

BIBLE SMASH!

Study: Exodus 31:12-17, Mark 2:23-28

Memorize: Exodus 20:8-11

Notes:

Analyze: The background information...

Topic: The Sabbath

General Information on the Sabbath

The Sabbath is the day of the week in which one rests from work. Later, after the exodus from Egypt it became a festival of celebration, with Temple visits, songs, and special foods. There were even restrictions on how much animals and servants could work on the Sabbath. Traditionally the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday and the Christian Sabbath is Sunday (because Jesus rose from the dead on this day and so that it would not be associated with the Jewish Sabbath).

As time went on from the time of the exodus to the time of Christ many priests and lawmakers kept adding more and more laws about what could not be done on the Sabbath such as, one could not trade on the Sabbath, harvest on the Sabbath, or even talk about one's business or company on the Sabbath. In some interpretations there were as many as 1521 things you could not do on the Sabbath! Due to the amount of rules about the Sabbath it became more difficult to rest and worship on the Sabbath because individuals became more concerned with "Are you breaking a law?" than with "This is the God I worship that has provided for me and given me a day to rest so that I may worship him fully and rest fully in his grace and glory." About the only time any of these laws could be broken is when it involved doing

something to save a life - animal or human. In this instance, breakers of the law were held innocent because they had saved a life.

To make up for the burden of all these rules and to try and put a positive view back on to the Sabbath great meals were to be prepared (the day before) and eaten on the Sabbath. To further enjoy this great meal of indulgence, individuals were encouraged to eat sparingly the day before, which would have been Friday. Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and lasts until sundown on Saturday. Two loaves of bread should be provided at the meal to represent the double portions of manna that the Lord provided to the Israelites during the time of the exodus, and one should walk in a distinctive manner and even use special speech.

Today, in America, there are almost no laws pertaining to the Sabbath (Sunday). It should still be a time of 1) rest from work and 2) to worship our Lord. However many of us are so busy that we don't take the time to observe the Sabbath as the Lord meant for it to be observed. Some of us work so much that we don't even take a day off from work at all (including sports and homework for younger people).

Exodus 31:12-17

This is the seventh and final time that God talks to Moses from the

mountain. Unlike the previous time, God is not concerned with anything priestly or liturgical, only with the keeping of the Sabbath. This commandment is one that will set Israel apart from the rest of the cultic world. Taking a day to participate in the joy, well-being and power of God's own life.

Why is the Sabbath so important that those that do not follow it will be put to death? The background for this is that the Israelite have just left Egypt where they were slaved under Pharaoh seven days a week. Anyone who does not take a break from work will end up back in slavery (you then become a slave to your work). The Sabbath, in part, is to keep you from slavery. Also, to work on the Sabbath is to try to gain additional wealth (or get ahead). You are implying to God that you don't need a break - that you are self sufficient - that you don't need God. You are working to benefit your self - you are putting yourself before God. You are stealing from God's time.

In verse 17 it talks about observing the Sabbath forever. There should not be a point in time in which we do not desire to spend the time God has given us for rest to do something else. Forever is, well, forever... for every generations that was, is, and will be. The rest is not to get ready for the next day's or week's work but to relax from the past 6 days of work. Like the Lord did after the creation in Genesis. It's the reward at the end of the week! Also verse 17 talks about God being refreshed. Even God took a break for the work of creation to catch up and feel revitalized. If God takes a break after working hard than surely we should take a

break after working hard. This is a time when God receives "energy" from us as we spend time with him and worship him. Like the way we can feel uplifted when we spend time with those we love the most. We share our energy with each other.

Mark 2:23-28

The conflict here is that, according to the current rabbinical laws, it was okay for the disciple to glean (pick-up grain that had fallen to the ground during harvest but that had not been collected) and eat grain but it was not okay for the disciples to pick the grain (harvest it) and eat it. (references Deut. 23:25, and Exod. 34:21)

David was exempt from the rules about eating the bread at the Temple (which was to be set aside for Aaron and his descendants) because he (David) was doing the work of the Lord. If these rules can be exceptioned for David how much more do these rules not apply to Jesus - the son of God (and those that follow him)

With Jesus' response in verse 27 he was implying that any person can make up a bunch of rules for the Sabbath - and in doing so think that man "made" the Sabbath because he made all the rules for the Sabbath. Meaning; If I make up all the rules for it I made it.

