



This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.

His Word Is Truth!

Today we examine God's 3rd Commandment as found in Exodus 20:8, which reads: **"Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it Holy!"** In Exodus 20:9-11 God tells His people to rest from their work on the 7th Day because God created the world in 6 days and then rested on the 7th Day (see Genesis 1:31-2:3). God did not rest because He was tired (God doesn't get tired!); God rested because He was FINISHED! His completed creation was perfect! God then declared that every 7th day was to be a holy reminder for us that God is

our Creator and that all we need comes from Him -- *especially the knowledge of good and evil (see Genesis 2:15-17)!* Blessing the 7th Day was God's way of reminding us that we must trust in His Word alone!

Therefore, the 3rd Commandment is NOT primarily about physical rest (although God does care about our physical needs – see Matthew 6:31-32). God commanded His Old Testament people to rest from their work on the 7th Day because their rest was a picture of God's rest on the 7th Day – *a weekly sign that God is our Creator and that we must trust His Truth that sets us free (see Genesis 3:1, Matthew 6:31 & John 8:31-32).*

Why would God give this Commandment? He wanted us sinners to recognize that we do NOT trust in God's Word! Adam and Eve were sinless, but things did not stay that way. The devil tempted them to doubt God's Word. They turned their

backs on God and they "died," that is, they died spiritually (their physical death would not come for hundreds of years later!). In other words, they no longer loved God or trusted Him. We are conceived with the same spiritual death! Therefore, our physical death is a sign that we are spiritually dead and enemies of God by nature (see Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 5:10 & 6:23a).

The 3rd Commandment shows us that we **ought** to love God and trust in His Word! Martin Luther gives this explanation of the 3rd Commandment: **"We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear learn it."** There's only one problem. WE SINNERS CAN'T DO IT! Spiritually dead people can't love God or trust His Word. What is our hope then? *Jesus, God's Son, is our Lord and Savior!* Jesus makes us New Creations!!

(See John 3:5, 2nd Corinthians 5:17-21 & Titus 3:3-5). Jesus has come to give us "rest" for our souls which are spiritually dead and burdened with sin (see Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus is God because He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (see Matthew 12:8). Jesus is also our Savior because He is our "Sabbath-Rest" (see Hebrews 4:1-16).

How did Jesus accomplish our salvation? At the end of the 6th Day, when Jesus' work of suffering for our sins was complete, He said: **"It is finished!"** (See John 19:30) Jesus then died, and "rested" from His work on the 7th Day – The Sabbath (John 19:31). Finally, on the 1st Day of the week (Sunday) Jesus conquered death and gave us the hope of New Creation – *which begins in those whom the Holy Spirit gives repentance and faith through God's Word!!* The Holy Spirit uses the 3rd Commandment to expose our sin of doubting God's Word. The Holy

2nd Spirit then uses the Good News of Jesus' work of salvation for us to give us new hearts that love God and trust His Word. Those who repent and trust in Christ are New Creations (see 2nd Corinthians 5:17-21).

God told His Old Testament people to rest on the 7th day because this was a picture of God's rest from His work in the PAST (after His work of *creation*) and in the FUTURE (after Christ's work of *salvation* on the cross). Now that Christ has replaced this picture with His completed work, God no longer commands His people to rest on the 7th Day (see Colossians 2:16-17 & Hebrews 10:1-18). Instead, God's mercy and love moves us to "rest" in His Word every day! In addition, even though we are free to attend public Church Services any day of the week (see Romans 14:1-9), many Christians throughout history have chosen to attend the public Services of God's Word on the 1st day (see

Acts 20:7) – *Sunday* – because this is the day Christ rose from the dead. Every Sunday Service is a celebration of the Lord's Resurrection and presence among us today through Baptism, the preaching of the Word and the Lord's Supper! Jesus is our "Sabbath-Rest!" Therefore, confess your sin of despising God's Word and trust in Jesus for "rest" – *the forgiveness of sin and eternal life with God in His New Creation!!*

Please read the next **"His Word is Truth"** on Monday, May 15th! Pastor Eckstein will continue the series on **The 10 Commandments** with the 4th Commandment: **"Honor your Father and Mother!"**

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's webpage: www.concordiajt.org
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