

Redeeming Our Sundays (2)

July 25, 2010

I. Introduction

- A. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; Acts 20:1-11
- B. A conviction rooted in a command from God, motivated by love for God.

II. Reasons Why We Need to Redeem Sundays

- A. We should all make Sunday worship in our local church and then soul and body refreshment throughout the Lord's Day our weekly practice unless providentially hindered.
- B. Review:
 - 1. Because Sabbath rest and Lord's Day worship are God's gifts to us!
 - 2. Because God does epic things on Sundays!
 - 3. Because God lives where his people gather.
 - 4. Because the Spirit falls upon and fills the gathered church.

III. Remaining reasons:

- A. Because the world will squeeze it right out of existence if we let it.
 - But the god of this world—Satan—in keeping with his overall plan to squeeze all that is good out of this world has filled this world more and more with busyness and noise—and he's gone after Sundays with a vengeance! We must resist the devil and the world at this point!
- B. Because our modeling of what matters most—to our children, younger believers and unsaved family and friends—is compromised if we do not.
 - By not seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness in this matter, the people around us are confused. Though our words profess the priority of God in our lives, our choices often belie and deny those words.
- C. Because absences weaken our congregational witness and guest hospitality.
 - Texts like 1 Corinthians 14:25 and James 2:1ff indicate that unbelievers and guests will often visit the local church and be impacted by what goes on. And Jesus said that people will know that we are his disciples by the way we love one another (John 13:35). This means that when people see us together, as the church—worshiping him, singing with joy, praying with faith, loving and enjoying one another with grace, greeting each other with holy affection, and simply being the church—they will be affected!
- D. Because we need communion with Christ and with each other around the Lord's Table.
 - The Bible teaches that frequent observance of the Lord's Supper is vastly important since it provides us needed frequent opportunities: (1) to clear our consciences through self-examination and preparation for the meal (1 Corinthians 11:27-32), (2) to focus on the cross through proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), (3) to enjoy the real spiritual presence of Christ in close communion (1 Corinthians 10:16), and (4) to renew our covenant of love and grace with him (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
- E. Because shepherds and sheep belong together.
 - Acts 20:28 tells us that the Holy Spirit makes certain men shepherds over specific flocks. And 1 Peter 5:1-3 makes it clear that pastors receive a specific "charge"—that is, a specific responsibility for specific people! This means that the matching up of spiritual shepherds and sheep is more a divine choice than a personal one!!
 - And then 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13 tells sheep to "respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you—and to esteem them very highly because of their work;" while Hebrews 13:17 exhorts sheep to "obey their leaders and submit to them—for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will give an account."

- It should become a top priority for sheep to be present when shepherds teach, when they preach, when they admonish, when they do their work, when they feed and, in fact do watch over their souls! Sheep must be there unless providentially hindered to both hear what they say and then obey and submit to it!
- F. Because every member of the local body needs every member of the local body.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 makes it clear that every member of the body needs every member of the body. Every member is gifted to serve other members! Given what the Bible says about the necessity of each hand, foot, toe, etc., every member surely must be cautious in his choices regarding attendance. What the Bible says about each member needing each member, should make absence on Sundays very much a greater-need-only matter.
- G. Because we are at war, and people at war do not get casual about such things.
- I'm talking about a war to conquer sin within, and to keep from being hardened by its deceitfulness, and to resist the world and the devil, and to preserve our marriages and our purity and our passion and our witness, and to win a hostile world of people Christ through the power of the gospel and our holy and love-filled lives, and finally, to fight for God in the cause of his kingdom and glory through our witness and walk!!
1. The enemy is using two great strategies in the world today: persecution and prosperity.
 - there is a danger worse than death, it is the weakening and deceiving and hardening of the heart by fear and isolation and sin, and the risk that persecution and other factors might tempt us to be so hardened!
 2. Passages like Acts 2:46 and Hebrews 3:12, 13 call for very frequent, seldom neglected fellowship and worship within a local church.

IV. Conclusions