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: #32

We gather as God’s redeemed Affirming that: ***OUR Help is in ...*** *Receive God’s Greeting…* ***May Grace, Mercy and Peace be yours from God the Father thru Christ His Son.* Amen**

*Let us now Worship our God as we sing a* **Song of Praise** ***PSALM*** **#48 vs. 1,2,4**

**Call to Confession : Exodus 20**

Prayer of Confession

Sing a Song of hope and assurance: **Psalm #62 Vs.1,4,5,8**

We come now to our time of Congregational prayer, let’s bow our heads, hearts and souls before the Lord**:**

**Scripture Reading: Luke 6:1-11**

**We now have the opportunity to return to the Lord a portion of our FIRST AND BEST – as we bring to God, *His tithes & our additional free will offerings (Deacons)***

*Let us continue to worship as we sing*: PSALM **#63B**

Scripture Reading/Text: **Deuteronomy 5:12-15** **Sermon Title: “How to Get Ready…”**

**\* Song of Response: Psalm #479**

***Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you all forever more. Amen***

***Doxology*: #527**

# Morning Sermon: “How to get ready…”

Text: Deuteronomy 5:12-15 Luke 6:1-11

**Introduction:** Children, When your Mom or Dad takes you to the Store with them to get groceries, do you have to do anything to get ready to leave? Maybe put your shoes on or something like that… but really, No. You just get in the car and go, Right?!

But what about when your family is going away on Holiday, Do you have to get ready for that? **Ahhh, YES!** You might not know everything that happens, but a trip takes a lot of preparation – You (or your parents) have to get maps and money and make sure you have reservations or places to stay, and plans for what you are going to do… AND THEN You (or your Mom) has to pack your clothes, toys, books, food, and get everything sorted and put it all in the car… **And only then** can you get in your seat and leave. ***The more important something is, the more preparation it takes…***

***Now, if I said that you could take a trip to heaven, then you would want to prepare very carefully, right?!***

**But that is what you get to do every Sunday! You get a little trip to or taste of your Heavenly Rest!** Onthis day, we step out of the normal mold of this world, and we step into a taste of ETERNITY! We get a sample of eternal rest and worship! *In fact, even more than that, in our worship we come into the presence of the Almighty God*. Then after church, we have the opportunity to talk to one another about what the Lord is doing in our lives and show the love of Christ through Hospitality and Christian Fellowship. ***What greater trip could you make in this life? B***

 (**Review**) Over the past couple of months, as we have worked through the First Table of the Law, I have been absolutely astounded how far reaching these commands really are. **If you keep any of the first four commandments properly**, **you will keep ALL TEN *by default*!** If you love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength – then you will necessarily love others as yourself! *And even though you may not have thought about it this way before, but if you obey the 4th commandment properly, then you also will not break any other commandment!* This is true, because here we are called to:  ***Arrange our lives so that we might take one day of holy rest and worship each week.***

As the Heidelberg Catechism explains: ***that means that*** we are called to rest from our evil ways every day of our lives, and let the Lord work in us through His Holy Spirit! *Like the other 3 commandments, this touches all of life.*

***Last week*** *we looked at* ***What we DO on Sunday,*** *and This week we are asking and answering the question:*

# HOW Do We Prepare for Sunday? (REPEAT)

***As it turns out, because this commandment touches all of life, WE CAN’T PREPARE TOO MUCH…***Now, I know what some of you might be thinking, You are thinking: *NO, Pastor Daniel… if we were to prepare for Sunday every day of the week we wouldn’t get anything done… We would be like that classic joke about the man who was so heavenly minded that He was no earthly good.”* ***But, I would reply: 1) THAT’s NOT Possible!*** *It’s impossible to be* **too** *heavenly minded* ***Such thoughts show you don’t know how to prepare for Sunday!***

1. *IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE* ***TOO*** *HEAVENLY MINDED Because to be Heavenly Minded is to seek to worship, serve, honour and obey God as He has commanded in His Law!* ***And such a person is productive, diligent and wise: They are an earthly blessing – not a problem!***
2. *And as far as preparing for the Christian Sabbath, That preparation includes all of life – it doesn’t prevent you from getting things done,* ***In fact quite the opposite****,* ***it MAKES you get things done! We will see that is true as we unpack the 3 major ways to prepare for Sunday:*** *Because*
	1. **Sabbath Preparation begins with 6 days of Good Solid Work!**

Here we see that comprehensive element to the commandment… ***For what does God say?*** *“****SIX Days you shall labour and do all your work…****”*

 As we discussed last week, we are often tempted to do our own work and recreations on Sunday because we just need a little more time… And yet, we need that time for either of 2 reasons: 1) Either we have wasted and squandered time, leaving too little to accomplish our work or recreations…. **OR** 2) We have overcommitted to more than we can handle.

