

SPENDING TIME WITH A FRIEND

Is there anything better in life than spending time with friends?

It is one of life's greatest pleasures.

The memories of past times, the pleasures of the present, the anticipation of future gatherings, (especially the resurrection). Isn't that what life is all about? The Bible speaks of a friend who will stick by you closer than a brother (Prov 18:24). How would you describe a friend like that? Here's how the author, Charles Kingsley describes a friend.

DEFINITION OF A FRIEND

“A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend; one human soul whom we can trust utterly; who knows the best and the worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults; who will speak the honest truth to us, while the world flatters us to our face and laughs at us behind our back; who will give us counsel and reproof in the day of prosperity and self conceit; but who, again, will comfort and encourage us in the day of difficulty and sorrow, when the world leaves us alone to fight our battle as we can.”

Few there are who would fit that description entirely, but if you had a friend like that, wouldn't you want to spend as much time with him as possible? Maybe even set a regular time to meet somewhere and get together just for fellowship. My brother-in-law meets with a friend nearly every morning for coffee at Mc Donald's. Perhaps you have someone you meet with on occasion, and if you do, I'll bet you look forward to that

meeting with pleasant anticipation. You undoubtedly discuss a variety of topics, maybe even ask or offer some advice. And when you part, typically you feel lifted in spirit and better able to face the coming day. Of course, that's friendship.

Perhaps you or your friend don't quite measure up to Kingsley's description of a friend, but you still are blessed by your get-together. Oh, if only we were able to meet with someone who filled all the requirements of that description, what blessings we might receive.

OUR FRIEND

Come to think of it, we do know of one who fits that description and then some; one who loves us despite of our failings, is always ready to forgive and is a great help in time of need. If we could meet Him over coffee some morning perhaps we would hear something like this:

“You are mine; I created you. It was I that formed you in your mother's womb. I loved you then, and I love you now, for I have formed you in my image. I have great plans for you; wonders that will leave you wide-eyed and breathless for the thrill of it all. I have given you a brief view of life, a glimpse into eternity with all its marvels.

“I want to give life to you on a *permanent* basis; I want to give you *eternal* life, but it must be your choice. I will respect your wishes. You did not ask for life. I gave it to you free, without cost, with out obligation. Do with it as you will, for I have

given you free choice.

“The life I have given you comes with a promise. I promise that I will be with you through every hardship, disappointment, and pain. I will never leave you or forsake you, for you are my own handiwork, and I will raise you up on that last day and set you in a seat of honor at the marriage supper of the Lamb. You are mine and I love you.

“I am your advocate, a mediator between you and the Father; I represent you and plead your case before the Father. I am well qualified, because I came as flesh and have felt every pain, every disappointment, and every humiliation known to man. I am the first born and sit at my Father’s right hand, constantly reminding Him of your frailty, your needs, and your sorrows. I am the word spoken of in John 1 who was with the Father from the beginning and made all things.”

Can’t you imagine how many more things He would tell us if we could just meet with Him on a regular basis as we do with our buddies? But wait, we can! Isn’t there a special time that He set aside from the very beginning for that specific purpose? Why, of course, the seventh day.

He called it the Sabbath (which was synonymous with seven and rest to the Jews), and it was made especially for us. He set aside a 24-hour period that we could spend with Him, and we have His promise that He will be there. But, where is “there”? “There” is not a church, temple or even a synagogue. “There”

is a space in time that *God* sanctified (set apart for a Holy purpose).

WHERE WE FIND HIM

Should one look for God in objects, idols or religious icons? I think not, but He can be experienced in time. A kind of portable sanctuary that is always available wherever you go. It is never crowded; there is always room for more. The Sabbath is not in us as much as we are in the Sabbath. We have been given a personal invitation to step into His Holy time. He made it Holy and instructed man to keep it Holy. We should be very careful not to drag the world into that Holy time with us. Rich or poor makes no difference. We are all equal in Sabbath observance, because we are all giving the same thing, our time.

THE CYCLE OF SEVENS

Astronomical bodies help us determine years, months, seasons and even days (Gen. 1:14). But where did the cycle of sevens come from? The only source we know of is God's account of creation (Ex. 20:11). Yet, consider the indestructibility of God's Sabbath in spite of Satan's many and varied attacks on it.

