***So Which Commandment Do You Break The Most?***

I am not asking for anyone to raise his or her hand, nor will I become nervous when I see someone scrambling for a Bible or a Prayer Book just to have a “gentle reminder.” Although people have some very strong opinions about which Commandments, when broken, cause the most trouble….let’s check out the Fourth Commandment. I realize that the Puritans had particular views about enforcement, but just for a moment can you think about who is hurt when we don’t keep “the Sabbath.” (I will let Sabbatarians begin their lecture, here...) BUT what happens, for the sake of the argument, when Christians don’t keep holy the Lord’s Day?

 Here is where people begin humoring me, as I tell that “when I was a boy…..” Stores were not open. Gas stations were not open. No athletic contests, practices, rehearsals, meetings, etc. really ever occurred. Frankly my many Jewish friends liked Sundays because they worshiped on Saturdays but they went to Hebrew School with their friends on Sunday mornings. There were the “blue laws” which have nothing to do with, obviously, one of God’s favourite colors (look at the sky…unless you were brought up in Pittsburgh, where our brownish haze meant that Dad had a job.) In my neighborhood I can still tell you the names of the very few people who did not go to church on Sunday (agnostics and atheists would be too embarrassed to mention that. It just usually meant that they had no reason to celebrate some special feast days and a somewhat rationalized excuse for sleeping in.). Then after being in church, people visited their relatives. They didn’t call; they just showed up, and Sunday was pot roast or spaghetti day anyway….and there was always enough. (Water, by the way came from the faucet or a sprinkler head, and plastic was….I don’t remember any.). I have often wondered what my Dad would say if he were alive today and heard that water was for sale in bottles. My Dad would have said that this must be a scam and that “someone’s pulling your leg.”

 The main word of the day was relaxation, after cooking and using the dish washer (one of the kids.). The other word for the day would be enjoyment. I know that I am not fantasizing or having selective memory when I remember the joy of being with my parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and godparents. Sundays were the day for real “face time.”

Now in the name of “freedom” just think about what people do (or don’t do) on Sundays. Now I can name people in a neighborhood who do go to church, and I can hear people saying (as if it were an original thought) that Sunday is the only day they can “sleep in” or “Catch up on sleep.” Are there really people who believe that anyone can really “catch up?” I mean, once it’s gone, it’s gone. You don’t get it back. Are we a more relaxed culture? When we shop on Sundays do we prevent a clerk from being able to go to church? After all they have no choice…if they need the money; and how many Christians keep other Christians from being able to celebrate the Freedom of worship? So much for freedom - as long as I have it - freedom for others is not as important.

 In the end, God can be God whether or not we keep the sabbath holy. God can still be God if we do not go to church on a Sunday morning. But the question is can we be the children of God that He intended us to be when He told us that we all need a break in the action? Maybe it was more than a Commandment for us to follow what was given. Maybe He demonstrated that even the Creator needed to rest from six days of creating**.** Our Creator has given us the gift of freedom to rest on Sundays. Some freedoms can one day be lost, and the result can be being enslaved to a culture, waking up “in a city that never sleeps.”