

A SERIES OF FOUR SERMON OUTLINES BASED ON THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS.

These commandments deal with our love for God Almighty. We can hardly be faithful believers, before we understand the very basic expectations of God about how we should show our love for Him! These four commandments may be *called the four cornerstones of our relationship with the living God.*

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Making God your Number one priority

Exodus 20:3 *"You shall have no other gods before me. (NIV)*

Do not worship any god except me. (Contemporary English Version)

Have no other gods, only me. (The Message)

Introduction:

In the New Testament, the emphasis is on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The focus is not on keeping a certain set of rules or regulations, but on maintaining a living relationship with a living Lord. But an amazing thing happens to the Christian who has Jesus living inside of him. Such persons will find that they fulfil the law, because the great Lawgiver and Law-keeper is living within them.

The Ten Commandments are summarized in the New Testament in what is called the two Great Commandments. These are found in Matthew 22, and they teach that God's commandment is to love God and to love your neighbour. The first four of the Ten Commandments are all about how to relate to God and must be *called the four cornerstones of our relationship with the living God*, while the second six are all about how to relate to one another.

Today we will learn about the first of these four cornerstones as it asks us very important questions, such as: How do we choose to live? What is the most decisive object of our love? Do we only live for ourselves? Or someone else? Or for the Lord? Am I willing to let God be God or will I allow other things to be more important than He is?

These questions are extremely important. To make God our first priority, is to know the blessing of His peace, His love, His provision, and His life. But to put other things first is to know the ultimate emptiness of things that simply do not satisfy.

Our text is Exodus 20: 3. There the Lord says, **"You must not have any other gods except me."** This commandment reveals several important keys that will enable us to keep God first in our lives.

We were created to worship God

The first thing we need to know is that we were created to worship. Human beings are unique. We are not simply animals driven by instinct and uncontrollable desires. God created human beings with an ability and critical need for worship. The question remains: What do we worship? God created us to worship Him.

As God gave Israel the Ten Commandments, He said, *"I am the Lord your God."* Israel lived in a time where the worship of many gods was encouraged by the culture of the day. The other peoples they encountered - both in Egypt and in Canaan, worshipped as many gods as they could! They believed that there was safety in numbers! But even today some people still bow down to rocks and stones and images and idols. There certainly seems to be a dire need for worship.

Augustine said that our hearts would not find rest, until it rests in God, because He created us to worship Him. That is our purpose and the fulfilment our calling. We remain dissatisfied and incomplete, until we worship the God who created us. That is just the way we are made.

We must choose to worship God

We must not only understand our human nature that we were created to worship, but we must also emphasize that we were created with a free will. True worship is to choose, because of love, to worship. God's call on our lives remains since the beginning that we should love Him and therefore choose to worship Him.

It must have been a frightening experience for the people of Israel when they heard, at the foot of the Mountain of God, His voice, sounding like thunder: "*You must not have any other gods except me.*" God affirmed His eminence, his superiority. With the same purpose He today is calling us to worship only Him. He deserves to have first place, because He is God. He is the living, only true God. All other gods should be spelled with a little "g." They are really not God at all, but only pale substitutes.

He created us, and He speaks to us through His word. There he gives us direction and comfort, instruction and wisdom. He speaks to us through prayer. As we read His word, we become familiar with His voice, and then as we pray to Him, that same voice we heard in His word, speaks to our hearts. Our God sees. There is nothing beyond His vision. He sees not only what we do, but also what we think, how we feel. He sees our joy and our pain. He sees our circumstances. He not only sees the surface of our lives, but also what is on the inside. Our God also hears. As we lift up our voice to Him, that voice does not fall upon deaf ears. Our God hears our prayers. His ear is always open to His people – indeed, to all who call upon His name. Though a billion voices ascend to Him at once, He hears them all. God helps us. The Bible says that His arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

We are encouraged in Psalm 62:8 to, "*Trust in God at all times, my people. Tell him all your troubles, for he is our refuge.*" Only the true God can meet our needs.

But you may think: "I don't worship gods or lifeless idols set up in heathen temples. I am a sophisticated person." I am sure that is true, but there are gods beside idols of stone. Anything can be a god, if it takes the place of the true God in our lives.

You must ask yourself several questions, in order to determine if you have other gods in your life beside the true God.