**FIRST: I think the most frequent reason for us not have enough time, is because we have wasted so much of it. I mean: *Who of us NEVER squanders ANY time at all?*** There are a few people I can think of who almost never waste time and who rarely sit down without doing something… ***Which just doesn’t seem natural…*** But most of us, struggle with wasting time on the computer (with facebook or games), or with television, or with daydreaming, or with reading books, or listening to/playing music and the list goes on and on… **and some of those things are not wrong**, but if you are supposed to be working/studying and you are reading a novel or watching TV – that is wrong. Far too many students are “forced” to study on Sunday because they watched too much TV during the week and didn’t finish their assignments. Far too many people “Don’t Have Time” to prepare spiritually for the Lord’s Day, because they were slack in their jobs earlier in the week. ***The 4th commandment calls you to put off your lazy tendencies and WORK PROPERLY for 6 Days, that you might take Sundays as a Day of Rest and Worship to the glory of God.***

**SECOND: For those of you who never seem to rest, and you still don’t find time to prepare for or rest on Sunday…**

**You are probably overcommitted!** If you cannot generally complete your work in 6 days **and** have time to prepare spiritually for the Lord’s Day… Then you have agreed to do more than God would have you do. Now, you might wonder – “*How can you say that? Everything I do is necessary… there just isn’t enough time!*” **Right, I understand the difficulty in determining the limits of your duty.** HOWEVER: God gave you 6 days to do your work, if you rarely/if ever finish it in that amount of time, then you need to set some of those tasks aside. God tells us in Proverbs *it is vain to get up early and stay up late, working for food to eat, for God grants sleep to those He loves!* It is worthless and meaningless to over commit yourself in work at home or for your employer, because God has given you rest (both at night and for 1 day in 7!). ***Has your duty to God suffered because you have overcommitted?*** He made the Sabbath to be a delight, and if all you can think about is the extra work you need to do and the commitments you have made – then this day will become a waste of your time, and an odious chore! ***Arrange your life in such a way so that you can take 1 day in 7 as a full day of rest and worship!***  *And YES… that may mean that really good things don’t get done! That is happened with my work here in this church every week that I have been here so far. I can’t do everything that would be good for me to do and that means good things go undone, often. And that hurts!* ***But the Gospel is really important for us here… For you and I are Not saved by our performance in this life! You will not be perfect, and you need to be okay with the limitations that God has put on your energy, your health, your time and your talents… And you need to trust that even as Christ lived and died to save you from your Sin – so you are accepted and forgiven in Christ when you can’t do everything! Trust God to provide in such times!***

***So, the first major way to prepare for Sunday is to work to the glory of God 6 days of the week!***

*The second major aspect to preparing for Sunday is Spiritual Preparation:*

* 1. **Spiritual Preparation to Worship on Sunday begins BEFORE arriving at Church!**

The Christian Sabbath is a day of rest and worship committed unto the Lord our God. So, our worship is not confined to what we do here as a group in this building – Our corporate worship is PRIMARY over against any other form of worship on this day, *but when we go home,* we are still to take opportunities to worship with our family and friends (which means we discuss the sermon, read the Bible, pray, maybe even sing together). ***So, How do we prepare to spend the day in Worship?*** *Let’s answer that with some*practical advice based on our Fathers in the faith –all very biblical, but I won’t be going to verse at each point.

1. We need to develop an appetite for the things of the Lord through private/family worship each day of the week. Every family and individual should take time **every day** to read the Bible, Meditate on/discuss what is read, Pray and even sing a psalm/hymn to the Lord. ***If you are delighting in your devotional lives each day – in those elements of worship… then you will GROW in your desire and delight in the Lord’s Day of Rest & Worship!***
2. We need to take special time on Saturday night and/or Sunday morning to prepare our hearts for the day. The Best way to get ready for Sunday is to stop all television, movies, games, and parties no later than 8 or 9pm on Saturday night. *And I can see some of you already objecting… NO! That is when the Rugby is on! Or that is my time to sleep in!!!* **BUT BEFORE YOU FREAK OUT and think that I am laying a huge burden on you, listen to what I am suggesting: Take time on Saturday night, OR Sunday morning to prepare for worship. Either one! One or the other or both – so long as you get your heart ready to worship the Lord! Why is this important?** Because what you invest in is what you think about. If you spend Saturday night watching a game or a movie, and you don’t take time on Sunday morning to refocus on God… then the movie or the game will be a huge distraction during the service. I can’t compete with the action or drama recorded in your mind’s eye! **But you can focus on the Lord with a little effort and preparation.**

