

<b>Series:</b> I Love Sundays	<b>Reference:</b> Psalm 122	<b>Title:</b> Sundays Can Surprise You	<b>Date:</b> 11.03.2019
<b>Website Writeup:</b> What's so great about Sundays? How can returning to a Sabbath Sunday benefit life?			

## COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

### Memory Verses for this Series

#### *Exodus 20:8*

<sup>8</sup> *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

#### *Mark 2:27*

*Then He said to them,*

*“Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”*

#### **Psalm 100:4**

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving & his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him & praise his name.*

Growing up, Sundays may've been boring, stressful, or just another day. They may've been a disappointment as a supposed 'family day', but the family never did anything together. Maybe it was yard-work/chore day. Maybe Sundays were awkward spent with a parent you didn't normally live with. Some went to church on Sundays, but no one was ever ready to leave on time, everyone scrambled & competed for the bathroom & breakfast, arguing all the way to church, but turning to saints when you enter church.

*Sundays were meant to be the best day of your week. God made Sundays for you! As Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)*

Our pace of life is debilitating- Sunday could be the solution. We have too much to do - Sunday's the antidote. We feel life's pressure all week - God made Sundays a relief. We rarely have time for the really important things - God says Sundays take care of that. There's never enough time for family, the people we love, or for the rest we need - God designed Sundays for that. It's easy to lose sight of what matters - God created Sundays as the cure.

Let's look today at Psalm 122 - I'm not putting the verses up, let's use the Bibles. Psalms is in the middle. Psalm 118 is the exact middle chapter, so open just about to the middle & you should easily be able to find Psalm 122.

Somebody invited King David, to go to the House of the Lord with them. This Church worship service is the modern equivalent. David's response is recorded here in Psalm 122. Listen & follow along as I read beginning with Psalm 122:1... *I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD.”* (For us: “Let us go to church!”)

Does David sound bored with church? No, He's excited! Why's he fired up about the one thing which seems to bore so many today? He can't wait to get there. What does he know that we don't? Let's walk through this Psalm to see...

*<sup>2</sup> Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. <sup>4</sup> That is where the tribes go up - the tribes of the LORD - to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel. <sup>5</sup> There stand the thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. (Psalm 122:2-5)*

He's describing the situation in Jerusalem. Densely packed with people, crowds gathering. He's describing what they're doing. Whole tribes going up to worship God. Giving God glory, 'according to the statute given to Israel.' In other words, "because God told them He'd like them to come." They're being obedient in their calling - God's invited, they're responding.

By the end of verse 5, David's through describing what he's seeing. In verse 6, he turns to his personal thoughts: *<sup>6</sup> Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure." <sup>7</sup> "May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels." <sup>8</sup> For the sake of my family & friends, I will say, "Peace be within you." <sup>9</sup> For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your prosperity.*

David cares for the people with whom he worships & that desire extends even to God's prosperity. David loves the place, people & person of God, He wants the best for all three. In this Psalm, David gives us six great reasons to go to church, making corporate worship high priority.

So let's look at **Why David Liked Going to Church...**

Firstly, in verse 4, **he liked being with God's people (v. 4a)** - God's people were his people, his tribe in all its diversity. Nothing wrong with wanting to be with your tribe, it's where you belong, feel safe & get rejuvenated. God calls us to enjoy the faith community made up of various types of people. It's where we find acceptance, love, care, encouragement & simple fellowship. God's glorified in a warm faith-filled community & calls us to extend that to others, to enjoy it without becoming insular. To take it out to all nations (Mt 28:18-20). The community of God is always invitational & open-armed.

Secondly, **David wanted to honor God (v. 4c)** - He basically says, "I want to go to church to worship God." We do well coming with a desire & expectation such as that. When we choose to worship, we actually can worship, and it makes all the difference. So when David went to church, he went with enthusiasm & expectancy.

And thirdly, **David wanted to do what God asked of him (v. 4d)**. As if he said, "I want to go to church because the statutes given to Israel told us to." When we choose to be obedient to what God says, it makes all the difference. So often we wake up & don't want to do what God's called us to; sometimes we just want to sleep in. But inevitably

when we make the effort, bringing our feelings & faulty desires in line with obedience, we're blessed!

Fourthly, **He wanted peace for those who love God (v. 6)**. David simply wants good things for God's people. Peace & security. We can relate to that. Everybody wants peace for those they love.

