

## **TAKING THE DAY OFF WITHOUT ANY GUILT**

### **Exodus 20:8-11**

Good morning! We're on the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of our series on "Living a Fulfilled Life". We're looking at the 10 Commandments and what they mean for us today. Today, I'm going to talk about the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment. But shouldn't it be the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment? Well, I thought I'd switch the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup>. Tomorrow is Labor Day, it's a day of rest, and the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment is about taking a rest. So, I have to tweak this series a bit in order to make this message more relevant. I hope you're good with that. Ok? Besides, there's no commandment that says, "You shall not make the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment and vice-versa. Today, I have entitled this message, "Taking the Day Off Without Any Guilt".

Let me ask you, when you relax, do you ever feel just a little bit guilty because you know you ought to be doing things? Like tomorrow, it's Labor Day but you feel like you have to catch up on things at work. I've got good news for you this morning, because we're going to look at the antidote to that guilt. Today we're going to look at what God has to say about taking a day off. The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment is the longest commandment of all the ten. God says more about this than any other. He says more about taking a day off than he does about murder or adultery. Let's look at it together.

Read Exodus 20:8-11.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. What is a Sabbath? Well, it's that one day a week that God wants you to make special. The word Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word Shabbat and Shabbat simply means rest. That's all it means. Rest. Sabbath means rest. I rest my case... It's a day of rest. It's a day that God wants you to rest, every 7<sup>th</sup> day. Now why does God give it? Well look at Mark 2:27, Jesus says, let's read this together. "The Sabbath was made for man, not

man for the Sabbath.” Now the reason Jesus said it is because the Jews had so perverted it that it had become a bunch of rules and regulations and restrictions by the time of Jesus. Jesus said God made the Sabbath for your benefit. It's God's gift to you. God knows you need rest. He made you. And this is to prevent burn out. Somebody called this God's prescription for people under pressure. Take a day off. Every 7th day. Now, why 7<sup>th</sup> day, not 8<sup>th</sup> day or 9<sup>th</sup> day? Because it's perfect. God knows what's best for us.

You know, during the French Revolution, the radicals controlling France who were anti-Christians outlawed Sunday, everyone should work on Sunday. Instead of the 7<sup>th</sup> day, they required a rest every tenth day. The results were catastrophic. Production fell drastically. Work animals died by the thousands. Men lost their strength to work. The whole experiment had to be abandoned. Folks, God knows best.

Now the problem is that most of us either ignore the Sabbath or we pervert it by bringing in a bunch of rules and regulations and we turn a blessing into a burden just like what the Jews did in Jesus' time. The Jewish nation had figured out 1,521 things you should not do on the Sabbath. Like you couldn't prepare a meal on the Sabbath. You couldn't move a lamp on the Sabbath. You couldn't tie a knot on the Sabbath. You couldn't light a fire on the Sabbath. But you can hire a gentile to light it for you. You couldn't walk more than three thousand yards or feet from your home on the Sabbath. It's incredible. Also, you cannot look at a mirror fixed on the wall on the Sabbath. Guess they take down the mirror the day before the Sabbath. Sounds ridiculous, right? And, here's the kicker, because they're so afraid they're going to do something wrong, nobody can really relax on the Sabbath!

Now, Christians do the same thing. We have our little man-made rules and rituals, but the point is Jesus said the Sabbath was made to meet human needs.

God said, I made it for you because I want you to rest and recover. Now, when is the Sabbath? When is it? What day?

As we know in the Old Testament they worshipped God on the 7th day, on Saturday. But in the New Testament Christians began to worship on Sunday, the first day of the week because that was the day Jesus was resurrected and we call it the Lord's day. But look at what Paul says here in **Romans 14:5-6**. **“One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord.”** What's the point? The point is it doesn't matter what particular date you select on the calendar as much as you understand the principle that every seven days you were to have the day off and rest and worship and spend time doing something different. Some of you are saying “Rolly, I have to work on Sunday. Well, my question is, do you really have to? Do you have to? Yes, I do I have to. Okay simple. Pick another day. Pick another day for your Sabbath.”

Now, I want to talk to you this morning about what do you do on the Sabbath? I want to give you **Four things you can do on your Sabbath**. First I want you to notice in the ten commandments, it says remember the Sabbath. In other words keep it in mind don't forget it. Make it a priority. Don't skip it don't say well I'll put it off this week I'll just work this week. It says remember the Sabbath to keep it what? Holy. Now what does holy mean? **Holy simply means set apart**. Special. Unique. Separate. Different. God says, I want you to set apart one day where you can rest and relax and worship. What do you do on that day? How do you keep it holy? By doing the things God intended for you to do. It's good for you physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. How do you do it? Let me share with you the 4 things you can do on the Sabbath.

