

## 11: Lord's Day Problems Solved, Too!

To understand our subject clearly, I would like to divide it into four sections. You might wish to make a mental note of them. Each is vital in an attempt at a clear and vivid understanding of this important subject.

1. Which is the Lord's Day?
2. The relationship of the Lord's Day and the Lord's love.
3. The A, B, C's of How to Keep the Lord's Day.
4. The A, B, C's of How to Display the Lord's Love.

First of all, now, we want to settle the question of which day, if any, is the Lord's. In Revelation 1:10 we read of the fact that the Lord does have a day, for John, the Revelator says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...." It does not, however, tell us which day of the week is the Lord's. It does tell us without question, that it is limited to one day. In Mark 2:28 the Bible says that the Lord's day is the Sabbath, meaning 'rest day'. But it does not tell which day is the rest day. We turn now to Hebrews 4:4, 9, and here it says, "He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The marginal reading for the word 'rest' is: 'the keeping of a sabbath.' Now what have we learned? Let's review:

1. The Lord has a day.
2. That day is a rest day.
3. The rest day the Bible indicates, is the seventh day.
4. The seventh day is the Lord's day of the New Testament.

We find the location of this Sabbath in Luke 23:54-56; 24:1. Here it tells us it is located between Friday, the sixth day of the week and the first day of the week, known as Sunday. Many recognize the terms, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The Sabbath is located between those two days. This is how simple it is to find which day is the Sabbath, or Lord's Day of the Bible!

Now we want to consider our second section of our original four: What relationship is there between the Lord's Day and the Lord's Love? In Exodus 31:15-17 we are told that the Sabbath was to be a 'sign' between God and His people. In Ezekiel 20, verses 12 and 20 we are again told that the Sabbath was to be a 'sign' between God and His people "that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." The word 'sign' means 'mark', 'flag', or 'banner'. These are all synonyms of the word 'sign'.

The Sabbath, then, becomes God's sign, mark, flag or banner as referred to it in the Bible. Since this day is the Lord's sign, mark, flag or banner, what relationship does it have to God's love? First we turn to I John 4:8 where the Bible says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love." Therefore since God is love, and since the Lord's day is the sign of the Lord, it must be a sign of love, for God is love. So the Lord's day immediately becomes a sign between an un-loving world; those who have accepted Him, being a part of it, and a loving God. It is God's love-sign, for so the Bible says.

Notice Song of Solomon 2:4, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."

The flag of a government represents that government; the flag of God represents God. The Bible says that God is love and we have seen that the flag or sign of God is His Sabbath, so then the Sabbath becomes the flag of God's Love Government! It bears such a strict relationship to God that it is a sign of

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love. Is it not reasonable then, that Sabbath-keepers should be the most loving people on the face of all the earth?

What is divine love? We have learned that the Lord has a day; and that His day is a sign of Himself. We have found too, that the Lord God is love. This makes His day a love-sign; a sign of divine love. Our next step is to define divine love, for which the Sabbath stands. The Lord of the Sabbath, Himself, tells us what this love is:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:44-48

Here Jesus Himself spelled out divine love, of which the Sabbath is a sign. This love is not 'publican love', according to our Saviour. Do you know what 'publican love' is? It is when one likes another because he is being liked. Joe likes Paul because Paul likes Joe! That is the only reason they like each other; there is no basis or foundation for this kind of love. It is predicated on being loved. As soon as Joe doesn't like Paul, Paul doesn't like Joe. That's 'publican love'. I contend that the majority of Christendom has not gone beyond 'publican love'. For the past forty years I have visited churches across this great land, and in every church I have found a great deal of 'publican love'. I have found it in the Baptist churches; among the Presbyterians, the Holiness and the Seventh-day Adventists. But do you know what they call it? They call it Christian fellowship. God calls it Publican Love!

Now take the hypothetical case of two ladies; Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones. If one of the sisters comes to Mrs. Smith and says, "Say, do you know what Mrs. Jones told about you?" And then she proceeds to relate a list of unkind things that Mrs. Jones has said. Do you know what Mrs. Smith will say? - and this is in spite of the fact that just yesterday these two ladies were very good friends - she'll say, "Well I can tell you some pretty ugly things about Mrs. Jones, too." That's publican love. This type of goings-on is repeated time after time in the name of Christian fellowship. Next week finds them both in church singing, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." They are singing in the clouds, but living in the ditch. How tragic is this kind of demonstration.