On what do you set your affections? Where does your mind point when it comes to rest? What is really important to you? What do you think about and long for? Is it your job? A promotion? Perhaps your home? Your car? Maybe another person? Or money? Material things? Do you set your affections on God? We are told in the New Testament, to set our affections on things above.

Another important question is **whom are you trying to impress?** Some may say they work hard only for themselves and that may be true. We may be trying to impress ourselves. In other words, there is a purely self-centred motive for our ambitions. We work and accumulate and achieve for ourselves. Some may say they do it not merely for themselves but for their family, or for someone else. They are trying to impress other people. They are striving hard in order to look good in the eyes of others.

The First Commandment, however, insists that we must be God-pleasers. The person we should seek to impress is God. We should seek to be a delight to Him.

A final question is: **What are we living for?** What are our goals? What are our aspirations? Would there be goals that relate to your walk with God, and your service to Him? These are important questions, which will help us evaluate what we put first in our lives.

We must make our worship real

We must understand our character, that we were created to worship. We are further challenged: we must make our worship real. Our challenge is to turn the principle of putting God first, into reality.

Unless we put God first in the practical ways of our daily living, it may only remain an exercise in religious speculation.

In order to do so, we have to **examine our lives**. If we are going to be honest with ourselves, we must have the accurate information. We have to do an honest evaluation. We have to look at our lives closely, in some detail, if we are to undertake the challenge before us.

After the evaluation, we must **make whatever changes** in our lifestyle that needs to be made in order to put the Lord first. We must create a setting for life that reminds us to only worship God. We must determine our priorities and make whatever adjustments are necessary in ensure that we serve and worship only the Lord our God.

Application:

We must **fall upon our knees**, and pour out our heart to God. We must ask, we must seek, and we must knock. Unless the Lord empowers you, it will all be some intellectual-spiritual exercise. He must empower you. He must create the desire within you to put Him first. He must fan the flame of your first love. He must give you wisdom. He must do his work in your life. But if you will ask Him to, He will. The Lord has commanded you to choose Him over all other things. The one who gave you the command will also give you whatever you need to rise to the challenge and obey the command. Let Him do it today.

The criminal who was crucified with Jesus found that his eyes were opened! He saw who Jesus is! He realised the He is the Christ!

Then He feared God, and His judgement. He is a man who never feared God before, but on the cross he was a dying man. He rebuked the other criminal: "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? And "Think of me Lord, when you go into paradise". He feared God at the hour of death, because the only true God was revealed to Him when he saw Jesus for what He is. And he knew that he did not fear, worship or serve Him!

This experience should not be a deathbed decision! It should be the result of a real relationship with the one and only God. Thus the first pillar of loving God with all our hearts comes into place: We will serve no other gods, except Him.

Is God the number person in your life?

Do you love Jesus and follow Him.

This is the word of God.

Amen.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

Authentic worship is godly worship

Today we consider the second commandment from Exodus 20:4-6.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Introduction:

This second commandment is similar to the first, but yet different in its scope. The first commandment says "You shall have no other Gods before me." and it has to do with the worship of gods from other lands. It forbids the worship of any but the One true God. These other gods were problematic for the Israelites because they had just come out of bondage in Egypt where many gods

were worshipped and the Israelites would find themselves often surrounded by peoples who worshipped other Gods.

The Second Commandment prohibits God's own people not only not to worship any other god, but also not to worship the true God in the wrong way. This is a warning against bowing before images, calling them "God". It is a warning repeated many times in the Scriptures. When we try to serve God according to our own wishes and whims, we end up calling our idols "God". What a frightening thought it is!

When we speak of idols in the Bible, perhaps the first thing that comes to mind is the golden calf. The Israelites had fashioned a representation of God and that representative became a god. This is the sin of idolatry, and that is what we shall consider now.

Do not worship images from creation as representatives of God

The first prohibition is that God's people shall not make any idols, by honouring the images of creation as representing God. Our "creative worship" of God may end up being the worship of our own creations - being works of art, or "new ways" of thinking and talking about God.

What are these other gods, these idols that violate God's Commandment today? Well, our selfishness tempt us to become religious in such a way that we, and not the Lord, is in the centre of our lives and our worship. Our tastes, likes, dislikes and fashions, our programs and diaries, our priorities become the principle on which we build our worship.

