



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – December 1, 2013

Heart to Heart...

I'm puzzled at times about us, the church. People who claim to be "a member of the church" but as "a member" there is little desire to worship with Christ and His body, the rest of the members. This is not from a minister's standpoint but from God's standpoint. Have we fallen so far away, dislocated ourselves from Christ and His body that we have no stirring, little desire to worship the One who bought us, who rescued us? Do we even know what it means to worship on the first day of the week?

Why does Jesus call His body to come together on the first day of the week? Because we belong to Him and it was the day of the week that Jesus arose from the dead. It was the first day of the week when Mary Magdalene and Mary came and looked in the tomb finding it empty. Jesus had risen! But let's look a little deeper.

God brought about the Sabbath (Saturday) and in His commandments spoke: "***Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.***" (Exodus 20:8) We know this commandment well, but listen to the rest the Lord has spoken following the commandment: "***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...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.***" (Exodus 20:10-11) God took pleasure in His creation and rested in satisfaction! "***God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.***" (Genesis 1:31) As the Lord Jehovah gave His purpose and instruction, He wanted His people (Israel) to enjoy the blessings from six days of their labor and enjoy the seventh day as a rest and joy. That seventh day was a reminder that God had provided everything they needed that week and there is nothing to be added! It shined as a reminder that man is completely dependent upon God and not ourselves.

We turn to the present. Our society is filled with debts and wanting more. We rush to this and that and we work hard to make our way just to pay for the great debts we have accumulated. We work every hour we can for money. Then comes the weekends and they are filled with more debts of spending and pleasures so we go back the next week to pay for it all. The cycle is killing us! We need the message of a Sabbath rest.

Jesus arose from the dead that first day of the week. His resurrection declared Him as God's Son and He was raised for our justification (acquittal of sin). This speaks that we are not self-made or self-maintained. It takes Jesus to bear all our sins. It takes the promise from God through Jesus that He will provide our EVERY need, if we would seek Him first in everything. That first day of the week, that day we call Sunday, is a day that we need to learn how to enjoy the blessings that came our way from God during the week, the greatest being Jesus. That first day of the week where we need to reflect, praise, and honor the One who has brought us into the presence of a holy and righteous God. Jesus is standing, interceding for us, standing between God and our sins, making us holy and keeping us blameless and beyond reproach. It is Jesus that is our assurance of eternal life. We need the first day of the week to come in thankfulness, peacefulness, and turn loose of our thinking, of control, fears of not making it both physically and spiritually. We need to reflect on God, our fellowship with His Son and fellowship

with His body in His Supper, praise for His promises, adore His faithfulness and allow His peace to surround us. Yet many who claim to be a member of Christ find themselves caught up in all the hustle and bustle, thinking God will save us no matter how little we are committed to Him. Lost is faith that God is our adequacy and Jesus is the ONLY hope we have in this life and the life to come. With that lost faith, we find little desire to worship because we don't see Him as our all. We need this present day "Sabbath rest". Think about it!!!

Brent