Here is an example: In creating all the rules associated with Monopoly Charles Darrow is credited for creating the game of Monopoly. A similar version of the game already existed. He borrowed ideas from it and marketed the game. The Sabbath already exists before mankind

created all the rules to go with it. Just because they created the rules for the Sabbath doesn't mean they created the Sabbath. God created it. And other than telling us that it is a day of rest God doesn't give much other instructions for it. Don't work and don't let your animals or servants work. All the other instructions come from us (mankind).

Jesus is not trying to make more rules for the Sabbath. Jesus is simply stating that the Sabbath was not intended to be a rule that you follow but that it was set up for our well being and health. God created the Sabbath as a gracious gift to release humans from the necessity of endless toil. Jesus shows that David had need and was hungry. Human need should take precedence over regulations. The disciples do not need to worry about appearing non-religious while doing God's work - there will be plenty of other Sabbaths to keep holy

everything else that needs to be done... even if this means lowering ones standards of living to rest with God. Although, personally, I hardly see resting with God as lowering my standards of living - if anything it's raising my standards of living! It's a disengagement from power and wealth.

Exodus 20:8-11

The fourth commandment is just to take a day of rest to remember what God has done for you. It is totally about work stoppage and not about worship. And, each landowner is to provide for everything under his dominion during that day so that they too may have a Sabbath. God is not a "workaholic" so neither should we be. It applies to everyone, men, women, children, rich, poor, animals... everyone.

The Sabbath should not be added to everything else that needs to be done. But requires the "breaking from"

Share: Is there anything that you have learned that you would like to share with others or anything that have learned from listening to someone else share? Write it here...

Honor: Thought on Sabbath

...It means to rest in the grace of a God who says, "You were once slaves and you made bricks for the pharaoh, but I brought you out of that so that you might be free to rest in the fact that I do the work of forgiveness."

-Rob Bell

Leader's Guide: Questions for discussion...

Exodus 31:12-17

- 1) What are some of the most expensive items we have in our houses? (car, stereo, TV...) Name some items we have more of than one? (stereo, shoes, CD's) What does it take to get all these items? (money) What do we have to do get that money? (work) What does too much work cause? (stress - which can effect attitudes and relationships)
- 2) Are there thing from the lists you made in question 1 that you could either a) get rid of totally or b) have a less expensive version of? If yes, which ones and why?
- 3) How would you define the Sabbath?
- 4) Make a list of things we should or should not do on the Sabbath. How well do you, and you family, obey this list you have made?
- 5) Make a list of what God has said to do or not do on the Sabbath based on the verses you have read. How does this list compare to the one you made about what you should or should not do on the Sabbath? Is your list longer or shorter (probably longer)? Do you have "rules" that God does not have?
- 6) What if your grandparents had certain "rules" about the Sabbath, then your parents added a couple, then you added a couple - each of you with the intention of helping others know how to take a Sabbath's rest? (allow the students to discuss this then explain: This is an example of what the priests used to do to help Israel keep the Sabbath. The intention of these rules was to help, but as time passed and new priests kept adding more and more rules they became more of a hindrance than a help.)
- 7) Why do you think some people don't have time for Sabbath? (note: As long as we thrive as a consumer based people always trying to have or achieve more there will never be time for Sabbath. There is always something more we can do to get ahead)

Mark 2:23-28

- 1) What do you think the big deal was with the disciples picking grain and eating it on the Sabbath? Do you ever go grocery shopping on the Sabbath, or prepare a meal on the Sabbath? Is that okay to do? (you may get varied answers - let them discuss it)

2) Do we have any rules or laws about what we can and an not do on the Sabbath? What are they? (you may have already answered this with the previous question 5) Do these rules affect how you rest with God? If so how?

3) Explain this statement: "Resting with God is a condition of the heart." How does this apply to the Sabbath?

Exodus 20:8-11

1) What gender or social class does this commandment pertain to? (all)

2) If we do not work on the Sabbath, and potentially lose 1/7th of what we could earn, will our standards of living fall? Explain your answer. (you may get varied answers - let your students discuss their answers with each other)

3) What do we gain by observing the Sabbath? (time with God) If we gain time with God, instead of possible money earned, then do our standards or living actually improve or lesson? Explain your answer (hopefully your students will now say that time with God will improve their standards of living. If they do not, point out the importance of our spirituality and that if our relationship with God improves that should be worth more than the money we may have earned if we had worked that one extra day. This may also be a good time to talk about daily devotions - time with God improves our relationship with God - that's worth something big!)

General Question

1) What are some changes in our lives (each student, personally) that we can make so that we have time for Sabbath? Each student may have different answers - that's fine. It should be that way as this is personalizing the goal of the Bible SMASH.

Credit

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