**I am not making a hard and fast rule for one or the other, rather I am explaining the practical best idea for getting ready to worship/rest on Sunday.** You prepare for worship (at whatever time works for you) by listening to Christian music, or reading the Bible or a Christian book. If you lack any of those resources (video, music, Bibles or good Christian books) we have some in the library and I have quite a few I am willing to loan out too! ***OF COURSE, there can and should be exceptions for special occasions/holidays – but in general, guard your Saturday nights or Sunday mornings to prepare for worship!***

So, to prepare spiritually for the Lord’s Day, we need to spend quality time in our daily worship, we need to take time to refocus on God … ***and*** ***the 3rd spiritual preparation is this:***

1. We need to schedule the day to ensure we do not neglect worship and Holy Rest.

A HUGE PART of any Spiritual duty, is a good schedule for the day. You don’t become great at anything immediately – You need to schedule, practice, and focus on anything to improve at it (whether a sport, a musical instrument or any talent – it takes effort) **So, work to set this day aside to God in order to actually do it!**

**Practically this means**: Set a particular time to get up on Sunday morning so that you won’t be rushed to get ready. Ensure that you have time for any meal preparation or lesson review if you are a Sunday School teacher. Schedule time for private worship before Church – including prayer for the church and for the preaching of the Word… I would recommend setting aside at least ½ hour or more before Church to get your mind focused on God. Avoid watching TV, surfing the net and other such distractions before worship.

Also, this means you should PLAN what you will do on Sunday afternoon in advance or you will always do the same default things you always do – You need to plan ahead if you are going to have people over for lunch, or if you are going to visit someone in need in the congregation. *Indeed, you need to plan if you are ever going to do works of mercy.*

And that brings us to the 3rd major aspect of getting ready for Sunday

* 1. **We must PREPARE to do works of Mercy**

As I explained last week, Works of Mercy fall into two categories: 1) helping and serving others, and 2) works that fall under God’s mercy…

We have already spoken about God’s Mercy last week, where God is gracious when you have to overcome special circumstances or even sinful decisions by working on His Day. ***But This morning***, I want to explain Works of Mercy where we help and serve others. Basically, works of Mercy are all the things Jesus commends His sheep for in Matthew 25. He says, “*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.*” This includes things such as **Showing** hospitality to visitors from out of town *or to other church members*, **also visiting** a nursing home, **or ministering** in some way to the elderly/frail in the congregation**, taking time** to visit the sick in the hospital/or those in prison. And in each case, some preparation on Saturday or earlier in the week is necessary – either getting petrol in the car, or buying enough food to share with others etc… don’t leave those things to Sunday morning!

***Now perhaps you are thinking,*** *Oh that all sounds like a lot of work and I try to make Sunday a day of rest…* **Well,** Remember that Jesus said in John 5 that His Father worked on His day, and for that reason Jesus too worked to heal the sick on the Sabbath. ***So, this day is a day to stop doing our work, and instead focus on doing the work of the Lord – both spiritually and physically!***

We might not think about it much, but this includes participation in the work of the Church – coffee duty and clean-up, Sunday School, catechism etc. ***Perhaps a minor work of mercy*** is to make sure we thank those who do these regular works of necessity around the church – *REGULARLY thank our* Sunday school teachers, Thank Richard for his work as the verger! Thank the young men who run the sound board, thank our musicians for their selfless services… We need to be involved in both *doing and supporting* these kinds of Works of Mercy/Necessity – otherwise we might just squander the day away frivolously – thinking that we are doing well, when in reality we are ignoring the work of our Heavenly Father!

***THERE IS so much that could be said, but* LET’s CONCLUDE with 2 Final Applications:**

1. ***Remember the Mercy of God….*** If you forget to prepare, and don’t have enough petrol – Just get petrol and go on to church! Certainly, don’t make a habit of it, but get the ox out of the ditch and Thank the Lord for His provision.

If you try to do some work of Mercy, or Hospitality and something happens and your plans fall through – It’s ok… You can try again next week – **Remember that this day is made for you to delight in serving God, so don’t get stressed out by your works of mercy/service, or even by your preparation for worship**. Instead, keep the joy of these things before your mind at all times, for that is the way you will most Glorify the Lord, and most enjoy the day!

1. **Finally,** *I have given you a lot of things to think about and to change in the way you arrange your week… and all of these habits are hard to begin… And so you need to ask yourself:* **How much of a priority is this?** *To Serve the Lord with all your strength?*Much of making worship a joy, and preparing to serve the Lord on this day comes down to this **– Do you love the Lord?**

**If we were talking about preparing for a trip overseas, or to your favorite holiday destination – you would be so keen to get ready and do all the packing and preparation… Because you Love the destination…**

**If you claim to Love the Lord, then you need to put that same amount of effort into planning and arranging your week so that you might Give the LORD your best on His Day.** *And That is also how you will find the greatest rest for your soul as well!*

**Amen.**