Medical science tells us that only a small portion of our brain is being used. There are billions of brain cells that lie dormant - never disturbed. But each brain, so it seems, has a swamp area, where ill thoughts are bred - publican thoughts. He likes the man that likes him and despises the man that despises him. This is the slum area of Christian living. What is needed is a new development - a subdivision, if you please, where restrictive thinking, is enforced. This area is reserved for big thoughts, kind thoughts, loving thoughts! Here is where the love for un-loving people is born. Here is where there is a reservoir of gentleness and kindness; where blessings come for those that curse him. This is where the Sabbath-keeping, Christ comes in!

The Sabbath is a sign of divine love. And divine love prompts the saying of something good about the man that says something mean about me. This, and this only, is Christian love. This kind of love is foreign to the vast majority of Christians. There are millions of Christians who indulge in a love that is no higher than publican love.

Try it some time. Put this to a test and see what happens. Go up to someone and tell them that you have heard something about him from someone else. Invariably they will respond, "Well, I thought as much. I never did think I could trust him. But just you wait, I know something about him, too." A

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thoroughbred publican! That's all he is. Claiming to be one thing - but in actuality, he's something very much different. Singing about the Lamb of God and His love, and living like a hog in a pig-stye.

God says He has a day. He says that day is related to Him as a sign of the government of love. Therefore it is the banner of love. This is divine love; not to be confused with publican love. There are several different kinds of love. The highly educated can quote and define them all. I'm not interested in this multiplicity of love, but I do think that it is important that we understand publican love and be able to recognize it in our own lives.

There is another kind of love that I might mention. This love is called, 'hen love'. I lived on the farm and observed the mother hen and her brood. It is interesting to watch these hens. They have their counterpart in the church as well, and I have watched them too. Here is a good church member, perhaps the Dorcas leader, and here is another very good church member - the Sabbath School superintendent. Now you take these two hens; neither of them able to sing very well, but they cackle the best they can - and take one of the chickens from the one hen and introduce it to the other. Do you know what happens? The new environment is terrible; the hen just picks it to pieces, but is in church the next Sabbath, singing, "Love Divine All Loves Excelling." This can be repeated any which way you want to do it, and you'll always get the same results.

Another good illustration of hen love can be found in many of our day-schools or our Academies. Watch how some of the parents treat their children's teachers. They are so interested in how the teacher treats their child - theirs is a special child, deservant of special treatment. They forget that the teacher is somebody's child himself or herself. The teachers' feelings don't matter too much - just as long as you make sure that my child is treated right. This is thoroughbred, registered 'hen love'!

Here's another kind of love, again an illustration taken from the farm. I call it 'Cow Love'. I used to milk many cows and was fascinated with their behavior. On one occasion, I remember, I saw these two lovely cows - both blessed with beautiful bass voices. But the one didn't think much of the other's voice. Each of them had a calf. I watched them one day and saw the one cow's calf inadvertently move into the pathway of the other cow. And do you know what that cow did? Brother! You would have thought that cow was a thoroughbred, registered Dorcas leader! Or a Sabbath School superintendent! That cow bunted this little innocent calf across the garden. That's 'cow love'.

God's flag is God's day; God's day is the sign of God's love. God's love is divine love, not publican love. I have been in homes across the nation and listened as the members of professed Christian families give instruction and counsel. The parents will do a little bragging first. "My Jimmy doesn't pick fights. I've taught him not to." You can see their eyes sparkle! But later I've heard that same parent say, "Now Jimmy, if John starts a fight with you, you give him a real whipping and don't let up until you've knocked the stuffings out of him." These parents build and boast of that kind of love. We can be sure of one thing: this is not God's love. It doesn't come from God.

In the example of the life of Jesus, we see clearly that when He was reviled, He reviled not again, according to I Peter 2:22, 23, He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Even when the devil accused Him when He raised Moses from the dead, He didn't enter into controversy with him then. He could have said to Satan, "You've always acted like the devil," and He would have been telling the truth. He could have said, "You're the one that stirred the mess up in heaven." If Christ would have said that, we would have said, "My, isn't that wonderful how He told him off. I think that ought to be recorded as one missionary visit." But Jesus did nothing of the kind. He said, "I'm going to turn you over to the God of heaven, He will rebuke you." This is Christian love.

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Look at Christ on the cross. The mob spit at Him and shouted insults. Yet He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." This is the way true Sabbath keepers will be. They will be filled with love because the Sabbath is a sign of the love of God; it is God's flag of love. God Himself says so.

Now we probe deeper this problem of the Sabbath. What are the A, B, C's of Sabbath keeping? We were holding some meetings in a little town in North Carolina. We were told about a young lady who had become acquainted with the Sabbath through one of the Bible Correspondence courses. We went to visit her and found her to be a very charming young lady. After we visited a little, I said, "I understand you have become acquainted with the Sabbath and have a desire to keep it."