Let me ask another question. What is it that people worship today other than God? What is it in our lives that take our time, our energy, our resources, and our very souls so that God takes a back seat in our lives? What is it that can keep us from worship in church? What is it that can keep us from studying God's Word? What is it that can keep us from talking and listening to God in prayer? What is it that can keep us from serving God with our time, talent and resources? What is it? Answer that, and you have identified your gods.

Some of our gods may in and of themselves be good things. Some people worship their family. Their children or their parents consume so much of their lives that there is no room for God. Family has become their God. Now understand this, family is a good thing. It was after all, God's idea. But family was never meant to become a god. We were never meant to worship at the altar of family. A creative theology replacing God with family responsibilities, makes family an idol.

Some people worship work. Their careers consume so much of their time, talent and energy that there is nothing left for God. The company they work for has become their god. Work is a good thing. It was after all God's idea. But work was never meant to become a god. We were never meant to worship at the altar of our jobs. A creative theology replacing God with work responsibilities, makes family an idol.

Many people worship themselves. They are so self-indulgent that they cheat God by keeping their lives free from God. They are too busy sleeping in on Sunday morning to come to church and worship and so they become their own god. Now understand this, we are a good thing. We are, after all, God's idea. But we were never meant to become our own gods. We were never meant to worship at the altar of *me*. A creative theology replacing God with great ideas on personal assertiveness and a powerful self image built on innovative positive thinking can make Me an idol.

There are many other false images of God people create. We would all like to create our own image of God - our own gods. It is part of our sinful human nature to want to create our own gods, simply because we do not like to be held accountable. We hate obedience and discipline. We want every thing to run according to our program. Serving God according to the Scriptures interfere with our

stubbornness and hold us accountable to the One True God, the Creator. None of our own fashionable ideas about who God is suppose to be, include this kind of accountability, obedience and fear of the holy One of Israel, the Father of Jesus, the almighty and righteous God

Do not worship God's symbols as if they are gods themselves

There's a dramatic story of this in the 21st chapter in the book of Numbers. In their wandering through the wilderness, the people of Israel were attacked and tortured by fiery serpents. Moses, on the instruction of God, made a bronze serpent and set it up on a pole. Those who had been bitten looked at the bronze serpent and they were healed. Not much is made of this story as it is found in Numbers, but centuries later we find that bronze serpent making another brief appearance. This time, in 2 Kings 18 where we find King Hezekiah breaking the serpent in pieces because the people had been burning incense to it. What happened? What Moses had used as *a reminder* of God's power over the poison of serpents, little by little, had become a god in itself.

This has happened in Christian history with beautiful and powerful symbols of the gospel of salvation. The cross, for example started out to be a reminder of God's great love, to help worshippers fix their hearts and minds on the One who bled and died for their souls. That cross can become a lucky charm regarded with superstitious reverence. When the gold or silver cross itself becomes a holy thing and it is confused with the reality for which it stands, it becomes an idol.

The problem with symbols as a substitute for God is that symbols are simply not adequate. They cause us to settle for less than God - to settle for our own little plans of salvation, protection and prosperity.

The context of the Second Commandment is worship; true authentic worship.

Worshipping God reminds us of the truth and identifies the lies of the enemy and the false gods of the world. But authentic worship brings us to the throne of God and changes our lives to the image of Christ. Be holy, because I am holy, our God said to his people.

This commandment is different from most of the other commandments in that God tells us why we are not to worship idols, and what the consequences are if we do. In verse five God also tells us that he is a "jealous God." The jealousy spoken of does not involve being suspicious or wrongfully envious or mistrusting. Jealous, when used referring to God, refers to that quality of His character that demands exclusive and authentic devotion. God is telling us that the greatest insult against His love for us is to make His love so unimportant that we are willing to settle for a lesser love, made up as a result of our desire to always hold the controls of our lives.

And there are consequences for idol worship. God says he will punish "children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject Him." We know that our sins do not just affect us, but those around us and especially those we love. Sin has a ripple effect. We know our sins can affect generations to come.

Application:

But there is good news. Those who refuse to settle for less than the only true God and authentic love and adoration for Him only, are given a promise. God says in verse six that he "shows steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments." The result of authentic, Biblical worship is to receive God's steadfast love, guaranteed forever. And for countless of generations to come.

