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Go and make disciples!

E-votional 84

The Lord Who Sanctifies You

Exodus 31:12-13 (ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses, "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.'

I really enjoy it when the Lord reveals spiritual truths from Old Testament examples in the Scriptures. This one in particular has to do with the Sabbath and how it is so much more than a day of the week. Now, in saying that, I do believe having a day of physical rest each week is extremely important. However, for the sake of this teaching, I want to focus on the sabbath of entering into the rest of God through Jesus Christ and the work of sanctification for the believer.

I previously did a teaching about the importance of holiness and perfection in the life of the believer. Being holy as the Lord is holy and striving for this in prayer and faith is extremely important. I cannot state it enough of how we need to be a holy people and turn away from evil and sin in this life. Praise God that He does not leave us to do this in our own strength. While this is true we are participants through His grace and power to be made just like Jesus and to shine as lights in this twisted generation.

Today, we will learn that it is the Lord who is the one who sanctifies us and that by His Spirit, not by works done by us, but by His Spirit at work within us. To get this out of the way before we dive in, I would like to say that we still have a role to play in sanctification, but it has nothing to do with the actual change that is wrought within us. The role we play is participation. That's right we get an award just for participating! Praise the Lord!

Let me explain by pointing out the part in the chosen verse that says, "*for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.*" One point here of the Sabbath for God's people was that they were commanded to not work on one day of the week. The point I want to

illustrate in this is that it was a sign because it would show the nations around them the faith they have in God. The Sabbath meant that since God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh, so should His people. It was not only a testimony to creation which many avoid but it showed the Israelites faith in God.

Let us recall the wilderness excursion of the Israelites. When God gave them manna from heaven He gave an amount that they should gather for each day if they gathered too much, whatever they had would turn to mold. Also, on the sixth day, they were commanded to gather enough for the Sabbath so they would have the day to rest in God and His provisions. One way this would be a sign to other nations would be to show that God was their provider and they only had to trust in Him for their provision. In short, there was nothing the people of God could do to earn the manna, they simply participated in obedience with how God commanded them to gather it. You see the work was already done for them. Are you tracking with me?

The Sabbath rest for us today is found in Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross. There is nothing we can do to earn it, but we do participate in walking it out in obedience. You see the work was already done for us. Let us just take a look at John 7:21-24 (ESV),

Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

The point to receive in this passage is twofold. One, Jesus referenced the circumcision and how the Jews circumcise someone even on the Sabbath if it falls on it so that the Law of Moses would not be broken. Circumcision on males was to happen eight days after one was born. So if that eighth day fell on the Sabbath so be it, they still did it. Yet here they are chastising Jesus for healing a man completely on the Sabbath.

The second part is referring to the idea of eight days. We think of the number eight in biblical terms as being the number of new beginnings. An interesting thought to connect with all of this is that New Testament circumcision is not a matter of the flesh but of the heart as found in Romans 2:29 (ESV),

But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

So the Sabbath of God for us today is linked to the finished work of the cross and the new beginning of being circumcised in the heart by the Spirit of God. We also call this the new birth or being made into a new creation. You see the work was already done for everyone!

The point is this, that we are mere participants in the finished work and by ceasing from our own works as God did from His we do enter the Sabbath rest of God through Christ Jesus. A further point for this teaching is to encourage the people of God to enter that Sabbath and rest in Him so that He alone can do the sanctifying as promised. We can add nothing, our only role is participation through obedience to Him and His leading.

I have to let out a great big sigh of relief personally! I say it this way because what a joy it is to know that I don't have to fix myself. I can simply come to the cross through the faith that God provides and enter into the Sabbath rest.

Another interesting note along these lines is that while God created everything in 6 days and rested on the seventh. Did you know that God created Adam last? So, God created everything on earth and in the sea and in the heavens and after all of that created Adam on the sixth day. Therefore, the first command of God to Adam was to rest on the seventh day. Hallelujah! I hope you are getting this!

So, Jesus, He makes a man completely whole the Scriptures say on the Sabbath. He finishes His discourse with the Jews on this subject by saying, "*Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.*" I think what we can learn from this was that the Jews Jesus was talking to were only fixated on keeping a written law, but Jesus was foreshadowing the coming of the Spirit and the complete work He would do in the heart on mankind. Praise the Lord!

Well, there is surely much more to say on the subject of entering the Sabbath of God. But we pray that this was the fill you needed for now and that the Lord would bless you immensely and abundantly as you seek Him and His Kingdom and righteousness first, and so let everything else be added to you in Jesus name. Amen

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In Christ's Love,
Chris and Jeanne
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