

The Sabbath Day is not about rest. It's about holiness. **Observe the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy**, Rest is involved, but holiness is not our work. No matter how hard we try, no matter what we do, we cannot make ourselves, this day, or anything else holy. We're sinners, can only make things sinful. Holiness comes only from outside us. Holiness belongs to God. And He is here to give it to you.

Sabbath is about His holy people, acknowledging His holy works for them. Sabbath is more than a day off, this rest is creational, acknowledging the God who made all things and still takes care of them, including you. Fields must have rest, people need rest, you need rest. The Sabbath God makes part of His commandments, sabbath rest -to receive His gifts in worship. Now that Jesus has fulfilled the Law, God's command for the Sabbath -no longer Jewish Saturday- but everyday, a Sabbath in Christ. To rest. To receive. To confess His works. And that's why you are here. Where else does Jesus promises to come to you with His means of grace? Holy things for people He makes holy.

The Sabbath Day, a gift. The Pharisee saw the Sabbath as an obligation. And to illustrate this to the Pharisees, Jesus uses the extraordinary example of David and Abiathar the High Priest. David was on the run from Saul, who wanted to kill him; David had nothing. He was hungry, tired. He's struggling, desperate. Yet he was God's anointed one; God had chosen to be king after Saul! So as he flees, comes to the house of the Lord, he asks for something to eat. The only food there is the bread of the presence, on the altar, in the Tabernacle, which was only for priests to eat. And they were to eat it only in the holy place. Specific rules God gave for its making, changing, eating. And Abiathar gives it to David. So, Jesus asks the Pharisees, did David sin? Did Abiathar sin? Would it have been better to let David, his men die in order to keep Sabbath laws? Should God struck down David and Abiathar for breaking His law? No answer given, none needed. Sabbath, the Tabernacle, the sacrifices were made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Sabbath rest in our Lord, body and soul.

Well summer's here, I hope you can find time to rest, relax. You must rest from the chaos of life. Some find that in retirement. Others are so busy in retirement, they don't know when they could ever find time to work. In the mail last week, I officially became old, a hefty envelope from AARP. Some long for retirement as a time of rest; others of you long for the weekend and a vacation. No one says, why is the weekend so long. No one ever said, I can't wait til my vacation is over so I can go back to work. Rest is what we

all needed. The world and sin and just daily life wears us out. We grow weary. Some of us get so tired of it all we want to scream. We long for rest. Rest only Christ can give.

A pastor told me of a parishioner from China. Christianity is persecuted there. They'd post a sentry to keep an eye out if the authorities came to the house, where the Divine Service would take place. One day, the sentry told them the authorities were coming, the congregation, pastor scatter. The authorities took the homeowner and tortured him. "Just tell us where the pastor is and we'll let you go." The man wasn't about to give up the Pastor, Sacrament. They took a modified cattle rod, shocked him, "just tell us who the leaders are, give us the pastor's name, it'll all stop and you go back to your family." After 4 weeks, they couldn't break him, so they let him go. He would not give them up or give up the Sacrament. As soon as he could; he made way to America. He was able to come to church, to the Sacrament without fear. He also realized in America: work hard, you make more; he wants more for his family; able to work more, be more, do more, accomplish more, to provide more. Soon, he wasn't going to church every week, then only once a month, soon only Christmas, then Easter and when I heard this story he missed Christmas.

Don't miss this point, what communism, tortured couldn't do, what electrocution, what threats, persecution couldn't do, our culture can do without even lifting a hand. Torture couldn't break this man's love for the preached Word and Sacrament; our way of life was able to strip away in just a couple years. Oh the distractions and how we fill our days with ourselves. Don't let your way of life, busy schedules, activities rob you of the Sabbath rest each day in our Lord's Word and a holy, rest found here.

Come to the House of the Lord like David, you, with nothing, no works to impress God, hungry, tired, struggling, desperate, and repentant, anointed, chosen by God, flee here. As Paul wrote: **you be afflicted but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed.** That's only because You have rest from the Lord, only God can give. The Sabbath isn't about obligation, like the Pharisees, to keep a law. It's about receiving God's gifts, basking in His works to take care of you. Come, like David, be fed by God and live. Eat the bread from the altar of God, the bread of the presence, of your Savior, given and shed for you to have life. Here is God for you, a holy sabbath rest He gives in the Divine Service like no other, what you need more than anything. Rest dear child every day in Him, what He gives.