May we refuse to settle for less than the worship of the one true God, in and through Jesus Christ! May we search and study, pray and reflect, until we know the Way, the Truth and the Life, Jesus

Christ, who is God's choice through whom we may authentically worship and live for Him - through the power of the Holy Spirit!
This is the Word of God.
Amen.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Honouring God with your whole life, starting with your words.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. -- Exodus 20:7

Introduction:

All of us have the experience of being around people who use the name of the Lord as profanity. We have all felt that uneasy feeling in the pit of our stomach, as people consistently trivialized the name of our Lord. This may be a daily occurrence. We have heard it so much that we are in danger of becoming *desensitized* to it. This is the enemy's tactic. Through constant exposure, he makes us immune for profanity, until we do not fear God anymore.

The Third Commandment is a prohibition against taking the name of the Lord in vain. Why would God give such a commandment? Are our words such a big deal? What does it mean to take the Lord's name in vain? Does this commandment simply refer to swearing or cursing?

This commandment deals not only with our speech, but also with our lifestyle. It deals with our lives, our words *and our worship*.

The implications of this commandment should be very important to you if you are a believer. This commandment was originally addressed to God's covenant community. Therefore, it is extremely applicable to those of us who call ourselves Christians. *In fact, Christians are the very ones who may be most at risk to take the Lord's name in vain, because it is possible to do so without speaking a word.* There are at least two ways this can be a danger for us. The first is when we do not understand the meaning of the commandment. Secondly we may understand its meaning and still just not respect God enough to honour Him.

Honouring the Name of our God consistently is the third pillar of the four cornerstones of our love-relationship with God, as it is revealed in the first four commandments.

We must understand the importance of names.

It is obvious that God places much importance upon His name. While God has forbidden us to make any image depicting His glory, He has given us His name. **His name represents His character. His name represents His person.** And we must understand the significance and symbolic character of names, if we are to understand the Third Commandment.

We need to see that in the Bible, names are symbolic. In Scripture, names have meaning for the individual. The essence of the individual was captured in the name. When God created **Adam**, He gave him that name because it means "man." Then **Eve** was created and her name means "mother of all living."

In the Old Testament we see parents choosing names for their children in order to reveal a nature. **Jacob** was so named because he had his hand on his brother Esau's heel. Jacob literally means "heel-catcher." His brother **Esau** was so named because he was red and hairy. **Judah** means "praise." **Samuel** means "asked of God."

In the Bible, God's names are revelatory of His character. God is revealed to us in Scripture by His names. They show us His nature. Firstly He is called Elohim, translated as GOD. He is *El Shaddai*, the Strong One. He is *El-Elyon*, God Most High. He is *El-Olam*, the Everlasting God. He is also called Jahwe. (I am) *Jahwe Jirah*, the God Who Provides. He is *Jahwe Rophe*, the God Who Heals. He is *Jahwe M'Kaddesh*, the God Who Sanctifies. He is *Jahwe Shalom*, the God of Peace. He is *Jahwe Sabaoth*, the Lord of Hosts. He is *Jahwe Tsidkenu*, the Lord Our Righteousness. He is *Jahwe Shammah*, the God Who is there. He is *Jahwe Nissi*, the Lord Our Banner. And He is *Jahwe Roi*, the Lord Our Shepherd.

In Isaiah 9:6 it says of Christ, "***His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.***"

The names of our Lord abound in Scripture. He is the Second Adam, our Advocate, the Alpha and Omega, the Ancient of Days, the Amen, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the Blessed and Only Potentate, the Captain of our Salvation, the Chief Shepherd, the Cornerstone. He is the Dayspring, the Desire of the Nations, the Faithful Witness, the First and the Last. He is the Good Shepherd, our Great High Priest, the Holy One of God. He is the Great I Am, the Judge of Israel, the King of the Jews, the King of Saints, and the King of Kings. He is the Light of the World, the Lord of Glory, the Lord of Lords. He is the Messiah, the Mediator between God and Man, the Man of Sorrows, yet, the Mighty God. He is the Prince of Peace, the Resurrection and Life, the Rock of our Salvation, the Root of David, the Saviour of the World. He is the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, the Son of Righteousness, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. He is Shiloh. He is the True Vine, the Truth, the Witness, and the Word of God. He is the Lamb of God, and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. That's who Christ is. What's in a name? There is much in a name. Names in the Scripture were symbolic.