Which is also revealed in our 5<sup>th</sup> point in v8, **He wanted peace because God's people were his family & friends (v. 8)**.

And sixthly, **he made a decision to commit himself to the prosperity of the house of God (v. 9)**. David wanted the influence of God's kingdom to expand, flourish & proliferate. He wanted God's Church to have an abundance for ministry & God's glory.

Not a bad list...I also want the church full & prosperous, in the sense of having what it needs, and even an abundance in the work of ministry. I also want Sunday to become the best day of the week for us, because it influences all the other days of the week - and changes the world!

Dave Christie shared a few weeks back how once upon a time everything stopped on Sundays. People went to church, worshipped, ate, hung out, rested & played. It wasn't a bonus day to get more done, or put our kids in more activities to get ahead. Sunday was a day of rest & worship.

I believe people had a greater sense of peace & hope. The pace of life wasn't as frantic because they slowed their pace one day a week, rested, refueled & refocused on what really mattered. We've been slow boiling in this pot a long time. Adding one ounce a week to your waistline isn't noticeable, but overtime it equates to obesity. Adding more & more to our schedules one little bit at a time doesn't seem like much, but over time it's like walking on hot sand - you can't go slow any longer. We're all addicts & our drug is busyness.

Imagine a graph in your mind. The vertical line represents prosperity in the sense of all things beneficial. The horizontal line represents years on a calendar. Plot the percentage of church attendance year by year, which has been going down for the last few decades. Now plot the percentage of societal happiness & prosperity over that same length of time. You'll find it's two lines run parallel - they're directly related. The higher the church attendance, the more engaged a person is, the higher the happiness quotient. Why's that?

It's because there's something you can't see, touch, taste, or smell about church attendance/engagement which makes it the most powerful investment of your week. Something about being in church fellowship makes us better & qualifies us for special blessings & provisions from God. At one time, Sunday was the best day of the week for almost everybody & life was better for everybody. I'm sure we all want that peace.

So, **what's the importance of Sabbath?** Way back at the beginning, the Bible says God created the heavens & the earth. He made the sun & moon, the land, plants & animals. Then in Genesis 2:2–3 it says, *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day & made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*

God rested. Was He tired? No...He knew we'd need to rest every seventh day & He modeled the importance of it & set precedent.

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, his fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8–11 was, <sup>8</sup> *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor & do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made the heavens & the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day & made it holy.*

Let me give you **seven reasons why we should invest in weekly Sabbath.**

Firstly, **We need it (Genesis 2:2; Mark 2:27).** And God knows we need it. That's why He rested & that's why He gave the commandment. God doesn't want to kill our fun or lessen life by taking away a day. He wants to increase our joy & improve our life by giving us a day to refresh, refuel & refocus with Him because He knows we need it.

Secondly, **God asks us to (Exodus 20:8).** The fourth commandment says to keep the Sabbath 'holy'. We'll discuss the meaning of that word next week - but it's important. But suffice it to say, when God commands, we don't question, we simply respond yes, and do it.

Thirdly, **God blessed the Sabbath (Genesis 2:3).** For reasons only He fully understands, God says He blessed the Sabbath. He's made it a *special* day, not an *extra* or bonus day. When we cooperate in what God blesses, we receive blessing.

Fourth, **My life goes better when I Sabbath.** So many of us think we'll get ahead if we're productive seven days a week. But that's not how God made the universe. The most prosperous fast-food restaurant in the world is Chick-fil-A. No one makes as much money per location as Chick-fil-A. And Chick-fil-A is closed on Sundays because the owners of Chick-fil-A know that if they honor the Sabbath, God will honor their business. So they make more money in six days a week than McDonald's, Subway, Burger King & Taco Bell do in seven.

Here are some interesting statistics which I shared these a few weeks back. Sociologists have studied the benefits of church attendance, finding those who attend church regularly...

1. Live seven & a half years longer than those who don't.<sup>1</sup>
2. Are 56 percent more likely to have an optimistic life outlook.<sup>2</sup>
3. Are 27 percent less likely to be depressed.<sup>3</sup>
4. Are 35 percent less likely to get divorced.<sup>4</sup>
5. Have higher average levels of commitment to partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking & talking about divorce, and lower levels of negative interaction.<sup>5</sup>
6. Have higher grades, better time management & have a better sex life.<sup>6</sup>

Life goes better for those who regularly attend church. There's something holistically, profoundly & inexplicably better to life when we're 100% obedient to Jesus in these ways.

