

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 2nd Sunday after Pentecost June 2, 1991

12Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 13Six days you shall labor and do all your work. 14But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. 15Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

I want to begin this morning with a song from my Sunday school days. I'll sing the verse, when I come to the chorus, all of you who know the chorus join me. And as you join me, think of the person you would want to hear this message today.

Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you;
Beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you.
God will take care of you, Thro' every day; O'er all the way;
He will take care of you, God will take care of you.

God will take care of you. How I like to say this to others, I believe it with all my heart. God will take care of you.

But what about me? Will God take care of that one too?

Jesus told this story: *The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, "What shall I do for I have nowhere to store my crops?" And he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods." And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"*

That's my story. God will take care of you, But me, I'm going to build some big barns. Don't worry, I'll say to you, but I'll spend the night racing through the paths of yesterday and tomorrow, frantically searching for a way that I can take care of me. Let my neighbors trust in God, I'll live my life in such a way that I won't have to trust in him.

For people like me, and I think for some of you, God gave this command: *Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not*

do any work, you or your son, or your daughter or your manservant or your maidservant or your ox or your ass or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

One day each week, while they were doing nothing, God's people were to remember what God had done for them. When they were helpless, slaves with no hope of liberation, the Lord freed them. He brought them out with the mighty hand and the outstretched arm.

One day each week, God commands his people to stop. Stop all our doing to remember his doing. We are commanded to gather here to remember how God has cared for his people.

A day for me to stop - and while I stop the sun still shines, and the grass still grows. God can keep things going without me, one day a week.

The Sabbath is a gift of God to help keep ourselves and the world in the right perspective. God will take care of me, that is what the Sabbath is about. He wants me to believe that, and know it and trust it with all my heart. He wants me to stop from all my work, so I can think about his works.

But by Jesus' day, and in our day as well, what God does for our good is so often distorted. Instead of remembering what God had done, the Pharisees of Jesus day made the Sabbath into a religious work, a day of counting how many steps a person could walk, a day of keeping track of every little deed a person did and a day of neighbor watching. So when Jesus' disciples picked a little grain as they walked along and ate it, the Pharisees objected. "Why are they doing what it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

Jesus defended his disciples. His word was in effect, "If they are hungry, let them eat." Yet Jesus himself did not pluck the grain.

When Jesus encountered a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, Jesus healed him. For himself, Jesus would not break the Sabbath, but for others, he would.

For himself, hungry in the wilderness, Jesus would not turn stones into bread, but for others, he multiplied the loaves and the fish.

To defend himself from death, Jesus would not speak a word at his trial, but for the woman caught in adultery, Jesus stood between her and the crowd and said, “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone,” and they went away.

Yet we continually do the opposite of our Lord. He did not sing, “God will take care of you,” – no, he healed the sick and the blind; he fed the hungry and sat at table with the outcasts. But he would build no barns for his tomorrow, but trusted fully in the care of God.

Yet we will build barns for our retirement, and our medical needs, wanting in every way to guarantee that we will never have to depend on God for this day's bread, while we say to our neighbor who is hungry today, God will take care of you. As we have lived in this world, we have not followed our Lord Jesus, but most often do precisely the opposite of what he did. Never do we want to live a Sabbath life, trusting in God for what we need, but all the hungry and the homeless and the poor we are more than ready to entrust to God.

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

God will take care of me. This is what the sabbath is all about. God will take care of me.

And what of you? Well, if we are going to follow Jesus, then it is time to empty the barns for our hungry neighbors. What I think I might need in twenty months or twenty years they need today. God will take care of me, so I am free to be his way of taking care of all those you's out there.

Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Every day of rest that you have, Stop! Remember what God has done, how God has provided, and then trust God with your very life. For Jesus who did just that was not disappointed. For God took care of him through life, and death and into life once more.

Confess with Jesus: God will take care of me.

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