"Yes," she said, "I'd like to keep it, but my boss won't let me, and I've asked repeatedly to have the Sabbath off."

Then I shared with her that there is an answer. "We have a little formula that will help you to keep the Sabbath immediately," I said.

"Oh, is that right? What is it?" she asked.

"It's very simple," I said, "and it always works." Then I shared with her the A, B, C's of prayer. We turned first to Matthew 6:33 where it invites us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." I showed her how that after we seek first the kingdom of God, then He promises to add to us our living. Then I told her that now we would put our finger on the promise and ask God to take care of her and solve the problem. "Then," I said, "we will tell God that we believe He is doing it and then we'll claim the promise by returning thanks to God that He has already found you a new job, if this is what it will take to solve the problem."

She had never done anything like this in her life before, but she followed right along with the plan. We prayed just as we had planned. After we had prayed we stood to our feet and I said, "Now God has given you the job. I don't know if it's the one you now have, or whether it's a brand new one. Did you know," I said, "that God also tells you how to approach your boss when you make the request for your Sabbath time off?"

"No," she said, "I've never heard of a text like that."

"Well here it is," I said, and we turned to James 1:5 and found that God invites us to pray for wisdom and the assurance is given that God will give wisdom. "... it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." We read these words together.

"Now you will go to your boss," I said, "and you won't waver, because God has already taken care of this for the gift is in the promise. You have asked, believed and claimed the promise. You have met the conditions and God has promised - and He cannot fail. Now you don't need to say, 'can I have the Sabbath off?' God has already done it for you. But as kindly and as graciously tell your boss that you cannot work any longer from Friday night sunset until Saturday night sunset, and you'll have your job; either where you're now working or at another job."

She smiled and said, "O. K. that's what I'll do."

A few days later the pastor and I had occasion to see her again. "Tell me," I said, how did things go when you went to see your boss. She was working in a drug store at the time.

"Well," she said, "I went to my boss and I said just what you suggested I say, and of all things - my boss said, 'if you mean business, yes, you may have Saturdays off!'"

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She was just beaming with gratefulness. It's just that simple. God has made a promise and He will keep His word. We just cannot fail when we're linked up with the God of the universe. It will always work!

Now we come to the fourth section of our study. Now we want to know the A, B, C's of sharing or displaying the Lord's love. If we are retaliating at all - in any way to anyone - then we need this love. We need it badly. Have you ever retaliated? I have. Have you ever retaliated since becoming a Christian? I have retaliated since becoming a minister. So we're all in the same boat. But it's a pretty poor place to be and we must not stay there. This divine love for which the Sabbath stands, is creative love. In Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11 we are told that the Sabbath is a sign of God's creative power. He worked six days in which He spoke the world into existence and rested on the seventh day - therefore we ought to rest as He did and as He has commanded us to. The Sabbath is a sign of our God being a creator.

Now we take a promise by which to get the love that comes from God. Romans 5:5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

This is the promise. We can kneel down and put our finger on Romans 5:5 and ask God for the fulfillment of the promise. We can boldly ask Him for this creative love that comes from the God of the universe. We ask Him to fill our hearts with this love.

Or you may wish to claim Ezekiel 36:26 where the promise is made: "A new heart will I give you...." Only the Creator can give you a new heart. He has promised a new spirit as well. "And," God promises, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

Or you may wish to take Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Another promise is couched in the language of Romans 8:9 where it says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." We can be one of God's children if we ask. This verse tells us that to be one of Christ's children we must have the spirit of love and joy which Christ had. This is ours - Christ promised it to you and to me.

We can place our hand on any of these promises and claim just the promise it makes. How many times I have taken Ezekiel 36:26 and placed my hand on that promise and asked God for love and understanding of my brethren. How often I have taken Romans 8:9 and prayed for the Spirit of Christ to flood my soul. Psalm 51 has many tear-stains on it where I have wept and let the tears fall on the Book. God hears and marvelous things have happened in this old heart of mine.

It's so simple, yet so powerful! First we find the promise. Then placing our finger on it we ask God for this love to be shed abroad in our hearts. We look into His face and say, "Now Lord, because You are the Creator as well as my Redeemer, You have the power to speak a world into existence, and You can speak a new heart into existence. I have misrepresented Your love, dear Lord, for the Sabbath is a sign of divine love, and I haven't displayed it. Someone said some mean thing about me, and I retaliated. Forgive me, Lord. Now I ask You to shed abroad Your love. I know I can't speak kind words unless my heart is kind; I can't show love unless I have a reservoir of love in my heart. Lord, I need the love that comes from You. Please let Your love be shed abroad in my heart. Now Lord I believe You are doing it. I believe and claim it and return thanks to You for having done it."