Number 1, the first thing you can do. Use the day to rest your body. Use the day to rest your body. Remember what that special word means. Sabbath. Rest. Now notice in Verse 10 he listed all these people, he said you shall not work, your son shouldn't work, your wife shouldn't work your maidservants, animals shouldn't work. Get the point? God is saying I want this to be perfectly clear. No work. Now the word in Hebrew for work is melakah which literally means occupation or business. What you do for a living. Your labor. He says one day a week you get off your desk. One day a week you take a total change of pace. You rest your body. Guess what I'm going to do after the service? Sleep. I believe God wants me to sleep and he will give it. It has biblical basis. Psalm 127:2, "*He grants sleep to those he loves.*" Folks, there we have a Biblical basis for a Sunday afternoon nap. All right? Don't you feel better now? He's saying whatever do you for a living, stop it one day a week, totally forget it, as a result you'll have more energy, more productivity when you go back to work. Efficiency experts know this. Work breaks increase productivity.

Now look at Psalm 23:2, "*He makes me lie down in green pastures.*" Let me ask you a question. Has God ever had to make you lie down? How many of you say that God has made me lie down sometimes. Yeah. "God, I don't have the time, I can't be sick right now. I can't rest right now. You don't know what's happening, you don't know the deadlines I have. People are waiting on me. There's too much work to be done. I can't rest. I've got to work today..." And God says, you're going to lay down, whether you like it or not.

You know, I discovered that workaholics who never take a day off eventually make up for it with two weeks in the hospital. It's just kind of a cumulative effect. God says use the day to rest your body. Some of you say, But you know, Pastor Rolly, when I relax I think of all the things I've got to do and I feel so guilty". Jesus never felt guilty about taking a break. Folks, even God took

a day off. Who are you? Well, if you put it that way. Even God. God considered it so important he uses himself as an example. He says I took the day off now you do the same thing. You rest. Rest your body every 7th day. You know I discovered that people who don't ever rest their bodies, who continually work, it's a mark of insecurity and immaturity. Immaturity. How do you mean? Have you ever noticed that kids hate to go to sleep? Some of you parents know that. They argue with you. They'll argue, I don't want to go to bed. You need your rest. I don't want to go. The last thing an immature person wants is to rest, is to sleep. Some of you have not been taking a day off. And you're not fit to live with. Ask your mate. You've become cranky and grouchy and uptight because as soon as church is over, you're going to go home and work on stuff. Then it continues to tomorrow which is supposed to be Labor Day, I mean non-labor day, non-work day. Use the day to rest your body.

**Number 2, Use the day to recharge your emotions.** Now how many of you agree that stress drains you emotionally? It does, doesn't it? People in America are always in a hurry. We all need periodic time breaks for inspiration and even counseling to get our pot refilled to get our emotions recharged because we're constantly being drained.

Now how do you recharge your emotions? Let me give you **three things from God's word that I think help you to recharge your emotions.** You ought to use these things on your Sunday or your Sabbath whenever it is. These are things that will recharge you emotionally.

**Number one, quietness.** Quietness. You know there's so much noise pollution we just need to be quiet. The Bible says, "...in quietness and trust is your strength". (Isaiah 30:15) Also, the Bible says, **"Be still and know that I am God". (Psalm 46:10)** My favorite verse. And look at this verse in Psalm 23:2b-3a, **"He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul."**

If you're a nature-lover, you'll find this to be true. If not, better try it. You get out in nature, you get by a cool calm river or stream or lake and get out there, just be quiet. Isn't that refreshing? Doesn't that restore your emotions? People say, "Why do I feel close to God in nature?" Because man was made from a garden. When God made man he put him in a garden with water, trees, and rivers. That's why when we build our church, we're going to put prayer gardens all around so people can go out there and just walk and get refreshed and restored. Amen? Kuya Rey, Amen? No pressure, Kuya Rey. Just relax and rest.

He leads me beside quiet waters. Just be quiet. Turn off the TV. Turn off your phone. Just have a quiet time. It ought to be part of your Sabbath. Jesus says the Sabbath was meant for man. Why? Number one, to rest your body. And you know, Jesus doesn't even mention worship. Do you know that? Also, in the Ten Commandments, God says rest. He didn't mention worship. We'll get to that. But it says rest your bodies. Recharge your emotions. Why? Because you need it. You do it through quietness. Some of you use another source of inspiration.

**Family.** Spend time with your family on Sunday, or Saturday or whenever you take your Sabbath. Spend time with your family. I think that is a legitimate use of the Sabbath.

