

Word notes Sunday 11/12/2011 Clare Reed
The Ten Commandments: 4

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Exodus 20:8-11

Reading the third commandment in isolation might lead you to think it's all about what you do and don't do on the Sabbath – or on a Sunday if you're a Christian. As a nation we have held an ideal to "Keep Sunday Special" that stood for some time and was famously challenged when the Sunday Trading Act of 1994 came into force. The Jews of Jesus time certainly observed the Sabbath as a different day, some went much farther taking a legalistic stand on what was "work" and what was not. In the end all they were doing was judging others, and of course putting themselves in a good light!

In order to fully understand Sabbath Rest we need to review the whole of scripture because the Sabbath is a subject of "progressive revelation" – a topic in the Bible where more understanding is gradually revealed by God through the course of His relationship with His people. Here's a brief set of highlights:

1, Gen 2:1-3. God makes the 7th day holy because He rested. Not because He was tired or needed rest but because His work was **complete**.

2, Ex 31:16-17. The Israelites were to celebrate Sabbath – a day of rest – as a sign of the covenant God made with them. It showed they **trusted** God to keep His promise. It was a sign for the Israelites, not a moral issue about working on a particular day.

3, Mk 2:23-28. The Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath – it's not about legalism. The Sabbath rest is meant to **bleed** man not rule over him. The Son of Man (Jesus) is Lord of the Sabbath.

4, Col 2:15-17. The Sabbath was a **shadow** of what was to come in Christ. On the cross (Jn 19:30) Jesus said "it is finished" – his work was complete.

5, Heb 4:9-11. The rest we now have is to **rest from striving**, from being lord of our life and allowing Jesus to be Lord. Rather than trying to be good enough we are made right through Jesus. We don't need to do any more. We rest from feeling guilty that we're not good enough or haven't done enough.

When Paul says we should "make every effort to enter this rest" it sounds odd – rest and effort? Like trying to go to sleep – difficult when your mind is buzzing with all kinds of things.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Do you have bedtime routines that help you sleep, what are they? What happens if you miss them out?

What does it mean to "make every effort to enter this rest"? Is it something we force ourselves to do, or does one result from the other?

Is this a new kind of legalism and striving or a result of God's grace? If it feels like the first do you think there may be something wrong with how you're going about it?

What efforts will you make to enter more fully into this rest and what fruit do you expect from it?

How, if at all, does Sabbath observance fit into the life of a Christian?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Be at the Carols by Candlelight on Parkers Walk Green 7:30pm Thursday 15th.