THE SURVIVABILITY OF GOD'S SABBATH:

God's Sabbath has survived through:

The fall of man;

The great flood;

Egyptian slavery;

Babylonian exile;

A scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world;

Roman persecution, especially under Emperor Hadrian;
France and Russian attempts to promote a 10-day week;
A blank day calendar with no seventh day;
Calendar changes (affecting days of the month but not the week)
Antinomianism, (God's law done away);
Secularism (a complete denial of anything religious);
Romanization of the Christian church with its promotion of the day of the sun god. Yes, it's true. Of the many false god's of history, they predominantly chose Sunday as their day. God's Sabbath will even survive the tribulation and will be observed in the millennium (Isa. 66:23).
And who knows what else?

I have heard it said that the Jews preserved the Saturday Sabbath, but in reality it's the other way around. The Sabbath preserved the Jews. Consider what happened to their sister Israel who changed God's Holy days for more convenient times (I Kings 12:25-33) and has since been lost to secular history. No, they did not all go back to Judah. There is much evidence of their many descendants if one cares enough to search it out.

GOD HIMSELF, TELLS US HOW TO IDENTIFY HIM AND HIS CHOSEN

God is being quoted on His purpose for the Sabbath and calls it a sign that identifies His people: "--It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, (your activities) and for a memorial between thine eyes (your thoughts, Ex. 13:9)." It also identifies who our God is: "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep:

for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you (Ex. 31:13).” Obviously, the 10 tribes that made up Israel lost their sanctification and therefore have lost their identity.

A SIGN OR A MARK

A sign is something that you voluntarily display and lets others know who or what you are and what you do; as opposed to a mark that is used to identify something that is owned or controlled as in Revelation 14:9-10.

REVELATION 14:9-10

9 “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

Notice the use of the head and the hand in both references. Wouldn't the head refer to what you know and believe, and a person's hand typically how you make your living? Isn't that the primary difference between Saturday or Sunday belief and practice?

We are sanctified by God's Sabbath. The Hebrew word *La hadish* means to sanctify or keep Holy. It's used in the Talmud

to describe an engagement as well as to sanctify. When a woman declares her engagement to a man she is said to be made Holy or sanctified. When a person consecrates his life to Christ and honors His Sabbath, he is changed, he is different, he is sanctified and set aside for a Holy purpose. Even the world will set him apart.

Consider how Sabbath keepers have been treated throughout history, and even today how traditional Christianity tends to shun Sabbath keepers as belonging to some kind of cult. “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (I John 3:13). Truly, Satan has deceived the world.

THE BLESSED GIFT

The pause to rest and reflect on the day of the Sabbath is like taking a vacation with God. It quickly becomes the most pleasant day of the week. It is not a day of do’s and don’ts, of rituals or judging others. Jesus showed that it was about love, mercy, healing, forgiveness and realignment to the important things of life. The Jewish religious leaders tried to turn it into a burden, but Jesus reminded them that the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

OUR INSTRUMENT LANDING SYSTEM (ILS)

Pilots depend on an instrument landing system that can be locked into as he approaches the airstrip. It will line the plane right up to the runway regardless of the weather, but the pilot must trust it.

Many plane crashes that are attributed to pilot error can be

linked to failure of the pilot to trust in his instruments. In certain conditions such as storms, winds, night flying etc, a pilot can become confused and disoriented. Thinking his judgment is better than his instruments; he acts on his feelings, makes the wrong decisions and loses his life. (“There is a way that seems right unto man but the end thereof are the ways of death” Prov. 16:25).

Honoring the Lord’s Sabbath is like an instrument landing system that helps to guide us through Satan’s arguments and deceptions that he has conspired against God’s Sabbath. Satan desperately tries to divert us from keeping our appointment with our friend. He does not want us talking to or listening to our Father. But, Trust in God’s word, all of it, rely on it, and it will bring you through the storms of life unto a safe landing into His Kingdom.

REWARDS PROMISED TO SABBATH OBSERVERS

The Sabbath is a delight and carries with it wonderful promises. Consider Isaiah 58:12-14: “And they that shall be of thee (descendants) shall build the old waste places: thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shall be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. (See the booklet THE PROTECTING WALL). 13 If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shall thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I

will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” Also you might enjoy reading Leviticus 26:2-13, for your friend is speaking to you.

BUT ISN'T A SATURDAY SABBATH FOR THE JEWS ONLY?