You know in American history a hundred years ago even 50 years ago, Sundays in America had two purposes. Number one, Sundays were for church and number two Sundays were for family. I think that was part of the strength of this nation. The people spent time in worship and with their families and Sunday was a quiet day. In Australia, years ago and I don't know now, shops and department stores and restaurants are closed on Sunday, not only Chick-Fil-A because they wanted families to spend time together in the park, at home, etc. I think America was strong because they spent time in those two things, in worship and with family. What am I saying? I'm saying plan special time with your family.

Do things that bring your family together on Sunday. Husbands talk to your wives and play with your kids on Sunday. I think there's a legitimate use of our Sabbath spending time with our families.

Then **number 3, fellowship**. Fellowship is another way to recharge your emotional batteries. We just draw strength from being together. **Hebrews 10:25 (NLT), "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another"**. You see, there's no such thing as the lone ranger Christian. We need each other. We need encouragement. We need to be together to encourage each other to inspire each other as believers. You won't make it very long in the Christian life if you don't have Christian friends. Have you ever heard anybody say this? Oh, I don't need to go to church. I can worship God in nature. Have you ever heard that? They're partly true. It's true you can worship God in nature. In fact some of my most meaningful worship times have been out in nature because you do get close to God. I see his creation and I feel close to God. Yes, I could worship just as well out in nature as I do in this hall. But, you can't fellowship in nature. You need Christians. And you come on Sundays not just for worship, but for fellowship and we build each other up.

You know, as I read through the New Testament it amazes me how often, in fact, in the book of Acts it mentions that Christians ate together. They ate all of their meals together. It was incredible. They're always eating. Like us. We like to eat, not only sing. I'm looking for the day when we restore the fellowship meal after every service. I know we have to limit it for now. But in our home groups, it's not a home group if there's no fellowship meal, right? Now, preparing a meal can be tiring and exhausting. I understand. You know what the Bible says in Proverbs? 11:30, you want to write this down. It says this. **"He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."** In other words when you give out you will always get more back.

And when you give out you will always find yourself saying, boy I'm glad we did that. I'm glad we took the effort, call them up and invite those people over. And that's a spiritual recharger. Quietness ought to be a part of your Sunday. Family ought to be a part of your Sunday. And fellowship ought to be a part of your Sunday. Use the day to rest your body, use the day to recharge your emotions.

Now, going back to another purpose of the Sabbath, **number 3. Use the day to relax your mind.** The reason many people are so stressed out is because their minds are preoccupied with so many things. They have problems and they worry and fret and are anxious about all things that are going on in their lives. That's a recipe for disaster. You have to relax, get back your bearings. Do you notice that when you're struggling with a problem, you stop thinking about it, that the solution comes? That happens to me in my job. There's a bug in my program, and I've been trying to find the solution, so I get up, take a break, maybe take a walk, and that's when the solution hits me. The Bible says, **"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you."** (Isaiah 26:3 ESV). When you're at peace, when your mind is relaxed, that's when you become creative and resourceful, right?

**And number 4, Use the day to refocus your spirit.** Tune in to God. **Psalm 122:1 says, "I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."** Is that how you felt this morning? Or did you feel grumpy or grouchy or crabby? Sunday is predominantly a day to worship. It's a day to tune in to God. It's a day to reclarify our values. It's a day to get our focus back in order and say what's really important and look at our priorities and stop and say Lord, you're really the reason for this. If you weren't here I wouldn't even be alive. And everything that I have God is really yours because you've allowed me to have it. The thing to remember is that we focus not on just our physical needs and emotional needs, but on our spiritual needs. Now obviously you're here because



you're focusing on spiritual needs. But it's amazing to me how many people on Sunday take care of their physical needs. They shop till they drop. Or they sweat it out in the gym. And that's going to be their Sunday. That's it. Some people take care of their emotional needs. They'll do fun things. They'll relax. They'll play with their family. That's great in its proper place. And they'll take care of emotional needs, physical needs, but they forget the most important need in their life, they're spiritual need. Oh, you know we can't let God interfere with our Sunday plans. We're going to the mountains, we're going to the beach, we're going to the resort. We certainly wouldn't want to let God interfere. I mean it's only his day.

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. You say, "Pastor Rolly, shouldn't we have fun?" Yes. Of course, you should have fun.

Thing is, people have turned Sunday into fun day. We've turned a holy day into a fun day. And it's sad, but a lot of our churches are half empty because everybody knows that the mall is more important than the Bible. And golf is more important than God. Make it a day to refocus your spirit. You tune in to the Lord. And for Christians, our priority is if anything else gets done, this has got to get done first.

