

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #46

A Sunday Pastor Adopts the Sabbath

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Kenny: May the peace of God that passes all understanding be upon you today brethren and keep your hearts and minds in Christ, Jesus, as described in Philippians 4, Verse 7.

Today, I am going to depart from the typical preaching from the word of God concerning the Lord of the Sabbath and the days of rest and worship that the LORD God, our Father, blessed, sanctified and appointed for all mankind to keep forever. Instead, we have two brothers in Christ from Morganton, North Carolina on the telephone today as our guests. One is Dewey Fox. Are you there Dewey?

Dewey: Yes I am. Thank you for inviting me brother.

Kenny: And, the other is Pastor Charlie Crump. Greetings, Pastor. Welcome to the Lord of the Sabbath radio series.

Charlie: Thank you, Kenny. It is great to be here.

Kenny: Okay. Well, both our guests have heard by the grace of God the call by the Father to His only begotten Son. As Christians, they have by faith believed on the Son and accepted Him as their Savior. But, unlike a couple of billion professing Christians, they have also accepted Him as Lord, in fact, the Lord of the seventh-day Sabbath. Christ Himself proclaimed that!

We choose to follow Him in the day that He and His apostles kept holy each week. Seventh-day Christians are a tiny remnant in the church, the body of Christ. And, like many Sabbath-keeping believers, our guests were once part of mainline Christianity and kept Sunday, the first day of the week, holy.

It is rather easy for an individual to find this truth in scripture and rest on the seventh day. But, the will and command of the Lord is for His people to also worship in a public assembly; to have a holy convocation each Sabbath before the LORD. That means finding fellow worshippers to assemble with each Sabbath to worship the Father in spirit and truth.

In Pastor Crump's case, he has been faced with a special challenge: to also convert his congregation from Sunday keeping to Sabbath keeping. It is this transition that is rather unique, an interesting story that I would like to have them share with you today. So, Pastor, let's start with you. Briefly, as background, how and when did you personally come to realize that the true, Biblical, ordained by God at creation, day of the LORD is the seventh-day?

Charlie: Brother Kenny, I will make it as brief as possible. Even as a child I grew up in a

Baptist Church, very dedicated, very loving parents. But, even as a child as I learned the days of the week and the books of the Bible, and all the things you learn if you're schooled in Church, I began to question and those things, especially the Sabbath, had been on my mind even as a child. It didn't seem to be an issue with the people that I was with. Sometimes I would mention it, but as I grew older I would feel like that was sort of a taboo area to question.

But, early on in my ministry, by that time I knew for sure within my heart. Yet, you know, I was faced with an incredible challenge because it seemed like that when that particular Truth was mentioned, a lot of people would shy away because it seemed to break something inside of them that they were holding as a truth. It took me a long time to understand that aspect. I guess really I am still learning.

But, within my preaching, within my teaching in the Church, I have pastored for over thirty (30) years now, I went about this slow. I went about it very loving. That's something I think everyone should remember. You love your people above all things. And, let the word of God define His own Truth, don't try to add to or take away. Hold True, lift Jesus up, bit by bit by bit. Jesus will bring things into play.

I keep the Sabbath. We have service. We have Christian Passover...many of those rich, good things that are needed. I also minister on Sunday. I have saw in the past that people that would come in on Sunday that would come to our seminars and teachings moved to the Sabbath. They saw the Sabbath.

Many that has been in the Church for years and years have not made that step. But, there is a joint fellowship; nobody shuns anyone. We don't let things like that become issues and run and hide. But, Jesus, thank Him, for everything has worked this out I think in a very nice, effective way. But, loving your people, through Christ, is the key.

Kenny: Amen, Pastor. So I take it you really kept Sunday for literally decades and in fact you still kind of do?

Charlie: Yes. Well, like in our bulletin for instance, when we do our bulletins, we will have on the left hand side when you open up, of course, we always open up in the front with scripture, scripture that is important from the Old Testament and the New Testament, this kind of a seed. Then, you open the bulletin and there is Sabbath worship. And, you have your agenda there, announcements, etc. On the right hand side you have Sunday fellowship and, then, your agenda there.