God has revealed His nature to us through His name. You can easily see why God does not want His name taken lightly. We must understand clearly that God is Holy, and His name is Holy. To use His name superficially, and in disrespectful ways, shows that we do not take seriously the greatness and the holiness of our God. It shows that we do not love God.

How can we safeguard ourselves against profaning the name of God? And what can we do to honour the name of God? The challenge is to turn profanity into praise.

We must honour God with our words.

The areas that this commandment covers are our words, our lives and our worship.

Let's look first at our words. We can profane the name of God by our speech. This is the most obvious application of the Third Commandment. We are very familiar with it. We encounter this kind of speech in the marketplace every day. It comes basically from three types of people.

The first type of person is the uninformed. An individual with an uninformed mind trivializes the name of God without even thinking. They are not intentionally cursing God. Their words are not directed either to God, or about God. Many of these people are not even aware of their profanity. Their profanity has become a habit pattern for their speech. The use of profanity has become part of their speech. They are uninformed.

Perhaps you've been guilty of trivializing the name of God. Remember: God's name is Holy, never use it lightly. Never use it in vain.

Another type of person who profanes the name of God is the uncontrolled. The person with an uncontrolled tongue will also go against this commandment. They know the Bible forbids this sort of thing, but in a fit of anger things fly out of their mouths they know they shouldn't say. The Bible teaches us in the book of James how difficult it is to keep our tongues in check. The Bible also teaches us how important it is to do so. What comes out of our mouths often reveals what is in our heart. If there is sin in our hearts, it will eventually be revealed on our lips.

The final reason people profane the name of God is because they are unsaved. An unsaved heart is totally insensitive to the Holiness of God. The unsaved heart is in rebellion against God. Their profanity is simply a way of saying "I'm in charge."

We do not expect unsaved people to respect the God we serve. Their real need is not to clean up their speech, but to allow God to come into their lives. If they do, He will take care of their speech.

Appeal:

We must honour God with our walk.

Names identify our allegiance. Those of us who have committed our lives to follow Christ are called by His name. We are called "Christians." We are identified with the name of Jesus Christ. How we live our lives determines whether we take His name in vain in the way we live or not. When we are named after Him, we should show His character to a world that lost all perspective of Him and replaced Him with their idols. His name can be profaned or defiled by our disobedience and unfaithfulness. When we who are called Christians and we are not living faithfully for Jesus, we take the name of the Lord in vain.

Our lifestyle reflects upon our Lord. People look at you as a Christian, trying to understand what following Christ is all about. They cannot look at Jesus, because they have no idea where to look, unless they can look at you. By our words and by our walk, we should bear the name of Christ, so that we praise Him with everything we do.

We must honour God through our worship.

Prayer, singing, listening to the Word of God is a risk! When our worship is not authentic and just a habit, we may take His Name in vain, while singing along with the congregation, while reciting the Lord's Prayer or in the way we treat the preaching of His Word.

Might the Lord be saying to us, "Christian, change your behaviour or change your name"? Because we carry the name of Jesus and are called by that name, we must live for Him lives that would be glorifying to His name.

This is the Word of God.

Amen.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

How to avoid burnout through our love for God!

"Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days per week are set apart for your daily duties and regular work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; then he rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy. --Exodus 20:8-11

Introduction:

When the Commandments of God come into conflict with our culture, which they often do, we must always choose to obey God. That is, if we love God, because Jesus taught us that keeping the commandments is the one way we certainly can show our love for the Lord. The fourth commandment is no exception.

Often the Commandments of God seems so strange to contemporary man - and the contemporary Christian - that we do not even consider the consequences if we do not obey God. That we do not feel that we do not love Him by not following His decree and institution. The Sabbath-rest, required by God in the fourth commandment may look like some of these of which we sometimes believe that not keeping it will not have serious penalties.

The Fourth Commandment is further often both misunderstood and misapplied. Is it day, a holiday or a holy day? Are we really expected, in light of our busy schedules, to take off one day in seven? Is this Biblical injunction still applicable today?

The Fourth Commandment instructs us that there is a time when we must avoid work.

It should be apparent from a reading of this Commandment that God makes a great deal out of avoiding work on the Sabbath. Beginning at verse 9, it says: *"Six days a week are set apart for your daily duties and regular work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you."* God emphasizes that we should do no work on this special day. Why does God make such a big deal out of this?