Now what do I do? I follow the instruction of Matthew 5:44 where it tells me to love my enemy. I now make a list of all of the good qualities of the one that is being mean and unkind to me. You'll be amazed at what happens when you start doing that. All of the good qualities are there in black and white! The devil won't like that. He doesn't want you to make a list like that. It points up the good in the one whom he would have us think has not one good quality.

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"Bless them that curse you...." Read the list over and let your ears hear these good qualities. This is blessing them. God didn't say, "bless them out!" He said, "Bless them. . . ." Many people would like to add the word 'out' into the phrase, but it isn't there! God says, "Say something good about your enemies..."

Now God says, "do good to them," This isn't just an idea - this is a command. It isn't my idea - this is God's program. It came from the One who said, "Be perfect..." You and I cannot change our motives; this has to be done by divine love. But we can ask and believe and claim this divine love, and if I claim it and return thanks that I have it, I'll start doing it. This is what happens. If I cannot change my motives, and I realize I can't; when I obey God and begin to do some kind, good acts to someone who has done a mean act to me, God gives me the emotion when I use the motion He tells me to.

Many years ago, my wife and I were living in a house trailer. We were in itinerant evangelism. We came to a little city and found a trailer park and arranged to park the trailer in a trailer space. There was an empty space right next to our space and I parked the car on that space. I had no idea it was being used by my neighbor, but when he came home and found I had parked my car on this empty space, he was very unhappy with me. I might say he was mad, for it was just that bad! He came out to where I was and he blessed me out, good and proper!

I explained immediately that I had no idea that this was his parking space and I apologized for having taken it, but he wouldn't accept my apology at all. He might be called a thoroughbred, registered publican! I went into my house trailer and I'll have to admit I didn't feel very good. Here I had apologized and this man had simply refused to accept my apology. In the first place I didn't know it was his parking space; in the second place I never would have parked there if I had known it was his space. In the third place I had apologized; and in the fourth place the man didn't accept it in the first place!! This didn't make me feel very good.

I didn't know what to do. A man feels miserable when he's upset emotionally. So I had to have a talk with the Lord. I said, "Lord, do something to these emotions."

The Lord said, "Do what I have told you to do - do something good."

"But what can I do to a man who won't even accept an apology?"

The Lord said, "Didn't you bring a load of oranges and grapefruit up from Florida? Go and share some of them with the rascal!"

So I went into the cupboard and picked out some nice oranges and grapefruit and took them over to his trailer. This man literally stared at me. He just stood there and stared. I said, "Do you folk like oranges and grapefruit?" When I said that, I began to see the faintest smile come over his face.

"Why yes," he said, "we do."

"Well, I wonder if you could do me a favor. We brought so many with us and we would like to share these oranges with someone before they spoil. Could you use some?"

At that they smiled - a real publican smile and said, "Thank you, thank you..."

I don't know if they belong to a church choir or a board of deacons and Ladies Aid Society, but when they saw those oranges and grapefruits - every evil trait was gone - it vanished! I know one thing: I surely felt better. When I first went over, I felt I lived in a mobile home and he lived in a trailer; when I returned, I felt we both lived in mobile homes!

God says, "Do good to them...." Express confidence that God has shed abroad His love in your heart and speak words of commendation and love for those that might be guilty of mistreating you. Do it. Only

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then will you experience the entrance of this divine love. This experience is part of the great Divine Plan God has made for His people; this is Seventh-day Adventism - and I like it! Anything less than this is not Seventh-day Adventism - it's Publicanism; it's 'hen-love'; it's 'cow-love'. What we must have is the love of Jesus. Not only must we possess it, but we must display it!

Notice Psalm 60:4, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

Do you love truth? God says if we love truth, we'll display it. We'll not merely talk about the truth, we'll display it. When we hear that someone has said something unkind about us, what will we do? Retaliate with an equally unkind story? No, for if we have spent time with God on our knees and claimed His promises and received a new spirit, we'll retaliate with - 'I know something good about him'. This will be the kind of retaliation we'll display.

Oh that we might appropriate this love to our hearts by the power of Jesus Christ. This is the armor that we'll need against the darts of the wicked one. It will be our only safeguard in the time of trouble that lies ahead. If we will ask, believe and claim the promise for victory, and allow heaven to create a new heart and spirit in us, then when Jesus comes, we'll be ready to go home with Him. May this be your experience, is my prayer.