This one bulletin type idea was my son's, who is Director of our fellowship. It gives each person, whether Sabbath or Sunday, the feeling of oneness. And, truly we are one in Christ. There should be no sense of division. But, we're growing and it takes people time to grow. We wouldn't get mad at a child because he couldn't read or write when he is only four years old.

Kenny: Yes. Pastor, that's so important. As we're growing in grace and knowledge of

the Lord and His Word and His will for our lives, that we can, despite some changes in our understandings, that we can still love one another, that's really the sign of His disciples. As much as I certainly believe Sabbath keeping is important, that's not the main sign; the main sign is love for one another. So, I take it, about how long have you personally been resting or keeping the Sabbath day?

Charlie: Well, I have probably over ten years personally our Church six years, maybe a little bit longer.

Kenny: Okay, that is longer than I realized. Dewey, I wonder if you can kind of give us a quick understanding of how and when you found the Sabbath and began your weekly walk with the Lord of the Sabbath?

Dewey: Okay, thank you, Brother Kenny. I'll just give you a little background about myself. Looking back on it, I started getting serious about the study of God's Word about seven or eight years ago. I started reading and studying my Bible a lot more and started a Bible class in Church. When I got down to the serious study of the Bible, I started questioning what was going on in the Church in mainstream Christianity; not that I hadn't had any doubts earlier in my life, but now it was a serious concern.

One Sunday when walking down the halls of the Sunday Church that my wife and I went to for about 13 years, I just had that feeling that I did not need to be there any longer; there was something more. I just didn't belong. I was just very uneasy about Sunday worship at that point.

It wasn't a problem with the Church members or that they were bad or anything like that. They believed what they believed to be the truth. They were very sincere people. But, I was searching for more, for what I would call the "real Truth." So we quit attending that Sunday Church and started searching for another Church. I made up a list of five or six Churches that we needed to go visit.

One of those was a Saturday Church, a Saturday Sabbath Church. I just went attending several of these different churches and we settled in on a Saturday Sabbath Church. Not necessarily did we go there because of the Church, but we went there because of the Saturday Sabbath church part of it.

Then, after about a year or so, we left that Church. We started searching for another Sabbath Church that we felt was; you know you have to go wherever the Lord calls you, and I felt that He had a little bit more for me. We moved to another Sabbath Church. Just let me kind of mention, of course, you know this, there is not a Sabbath Church on every corner.

Kenny: No, they're kind of far and few between.

Dewey: Right. We drive about seventy (70) miles each Sabbath there and back to the church we go to now. But, Jesus said small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads

to life and there are few who find it. I am searching for that narrow road right now. After searching the entire Bible, I never read that Jesus or any of His disciples ever went to church on Sunday. It's always been the Sabbath. I never found anything in scripture where the day was changed from Sabbath to Sunday. My concern is just to follow Christ and obey what His commandments are and try to honor Him.

Kenny: Dewey, I guess everyone who abandons a long-term tradition of Sunday-keeping, and adopts Sabbath-keeping, runs into a certain amount of surprise and even resistance from family members or Christian friends and certainly even some of your closest brethren. Did you have some experiences like that?

Dewey: Well, I guess the first experience I had is it felt so strange to get up on Saturday morning and basically go to church or let that be my Sabbath. You would drive by on your way to Church or wherever and everybody else was out working in their yard or had their stores open or whatever. So, it took me a while to get used to that. It is just a different feeling. I just felt like that was where God was leading me.

But my family, I am the only one who is a Sabbath-keeper. I run a business here in town. People come in and I am closed on Saturday and, during the business season, open on Sunday. When you start trying to explain that to people it gets kind of tough. But, I have had a lot of people that have been surprised, "You're open on Sunday and closed on Saturday? What are you in?" You have to explain it to them that we're Sabbath-keepers and most people understand.

Kenny: You are in what is known as the Bible Belt, so you have a lot of people who are pretty committed to that Book and the word of God and here they find you open [for business] on Sunday and closed on Saturday. So, I imagine that raises a few eyebrows.