Our first priority on the Sabbath is worship. We will spend time with God. We will give God the first part of the first day of every week and remind ourselves to say, God, you are first in my life. Because you I am grateful for the gift that you have given me, my health, the freedom we have in America, the finances we have to do things, God, you are so blessed because you bless us. And everything you do is an offering to God. You don't have to sit in church all day to make it holy. I don't believe that. But I do think it ought to be the first thing in our lives. When we focus on it in prayer we look at God's word and we continue today with this attitude of gratitude to the Lord. And you really relax. You don't need a half day,

you need a full day of rest. You don't come to worship and then go home and turn on your computer. Or if you're at home all week and you're doing laundry you don't need to do laundry on Sunday. It can wait. I hope. And you just do a little extra planning. God says if I took a day off, you ought to as well.

Now fathers, here is a biblical area where you would provide spiritual leadership for your family. And that is in your faithfulness to worship. I have a friend who I admire because of his diligence in worship. When his family is on a vacation away from home and it's Sunday, he will treat it just like any Sunday, meaning, he will look for a church nearby and bring his family to worship. He finds that staying in the cottage and doing devotions and singing is not enough. Like something is missing. That's why if he can help it, he wouldn't fly or make a road trip on a Sunday because it takes away that time of worship with other believers.

Now, I've noticed with three kids that I don't have to tell my kids my priorities. They will pick them up easy enough. They will pick them up simply by looking at what's important to me. The way I spend my time. And if I have a casual attitude towards the Lord, like I say, "Well, kids, we don't need to go to church today, we're on vacation. What do you think my kids' attitudes are going to be?" But if I say, "Kids, this is most important, Sundays are first to the Lord. Then they're going to think first of the Lord, then the family and then fellowship.

So, I'd like to be a model. In my attitude, I'm constantly asking myself, Lord, is my work or my worship most important? What am I communicating to my kids? Am I a casual Christian or am I a committed Christian?

You know, proper maintenance equals maximum performance. Now that's true of human beings too. God says, proper maintenance equals maximum performance. And fortunately, we have an owner's manual. And the owner's manual for your life says every 7th day you take off. And you'll last a lot longer.

The Sabbath was made for man, for your benefit to avoid burn out, for longevity. You'll be healthier, you'll have more emotional maturity, you'll be closer to the Lord, you'll be a stronger Christian. God gave us the Sabbath for our benefit. You say, well what do you want me to do? I want you to make a commitment this morning to say we're going to take Sundays seriously. You say, Lord, we're going to take this serious. We're going to use it to rest our body. We're going to use it to recharge our emotions. We're going to use it to refocus our spirit to tune in to the Lord and worship him.

Now, let me direct you to Colossians 2:16 and 17. This is important. Take note. *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

What does that say about the Sabbath? It's saying that as New Testament Christians we are not bound to all the ceremonial laws that the Jews had to observe on the Sabbath. We're not bound to all of those things about where you could walk and what you were to do in those kinds of things. They were a shadow of the things to come. What is the thing to come? Jesus Christ.

You see, ultimately your rest is found in the person. The person of Jesus Christ. He is our Sabbath. And when you have a relationship to him, he gives you rest, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, physically. Jesus says in **Matthew 11:28-30**, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

If you're carrying a burden that is too heavy for you, you're not in the will of God. You're not in God's will. God says my burden is light. And what happens is we start trying to play God and take a burden that God never intended for us to bear in the first place.

And when we assume responsibility that really is God's, that's called worry. Now I've said relax. I can't think of a better way to begin this day, this Sabbath, this Sunday, than to give your life to Christ if you've never done that. Begin a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Let him come into your life and release all of the fatigue with his strength.

Now some of you came to church this morning and you are tired. You barely got out of bed today. Some of you are not only tired, you're tense. You're troubled. You're under tension. You're at the end of your rope and God knows you needed to be here today. So if he motivated you to get up and come, then he has a message for you. I want to challenge you to take your Sundays seriously or if you have to work Sundays, I mean you really have to, there are obviously doctors and firemen and nurses and there are jobs that have to be done on Sunday. If so, fine. Choose another day. But you need one day a week to rest. You say, Lord, I want to use it to rest my body and I want to use it to recharge my emotions. It's time for quietness. It's time with my family. You don't have a family, spend time with fellowship. You can spend all your family time with fellowship. Then Lord, help me to refocus my spirit. You know our windows get pretty clogged up and get clogged during the week. Sunday is time to wipe or windshield clean. You say Lord, help me to realize that the things that are really important, focus on you. If you've never invited Jesus Christ into your heart, he says I want to come in and I want to give you strength, power, peace, purpose. You say Jesus Christ, as much as I know how come into my life and I want you to be my director, my Lord. I need energy. Give me your strength Lord, to live for you. If you prayed that prayer in your heart, in a minute when we close would you let me know about it? I want to send you some material this week to help you with your decision. Father, I thank you for this passage we read this morning. It's a very simple message about a very simple truth and yet it can have such an impact on our lives if we simply follow it. Help us to make Sundays a holy day, not just a holiday. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.