“But”, someone may say, “Isn’t that just for Israel?” Not really, for anyone who obeys God will receive His blessings, just as Israel did. However, as Christians we are sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7), we are heirs to the promise (Gal. 3:27-29), just like Isaac (Gal. 4:28). How then, are we any different from Israel?

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LORD’S DAY?

Everyone knows Sunday is the Lord’s Day, don’t they? Doesn’t that, in effect, change the Sabbath to the first day? Nowhere does the Bible mention Sunday as the Lord’s Day, neither does the Bible mention a change in His Sabbath, but it does identify which day belongs to the Lord. In Mark 2:28 we read: “Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” And, we do know that the Sabbath is Saturday, the seventh day. (By the way, Rev. 1:10 does **not** say the Lord’s Day is Sunday.)

BUT DON’T WE OBSERVE SUNDAY IN HONOR OF HIS RESURRECTION?

Is there any reason important enough for man to arbitrarily change a commandment that God authored? Nowhere in the Bible is there even a hint that Christ or His Apostles observed

Sunday as a weekly Sabbath or sanctified the first day in place of His Sabbath. Also, a careful, in depth study of the gospels will prove that Christ was not resurrected Sunday morning, but that He was, as He said He would be, in the grave for three days and three nights (Matt. 12 40).

BY WHO'S AUTHORITY?

Years ago T Enright, C.S.S.R., offered \$1,000 to anyone who could prove *from the Bible* that a person should keep *Sunday* Holy. As far as I know, that offer still stands. He further stated, "There is no such law in the Bible. It is a *law* of the *holy Catholic Church* alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy.' The Catholic Church says: 'No. by my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church." So stated in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1884.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21-23). How, then will we be able to explain to Him our disregard of the fourth commandment?

THE BOTTOM LINE

In spite of all the arguments pro and con, Christ kept the seventh day Sabbath. He is our perfect example. Should mere men dare attempt to improve upon His perfection and think they are not subtracting from it. Therefore, I honor the day He

sanctified and made Holy, the seventh day Sabbath.

Let us then, revere our appointment with our friend by preparing ourselves, by making ourselves presentable as fitting to a king; listening to His wisdom, experiencing His love, accepting His forgiveness and His grace. Truly, He far surpasses even Charles Kingsley's definition of a friend.

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THE PREACHER

by H. Cosby

“A preacher is a proclaimer, a herald, not a degreed professor of religion or an originator of theories. He has the Word given to him, and that he is to proclaim. Why would he draw from the stagnant swamp of human philosophy, and ignore the pure fountain of living waters that flows copiously directly from the throne of God? His charge is simple, but definite. He is to tell the people what God has said. He is to shield himself behind the message, and to receive it equally with those he addresses. His responsibility is as a messenger for God, and he is responsible to God only, and not to the congregation, the denomination, or any of man's governing bodies that might attempt to adulterate God's Holy Word, for it is to God he will ultimately answer.

If the preacher speaks the Word only, he will bathe in God's revelation and be permeated by it; and so be proof against all the shafts of ignorance, conceit and deception. He will not go

to the Pope or council, to Calvin or even universities of higher learning to know what to preach. His delight will be the law of the Lord, and in His law he will meditate day and night. The Word is supernatural, and woe to the preacher that leaves the supernatural for the natural; who sets aside the sword of the Spirit and uses instead a blade of his own tempering!”

If we honor God, why not honor the Word He has sent? Let us not allow or be the cause of one jot or one tittle of it to be disturbed. It is the Word of God, and as such, we shall not allow for a moment, the speculations, imaginings, and guesses of men ever so learned to weigh a feather’s weight against it.

Having, therefore, become partakers of His divine nature; is it not folly to go to the “wisdom” of man, human philosophy, or man’s inner consciousness for confirmation or explanation of God’s Word? Wouldn’t that be like going to the convicted criminal in order to understand the excellence of criminal law?

Howard Cosby, Chancellor of the University of the City of New York, *The Fundamentals*, vol III, pp 168-177

Other booklets addressing this subject:

AN ANGEL SPOKE TO ME

OLD AND WORN OUT EXCUSES AGAINST GOD’S SABBATH

THE PROTECTING WALL

GOD’S INTRIGUING CYCLE OF SEVENS

AND YE SHALL BE AS GODS

THE NUMBER SEVEN AND GOD’S SABBATH