The truth God is communicating to us, is that there is more to life than labour. God modelled this truth through His own behaviour according to the Creation-story. Verse 11 tells us, **"For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; then he rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy."** Now why do you think the writer emphasises that God rested on the seventh day? Was it because He was tired? If God is God, how could He be tired? He did not need six days in which to create the world. And he did not need to rest on the Sabbath. No, God reveals these things in order to give us an example. The Bible says these things to show us that there is a time for work, and a time for rest from work. In fact the word Sabbath in Hebrew comes from a root that means "rest." God's commandment and His own example indicate to us that *there is more to life than labour.*

It is interesting that people are only recently "discovering" what God said thousands of years ago. Production analysts have concluded only recently that reasonably spaced work breaks clearly increase productivity. The medical community gives statistics, which indicate that workaholics top the list in work related disorders such as high blood pressure and premature heart attack. God knew this before all the doctors and analysts. He knew that our bodies need a break.

Our emotions need a break as well. By the end of a long week we are emotionally exhausted. Our nerves are on edge, our stress level is way up, and we are in desperate need of a change of pace. If we continue working at that point, we will inevitably begin making mistakes. We will make bad decisions and do sloppy work. We need a break. Too many people and too many demands take their toll. And the price we pay often reflects in our faith-life and our peace with God! We need a break and that break is for *more than just rest.*

We need to Worship

There is a flip side to this Commandment. God gave the Commandment for two very important reasons. The first is that rest from daily work will benefit us physically, emotionally and spiritually. The second is that we will be blessed by authentic, peaceful worship of God and to hear the voice of God's assurance of His love. God not only wants us to stop working on the Sabbath, He wants to start worshipping.

This Commandment begins by God saying, *"Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."* Throughout history, people have worshipped on the Sabbath day. God's people, Israel, gathered together for worship on the Sabbath: first, at the tent of meeting, later, at the temple, and

finally at the local synagogue. Jesus Himself worshipped on the Sabbath, "*as was His custom*" (Luke 4:16). The Early Church continued this pattern. Later the day of worship changed from Saturday, the last day of the week, to Sunday, the first day of the week. Jesus rose on the first day of the week. Sunday was the day of Resurrection. The early Christians, therefore, began meeting on Sunday to commemorate the Lord's Resurrection. Sunday became known as the "Lord's Day." The Lord's Day is our Christian Sabbath.

This special day then is a blessing for us in several ways. We are blessed physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In this Fourth Commandment, God established the priority of a special day for our blessing and benefit. The writer of Hebrews commands us that we should not neglect the corporate meetings of the church. God knows what we need. He knows that we not only need rest, but we also need the special communion with Him, which only comes from worship.

When we gather together in Jesus' name, we must remember that God is here. Sometimes we can lose sight of that. Jesus has promised us His special presence when we gather in His name. This is something more than His indwelling presence in our daily lives. There is a special presence reserved for the corporate gathering of His people. When we come together for worship, God visits us in a special way. There is a certain anointing of the Holy Spirit that is reserved for God's people when they gather.

How can we keep the Lord's Day a special holy day? There are several things we can do. The first is to set the Lord's Day apart as a priority day. Treat the Lord's Day as a special day. Block it out on your calendar and don't let anything or anyone interfere with it. You have an appointment with God on that day.

Discipline your life to be faithful in corporate worship. Determine that you will be faithful, not simply because of what you can get out of it, but because gathering together with the saints of God is a testimony of God's grace to the world and the people of God. There is a special blessing God gives to those who honour Him by taking the time to make corporate worship a priority.

Appeal:

Renew your commitment to obey God. God has made us in a way that we will only function properly if we obey Him. If you are willing to obey Him, you will experience rest, joy, peace, and blessing. If you will not, you will reap in your own life the fruit of your refusal: stress, weariness, confusion, and death. Obey God and find the special blessing His day brings. Remember the words of Jesus:

Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls. --Matthew 11:28-29.

Loving God means much more than the content of these four sermons. But the teaching of Jesus stands, that the first commandment is to love God with our whole heart, soul and mind. The cornerstones of such love have been spelled out to us in the first four commandments. The only question that remains asking is: Do you love the Lord enough to desire to keep these decrees and institutions through which we show our love for Him?

This is the Word of God.
Amen.

Any comments regarding these sermon outlines may be sent to andries@centurionwest.co.za .