

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
September 30, 2018

Consecration of Time

Exodus 20:8-11

20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

20:9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,

20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and 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.

### 1. Consecration

Do you know the word “consecration”? You see is as a verb in today’s verses; verse 6 and 11. The New Inter-confessional Translation says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” to “keep the Sabbath in your mind and keep it holy.” In Hebrew it is called **שָׁבַט** (qadash) and it means to set apart or to separate. The original meaning is “to consecrate” or “sanctify”.

In the Old Testament, various things were set apart for the Lord. Especially when the tabernacle was made in the tent during the time of Moses, it was set apart for as the House of God and the sacred oil was poured into each of the items. The oil was poured into the priest who serves God in the tabernacle and the clothes that the priest wore. They were set apart for God.

Consecrating the tabernacle and priests was the mark of what the God's people – were setting apart for God. God set the Israelites – God's people, apart from being slaves of Egypt to Himself. Leviticus 22: 32-33 says, “And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD.” Because God Himself is holy, God has set apart His chosen people for himself, and God asked His people to know God as the holy One, and God called His people to become holy. Leviticus 11: 44 says, “For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.” The sanctification is not only for priests, but for all of God's people, not only for rituals, but for all of life.

The Ten Commandments, including today's verses, commands all the people of God that revere Holy God and we set ourselves apart for God and practice it in our lives. The First Commandment in Exodus 20:3 says, “You will have no other gods before me.” It teaches us to set apart God from anything else for Himself. The second commandment in the verse 4, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image.” We are to set apart our worship from anything but to God Himself. Third commandment in the verse 7, “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.” It tells us to set apart the name of God from anything else but to God Himself. The Fourth Command in the verse 8, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” It teaches us to set apart our time from anything else but for God Himself.

When we set apart God's belongings to God, it creates our renewed

heart that respects others. The fifth commandment in the verse 12 says, “Honor your father and your mother.” It teaches us to respect our parents and our leaders. The sixth commandment in the verse 13 says, “You should not murder.” It teaches us to respect our life. And the seventh command in the verse 14 says, “You must not commit adultery.” It teaches us to respect our marriage. The eighth commandment in the verse 15, “You must not steal.” It teaches us to respect our ownership. The ninth commandment in the verse 16, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” It teaches us to respect our honesty in truth. The Tenth Command in the verse 17, “You shall not covet your neighbor's house.” It teaches us to respect other people's property. It also teaches us to purify our mind and heart from sin such as “greed.”

The Ten Commandments are not merely a list of “do and don'ts”. God calls us to become holy by setting apart God from anything else and purifying our inside and being transformed by Holy God.

## **2. Consecration Being Forgotten**

However, I think that “consecration” is forgotten in the present age. When I came to the United States, I was surprised to see some people putting their jackets and bags and sitting on a communion table or pulpit, so I have warned those people. Japanese rarely sit on a table or desk, but it is common in the United States. However, the communion table and the pulpit are special, not just “furniture.” I believe that the communion table should be dedicated only for the Lord 's Supper, and the pulpit is for the preaching only. It should be “consecrated” for the Word of God.

I was quite disappointed when I saw the Bible being used as a coaster for mug cup. The Bible is “The *Holy* Bible.” It’s a holy book. Indeed it may be said that what is important is the contents written in the Bible. But those who value the word of God carefully will handle and cherish the book. A person said, “When I lay the books stacked, I place the Bible on the top.”

The chapel was once called “Sanctuary,” and a communion table, a pulpit, a baptismal pool, and a cross were placed in the center. It was a place sanctified for worship. Today, it is called “Worship Hall” or “Auditorium” at many churches, and its front is a stage for musicians. The worshipers look up to see not a cross, but drums, guitars, keyboards, and monitor speakers. Preachers frequently put the Bible on the music stand and talk. I understand that there are various restrictions, and it is sometimes not possible to obtain the ideal building, but among those constraints, I think that it is necessary to think about what we should consecrate the worship as a window of heaven.

It goes without saying that we need to sanctify our inner selves more than the outer surface. The Bible teaches us the inner sanctification. The sanctification of the inner selves will appear on the outer surface, and the sanctification of the outer surface will show people the sanctification of the inner part. It was to consolidate various visible things in the Old Testament period to teach us to make the unseen God, holy and to make the inner and the life sacred.

Let's take a temple as an example. Today there is no visible temple. As Jesus said, “the body of Christ” is the temple. And the church is “the body of Christ,” and each one who believes in Jesus Christ

becomes the temple of God by belonging to this “body of Christ.”

There is an outer yard, the holy place, and the most holy place in the temple. If the one in Christ is a temple, the outer garden is “body,” the holy place is “heart,” and the most holy place is “spirit.” The deepest region of our personality, “spirit,” is engaged with God. And the “spirit” leads our soul. We have “mind,” “heart,” and “will” that are intellectual, emotional, and a decision making function of our soul. And this soul moves “body,” from there to make the God holy and to sanctify ourselves. The Bible teaches that inner sanctification will bring about the sanctification of our daily life.

### **3. Consecration of Time**

What can we do in order to get back to this “consecration” which God seeks in us? The Bible teaches us to begin with the consecration of time. It is because everyone receives 24 hours equally. We can not regain the time once we lose. So it is very precious. We are living in the time, and the time is our life. How can we live? How can we establish our life? They are totally based on how to spend time. The consecration of time is the first step of the consecration of our life and our entire life.

The foundation of the consecration of time is the “Sabbath,” which God first consecrated. In Genesis 2:3, “and on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.” Before He consecrated the temple, its instruments, priests, and their dresses, He consecrated the Sabbath from the beginning of his creation.

For Islamists, it’s on Friday, Saturday for Jews, and Sunday for

Christians, we all keep them as the “Sabbath.” The day is different from each other; however, the principal; “one day in a week” is the same. We shall give back 1/10 of our income to God but we need to give back 1/7 of our time to God. We can tell that our time is more precious than our money.

To keep the Sabbath means to keep our mental and physical health well. We, human being have a bio rhythm, which is approximately 7 days cycle; therefore, if we continue to work more than 7 days, the bio rhythm is not balanced and we get sick. It would be beneficial and blessing if we keep the Sabbath and spend the Sabbath quietly. Not only the Sabbath but also any kinds of command from God, they will bring us blessings. God’s commands were decided based on God’s mercy on us.

Ezekiel 20:12-13 says, "Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make a full end of them." Ezekiel 20:19-20 says, "I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God."

The Sabbath is a “sign” of a covenant relationship between God and God’s people. We can say that we are the people of God and God is our God because of the sign. People of Israel did not obey the Sabbath first when they were apart from God. They ignored God, run

to idols, and lost the blessing as the people of God. God said to those people, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” because God wanted them to come back to Him and re-gain the blessing. The Sabbath is such an important element of our faith.

Not only the Sabbath but also the time for reading the Bible, giving a prayer etc, how can we treat them seriously? We set the verse for the year: “Rather, train yourself to be godly” and spent 3/4 of this year. Let us consecrate the remaining of 1/4 and be filled with the blessing of God.

**(Prayer)**

God, the Father, the consecration of time is necessary for our spiritual training. The time is blessing from you. Give us the faith to consecrate the time for the fellowship with You, and the wisdom to make time for Your ministries. In the name of Lord Jesus, Amen.