

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 5/3/2024

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

Why don't we worship on the Sabbath? According to Genesis 2:2-3, GOD rested after completing GOD's creative work. Genesis also tells us that the day begins in the evening followed by the morning. It was GOD's practice to meet with Adam and Eve in the "cool of the day," the evening so that they began their day with GOD. The Ten Commandments include an instruction to "remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." According to Jewish practice, the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. The Jews have strict laws about keeping the Sabbath including specific guidelines to avoid working on the Sabbath. When JESUS died on Friday, HIS body had to be removed from the cross and placed in a tomb before Saturday to avoid violating the Sabbath. But there hadn't been time to prepare HIS body for burial, so the women went to the tomb early on Sunday to do that work.

So, why don't we worship on the Sabbath? JESUS was challenged whenever HE healed someone on the Sabbath. Healing was work, so the religious leader felt JESUS violated that commandment. Yet Matthew, Mark, and Luke all refer to JESUS as "LORD of the Sabbath," meaning HE rules over the Sabbath. JESUS has authority even over the traditions and rules that guided the Sabbath because HE had created the Sabbath. The creator is always greater than the creation.

Nevertheless, the Jews worship on Saturday, the Sabbath. We worship on Sunday, the first day of the week. Why don't we worship on the Sabbath?

The answer is that we worship on Sunday because JESUS rose from the dead on Sunday. Saturday is the Sabbath, but Sunday is the LORD's Day. Each Sunday is considered a "little Easter", so we gather to celebrate our risen LORD again. Most Christian churches have their sanctuaries oriented with the altar to the east so we can look toward the SON-rise.

Some folks aren't able to worship on Sunday. They have jobs or responsibilities that keep them from being able to attend the worship services of GOD's House on Sunday. Pastors who lead worship on Sunday are "working" and often can't observe it as a day of rest and reflection on GOD. Still, the instruction to observe the Sabbath as a holy day provides helpful guidance. All of us need to find time to be with GOD in prayer and worship. It does not need to be on Sunday or Saturday, though opportunities to worship are more often available on these days. Nevertheless, extended time weekly focused on GOD is important for our faith and relationship with GOD. And daily time in devotion and prayer can center our days in the LORD.

In CHRIST's love,
Pastor Jeffrey