

“A Foretaste of Glory”
(Exodus 20:8-11)

I. Introduction.

A. Review.

1. Last week, in the morning service, we saw when Christ was coming back.
 - a. He will return when the last Jew and Gentile have been saved.
 - b. When the last elect person has been gathered into His fold.

2. When that happens, Christ will raise all His people from the dead, and bring them into glory.
 - a. Then will be an end to our pain, suffering, trials and tribulations.
 - b. Then will be an end of sin: ours and others.
 - c. Then will be an end of conflict, division and strife.
 - d. We have a glorious future because of what Jesus has done.

B. Preview.

1. We also saw how that future is to affect how we live today.
 - a. We are to live every day knowing that we will give an account.
 - b. This should help us think carefully about what we heard this morning.
 - c. Remember what Baxter wrote, “If we saw God, and heaven, and hell before us, don’t you think it would effectively reconcile our differences and heal our unbrotherly exasperations and divisions? Wouldn’t it hold back the hands that itch to be using violence against those who do not agree with them in everything? How many empty controversies would it reconcile! As the arrival of the teacher ends the fight among the school boys; so the sight of God would frighten us from contentions or uncharitable violence.”

2. But we are reminded this evening that the Lord has given us something else to make us reflect upon that future: He has given us the Sabbath.
 - a. The Sabbath was originally established by God at the end of the Creation week. “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Gen. 2:1-3).
 - (i) It was the day He rested from His own work and the day He sanctified as a day of rest for man.
 - (ii) It was meant to be the foreshadowing of something better, something after this world: our eternal rest.

 - b. Even after Christ completed His work on the cross and changed the day we observe our rest from the last day of the week to the first, it still points to that eternal rest, to that eternal glory.

- (i) The author to the Hebrews tells us that, “There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through *following* the same example of disobedience” (Heb. 4:9-11).
 - (ii) In other words, the Christian Sabbath, the Lord’s Day, is a weekly reminder of what we are all aspiring to as Christians: eternal life and eternal glory.
3. As such, it also reminds us that there is something we must be striving for on earth: *To reflect what it is we will be in heaven.*
- a. Remember that eternal life is not just a quality of life, but a state of life. It is His life. We are to become like Him.
 - b. The Sabbath reminds us that we are to be transformed into the image of Christ.
 - c. It reminds us that we are to be holy as He is holy.
 - d. It reminds us that we are to be one as He and His Father are one.
 - e. In other words, the Sabbath is not only a picture of what we’ll be doing in heaven, it is also meant to remind us what we are to be in heaven.
 - (i) What we will be is fully in love with God and His people.
 - (ii) And what we will be doing is expressing that love to Him and to one another for all eternity.
 - (iii) This is how the fourth commandment is also a commandment of love.

II. Sermon.

- A. The fourth commandment tells us that there is a day we are to keep holy: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (v. 8). In order to be able to keep it holy, the Lord tells us to get all our work done in the other six days, so that we can devote this day entirely to Him. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you” (Ex. 20:9-10).
1. The Lord Himself set a pattern for us at the Creation.
 - a. “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy” (v. 11).
 - b. He could have made all things in a moment. But He did it in six days to give us an example to follow.
 2. And so we are to work six days and get all of our work out of the way.
 - a. God worked: He made all things.
 - b. When Adam and Eve were in the garden, they worked.
 - c. This shows us there’s nothing wrong with work.
 - d. How long did they work? Six days.
 - e. Why? Because God told them to work: He told them to cultivate the garden and guard it. But He made it so they could get this done in six work days.

- f. We are also to work: we have to in order to eat and provide for our families.
 - g. But we are also to work six days and get it all done in that time frame.
- B. Now this, as I've said, is so that we will be able to keep the whole of the seventh day holy.
1. Holy means that it is set apart to God.
 - a. When God sets something apart from common use to Himself, it is called holy.
 - b. The tribe of Levi was holy, because they were set apart to work in the tabernacle and temple of the Lord.
 - c. The priests were holy for the same reason.
 - d. So was Israel as a whole: they were called a holy nation.
 - e. We are a holy people, because God has set us apart to Himself.
 - f. When God tells us to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, He means that we must set it apart to Him, that time belongs to Him.
 - g. And what we are to be doing with that time is to use it in a holy way to become more holy.
 2. But what does this mean except that we are to use it to become more holy.
 - a. Remember the essence of holiness is love.
 - (i) Holiness also means to be separate from sin.
 - (ii) The law tells us what sin is: "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).
 - (iii) But love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:10).
 - (iv) So on this day, we are to be cultivating love.
 - b. We are to cultivate love to God on this day.
 - (i) We are to use the means of grace to get more of the Spirit's help to love Him more.
 - (ii) We are to express that love to Him in worship.
 - c. And we are to cultivate love to each other as well.
 - (i) We are to minister our gifts to one another.
 - (ii) We are to encourage one another in the things of the Lord.
 - (iii) We are to build one another up in love.
 - (iv) Paul writes, "But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4:15-16).
 - d. Loving God and loving our brothers and sisters in Christ is what heaven is all about.
 - e. That is also what this day is to reflect as we gather together for worship and fellowship.
 - f. The purpose of the Sabbath then is to remind us to cultivate this holy love in preparation for heaven.

III. Application.

- A. Now if this is the case, how can we complain or argue against God for having to give up certain things on this day?
1. The Lord tells us not to work on His day.
 - a. We can do what we must do: works of necessity.
 - b. We can also show mercy: help people who need help.
 - c. But He doesn't want us to do our regular work: unless it is necessary work or a work of mercy that must be done.
 - d. And why not? So that we can devote the whole day to loving Him and each other, to prepare for heaven.
 2. He tells us to leave the distractions of the world behind on that day.
 - a. He doesn't want us to talk about our work or think about it, except as we need to share our burdens with one another so we can life and encourage one another.
 - b. He doesn't want us to dwell on the things we do in the world for fun.
 - c. He wants our minds and our words directed towards heaven.
 - d. Why? So that our hearts would be attached to Him and to heaven and not to the things of the world.
 3. If God, His Son, His people, His heaven are the things we really love, how can we complain that God wants us to set aside these other things?
- B. Let's not forget what we are aspiring to today.
1. Our Lord has predestined us to become conformed to the image of His Son.
 - a. One day our bodies will reflect the glory of His resurrection body.
 - b. One day our hearts will reflect His perfect desire for love and devotion to the Father.
 2. That work has begun here.
 - a. It started when He saved us.
 - b. It won't be perfected until we reach heaven.
 3. But the Sabbath reminds us that we are on our way there and that He wants that work of growing into His likeness, into His holiness, into His love, to continue in this life and for us to grow as much into the image of His Son as possible here, before we arrive there.
 4. The Lord wants us to be holy everyday, but the Sabbath reminds us why.
 5. And so strive to be holy.
 - a. Put the world out of your mind as much as possible.
 - b. And cultivate love with your Lord.
 - c. Also with your brethren. These are the faces you'll be looking at throughout all eternity.
 6. The Sabbath is a foretaste of glory, and that glory is the love we will enjoy with God and with each other. Amen.