The fifth reason I want to take a Sabbath every Sunday is because, **Mondays go better when we Sabbath.** You may dread Mondays, getting out of bed saying, "Uggh, back to work!" We're exhausted & unmotivated because we've used all our energy on Sunday, instead of receiving new energy from Sunday.

Today we're starting a five-week series, learning two things from God's perspective. How to have a great week, and how to have a great life. Next week we'll see why *good Sundays make better Mondays*. What we're going to learn is that if your Sunday's lived the way it's intended, your Monday will go as it's intended.

The sixth reason I want to take a weekly Sabbath is because, **Our families do better when we Sabbath.** Families who rest together do best together.

It's overarching & comprehensive; a family who attends church learns biblical skills on how to do relationships & life better. The more we invest in spiritual formation, the more we become like Jesus - healthy mature beings reflecting God. Great families

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. James C. Paterson II, MD, PhD, "Live Long and Prosper: Going to Church Increases Lifespan," Reasons to Believe, August 20, 2010, <http://www.reasons.org/articles/live-long-and-prosper-going-to-church-increases-lifespan>.

<sup>2</sup> Janet Washington, "New Study: Regular Church Attendance Linked to Positive Outlook, Less Depression in Women," EEEW Magazine Buzz, November 11, 2011, <http://buzz.eewmagazine.com/eew-magazine-buzz-blog/2011/11/11/new-study-regular-church-attendance-linked-to-positive-outlo.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Washington.

<sup>4</sup> W. Bradford Wilcox, quoted in Glenn T. Stanton, "First-Person: The Christian Divorce Rate Myth (What You've Heard Is Wrong)," Baptist Press, February 15, 2011, <http://www.bpnews.net/34656#top>.

<sup>5</sup> Scott Stanley et al., "Marriage in Oklahoma: 2001 Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce," [http://www.okmarriage.org/downloads/media/survey\\_report.pdf](http://www.okmarriage.org/downloads/media/survey_report.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Haas, "The Jaw Dropping Benefits of Church Attendance," PeterHaas, August 19, 2014, <http://www.peterhaas.org/?p=1342>.

become great by practicing great things together. In developing the habit of doing church together, your children build a repository of enriched memories which last a lifetime. My family's a *far* better family because of this church.

The seventh reason for Sabbath is, **My eternity will go better if I Sabbath.** I bless God when I show up to worship & fellowship with others, and in turn He blesses me in that as well. Someone may hate Sundays, but if Jesus were here, he may whisper to you, 'I'm so blessed to have my people worship together.'"

Imagine that. God creates this beautiful world for us & does things for us all week long, day in & day out. When we turn around & spend a morning a week recognizing Him & thanking Him for that, wouldn't that a blessing! God loves Sundays & invites you to love them too. Psalm 100:4 says, *Enter his gates with thanksgiving & his courts with praise; give thanks to him & praise his name.*

What can you do to look forward to church every week? We're going to explore that. So, read your book, show up, get in a community group & I guarantee you'll be blessed! Let me give you **three steps to Make Sunday the Best Day of Your Week.**

**(1) Decide to let Sunday be the best day of your week.** At the end of Psalm 122, David decided to commit to the prosperity of his community. For life to improve, we have to make a decision & effort to let it improve. You make the decision - God will make the difference. *Decide* to start coming to church regularly. *Decide* to make a commitment to it. *Decide* to get involved.

What that might look like this week is (1) reading the first two *very* short chapters from *I Love Sundays*, and (2) being part of a Community Group.

**(2) Invest in your Sundays.** To get something great out of Church, you have to put something great into it. Matthew 6:21 says, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" So start investing your heart here. Being devoted to this weekly worship service is a great initial investment.

**(3) Take your next step.** Years ago a church sociologist named Win Arn did a study of satisfied church members & discovered they have six things in common.

- (1) They attend regularly.
- (2) They have a place they serve somewhere in the church.
- (3) They develop at least six friendships with other members of the church.
- (4) They call the church 'my church'.
- (5) They give consistently to the church.
- (6) They invite others to their church.

If you're new, pick number one & start coming regularly. If you're already doing that, pick one of the others you're not & start doing that. Take your next step, whatever it is. David wanted the best for his people. God wants that for you. So let's decide to make our Sundays wonderful.