the accounts of Jesus’ arguments with the Pharisees about the Sabbath, they are all centred around works of Necessity and Mercy. You see, the Jews had blown the idea **of rest** out of proportion. They had gotten to the point where they wouldn’t even let you set a broken bone on the Sabbath, because it was considered work. If your house fell down and there was no danger to someone’s life (no one caught under it) then you couldn’t move or fix any of it until the next day.

 **And yet,** God had always intended the day of rest to be FOR OUR GOOD. HE even taught in the OT, if your ox falls in a ditch – get it out (no matter how much work it took). ***Of course farmers caring for dependent animals was also allowed!*** If you had some necessity or if someone needed help – then it was lawful to do work which would normally be UN-lawful in order to fix the problem.

BUT THE JEWS of Jesus’ day (and of Isaiah’s day) had turned the Sabbath into a hypocritical Joke. *They thought that they could neglect mercy, justice, kindness and heart worship and that God would accept them.* We read about that in Isaiah 58 – God hated their worship because on their day of worship and fasting, **They worshipped**, but they exploited their workers, and ended up arguing and fighting with one another! God corrected them saying, *be merciful, show kindness – that is the kind of worship/fasting that I approve of – don’t just stop working so that you can feed yourself, but go out and work for others and feed others!* ***God corrected their lack of genuine devotion and worship and reminded them that His day was for doing HIS work, for finding Joy in the Lord…*** There we learn that works of Mercy and Necessity were always allowed in the OT – AND Jesus confirmed that by doing miracles on the Sabbath, and by calling Himself the Lord of the Sabbath.

So Practically: For necessary jobs like Doctors, Nurses and other medical personal (even farmers and support workers) – If they need to take their due share of working on Sunday – that is ok. The same goes for emergency workers: police , fire-service, even at times, Electricians, Plumbers must work to clear up emergencies! … **These are not violating the Sabbath when they work, because their work is necessary for others to rest, worship and live in safety!** ((But try to worship once a Sunday if at all possible, and don’t work extra on Sunday just to make more money))

But what about the rest of you who don’t have that kind of Job… what are jobs of necessity and mercy for you? Well, when the toilet overflows or a pipe breaks, it is ok to clean up the mess as best you can… and to take care of the problem. **But be careful, It is easy to abuse this concept…** don’t fall into the trap of thinking that planting new grass in the yard is a work of necessity because you didn’t do it all on Saturday… The test of works of Necessity/Mercy is the same as all other activities – **will it further the purpose of worshipping the Lord today to do this?** *If the bathroom is flooding, you are not going to be able to worship knowing your house is being destroyed!* ***Fix the Leak!***

And don’t forget works of Mercy… They fall into two categories: 1) helping and serving others (which we will talk about more, Lord willing, next Sunday)… and 2) works that fall under God’s mercy…

**Now, what do I mean by that?** God created this day for you… He didn’t create you for this day. YES, this is HIS DAY and we are to delight in it and worship Him and DO OUR MOST DILIGIENT BEST to keep ourselves focused on His purposes for His glory. ***But, sometimes, things just don’t work out well.*** *There will be times when you tried to get ready for Sunday, you tried to set the day aside for Worship and rest, but you fail…* **And God is MERCIFUL in those times!**

My dad explained this concept to me this way, when He was in seminary, they were rightly encouraged not to study on Sunday – that was their work – so they needed to rest. Well, some of his friends were so strict in their observance of the day of rest and worship that if they had an exam on Monday, they would skip evening worship and go to bed early so that they could get up just after midnight to study for their exam. My Dad said, No! Go to worship, and then study if you have to…

This is not a day for precise timing of the clock as if we are earning our salvation! **REMEMBER JESUS is the Lord of the Sabbath, and HE Loves Mercy!** So, even though we are going into great detail about the Lord’s Day –always remember and be comforted in the fact that we serve a MERCIFUL God, who saved sinners while we were still dead in our sins. **HE has gifted you with a day EVERY week where you can find refreshment, rest and peace with Him! That is what we will celebrate in the sacrament in just a little while**

The CENTER of this command… is that this day is a day about you coming to know the peace, joy & assurance of your Salvation! ***That starts with repentance and Faith in Christ!***

 And by faith in Christ, you begin to trust that your Heavenly Father has a better plan & more wisdom than you do! ***As you submit your life to God’s Word & Law, you will find His promised peace and rest!***

Therefore, Do not make this a day of DO’s and DON’Ts – and turn this day into a burden. There ARE do’s and don’ts (as we have seen) but they are meant to keep you in the safe center of God’s provision of peace and REST!

When God’s children obey His instructions, and take their rest, and delight in worshipping/serving Him, His Way… THAT is when you find the greatest refreshment, joy and assurance in your God! ***Amen.***