

Today I begin the sermon series, “I Love Sundays.” I want you to make Sunday the best day of the week. Once upon a time in our country, everything stopped on Sundays. People went to church and worshipped God, then ate together, hung out together, rested and recreated together in the afternoon. Sunday wasn’t an extra day to get things done. Or a bonus day to put our kids in high-impact activities so they could get ahead. Sunday was a day of rest and worship.

Many of us grew up in situations where Sunday was boring. Or Sunday was a rat race.

Some of us grew up in homes where Sunday was a disappointment, because it was supposed to be a family day, or a day off, but nothing ever happened because the family never did anything together. Or the wrong thing happened, like you had to do yard work with dad or chores with mom all day. Others of us grew up in homes where Sunday was full of conflict because church was mandatory but no one was ever ready to leave on time, so the whole family competed for the bathroom, bumped into each other scrambling for breakfast in the kitchen, wolfed down our food, bolted for the door, and argued with each other all the way to church—where you were miraculously healed and acted like saints as soon as you hit the parking lot.

I have good news for you today: Sundays were never meant to be that way. God made Sundays *for you!*

Jesus, in the Bible, said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Today we live in a world where the pace of life is killing us. I want to suggest to you today that Sunday is a solution to that.

It feels like we always have too much to do. God said that Sunday is the antidote for that.

It seems like we always feel pressured. God made Sundays as the relief for that.

We rarely have time for the really important things. God thinks Sundays can take care of that.

There's never enough time for family, or the people we love, or the rest we need. God designed Sundays for that.

With so much going on in our world, it's easy to lose sight of what really matters. God created Sundays as the cure for that.

The General Social Survey provides the trend of happiness from 1973 to 2016 in the United States.

**Figure 5.1: General happiness, U.S. adults, General Social Survey, 1973-2016**



This graph shows us the decline in happiness. Americans should be happier now than ever. The violent crime rate is low, as is the unemployment rate. Income per capita has steadily grown over the last few decades. As the standard of living improves, happiness should improve, but it has not.

There are several explanations for the decline in happiness among Americans. Jean Twenge suggests that Americans are less happy due to fundamental shifts in how they spend their leisure time. In other words, Americans are less happy because of how they spend Sundays.

Many of us think that if we can get ahead faster, if we are productive seven days a week. But that's not how God made the universe. The most prosperous fast-food restaurant in the world is Chick-fil-A. No one makes as much money per location as Chick-fil-A. And Chick-fil-A is closed on Sundays. They make more money in six days a week than McDonald's, Subway, Burger King, and Taco Bell do in seven days.

Also, here are some statistics I think you'll find interesting. Secular sociologists have studied the benefits of church attendance. What they've found is that those who attend church regularly,

1. Live seven and a half years longer than those who don't. (And yet some people say they don't have time for church.)
2. Are 56 percent more likely to have an optimistic life outlook than those who don't. (That's true, isn't it?)
3. Are 27 percent less likely to be depressed.
4. Are 35 percent less likely to get divorced.

5. Have higher average levels of commitment to partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce, and lower levels of negative interaction.

6. Achieve higher grades, practice better time management, and experience a better sex life. (Raise your hand if you DON'T want a better sex life.)

The studies are pretty clear: life goes better for those who go to church regularly.

Way back at the beginning of time, the Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth. After it was all done, after He made the sun and the moon and the land and the plants and animals, Genesis 2:2–3 says,

**By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done (Genesis 2:2–3).**

God rested. Do you think He rested because He was tired? God doesn't get tired! The reason God rested on the seventh day was because He knew that we would need to rest every seventh day and He wanted us to see how important that was, so He set the example for us.

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, his fourth commandment was "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy."

**Our lives go better when we keep Sabbath.** How can we do that? What can we do so that we look forward to church every week? That's what we're going to talk about together for these next weeks. So, the first thing you have to do **Decides** to let **Sunday be the best day of your week.**

At the end of Psalm 122, David decided to commit to the prosperity of his community. For our lives to improve, we have to make a decision to let it improve. We make the decision, and God will make the difference. *Decide* to start coming to church regularly. *Decide* to make a commitment to it. *Decide* to get involved.

**The Key to a great Sunday is not the preacher, the service, or the people. The Key is you.**

Being part of *I Love Sundays* these next few weeks is a great initial decision. Invite others to be part of *I Love Sundays*. I will share Good Sundays make better Mondays next Sunday