Dewey: Yes, it does.

Kenny: Pastor Crump, given your calling as a shepherd, were some of your sheep somewhat astonished at your new belief and practice and what kind of things did they say to you?

Charlie: (laughing) Well, yes, there were different degrees and levels of that. After going through a year or so of fairly intense study of the Sabbath and different Truths in God's word, I knew it was getting very close. I could see the Holy Spirit grooming people. I could sense the different levels of concern. One mid-week, several of the sisters stopped me after the Bible Study and were very, very concerned and said, "Pastor Charlie, what do we do?"

And, I just smiled and looked at them and said, "Are you ready for the long haul?" Because when we make a commitment, I know the commitment is already made in your heart; you know we are serving Jesus. We are serving His Truth. And not everybody is going to accept, not only in your fellowship, but also within your own private families. They said, "I'm ready!"

Kenny: That's kind of amazing. In other words, they almost approached you wondering when you would take a stronger leadership role as their shepherd to say maybe we should start.

Charlie: You know Jesus has unique ways of taking things from you. Yes, that was a concern. You know, sooner or later, we're going to have to publicly open our doors on the Sabbath.

Kenny: Yes, the holy convocation, when you study what that means, it is pretty much a public assembly open to anyone who wants to worship the LORD. Pastor, Dewey is not really a member of your congregation. How did the two of you get together?

Charlie: (laughing) Well, this is kind of unique too. He started his search about the time that I was really intense also. And at different places, different times, I kept noticing this guy. I saw him over at this place and then I would go into another little seminar or something and I think I noticed him. Then, one thing led to another and I found out who he was and remembered this business that Mr. Fox was in. So, I dropped by to see him, and we talked. It was just the Lord's way of bringing two servants together and the rest is history.

Kenny: Isn't that something (laughing)! So you had noticed that he was a business man who was closed on Saturday but open on Sunday. Dewey, you have been supporting the Pastor in various ways as a friend in Christ. I am just wondering, as the time is flying by here, what can you say that you have observed in the form of "dos" or "don'ts" when you are trying to introduce Sabbath keeping to others who have always believed that Sunday was the day for group worship. Is there any wisdom you can share with us?

Dewey: Well, the only thing I could mention basically is that you just want to stick with the Scriptures; what the Bible says. When you talk with people who go to Church on Sunday, and they know that you go on the Sabbath, you can just ask the question, "When did Jesus go to the synagogue?" So I guess the only suggestion I would have is to stick strictly with the scriptures and let the scriptures speak to them.

Kenny: Yes. Well, I noticed earlier, Pastor, that you mentioned about studies you were doing where you open the book and read for yourselves what it says there, and says not, in terms of how to worship. I wonder sometimes in my own sense, how much of a personal example like Dewey's of which day he works, or which day he doesn't work, and in fact a 24-hour kind of practice, how much is the example of someone else you know and respect, a brother in Christ, who makes such a change, is that just as powerful or about the same as just studying the word yourself?

Charlie: I would say that that is extremely powerful. On the one hand, I would bring people into an awareness through God's word. It was not anything that I said but what their eyes fell on and what Jesus was putting in their heart.

On the other hand when you see a person that loves the LORD as much as Dewey and you go by and see his place closed on Saturday but open on Sunday, I have found this very much to be true. I've got people coming on the Sabbath right now that privately try to prove us wrong. But, the more they studied, the more they saw.

Kenny: Interesting. I just was here at the station with an old friend tennis player partner of mine. We had lunch together before coming over to the studio. Talking at lunch, he found out that I don't play tennis matches on Saturday when most opponents want to play. He was amazed at that. He said, "Wow, you really take this seriously!" I said, "Yes, it is more than a one-hour service obligation. It is a 24-hour thing." So people notice the examples and commitment and when we can back it up with scripture, it means a lot.

Pastor, do have a time frame in mind when you will convert to ONLY keeping the Sabbath with your congregation?

Charlie: Well, as far as keeping the Sabbath, of course, that will be forever. I understand the question. But, I am wondering in my mind even now; I know that Sunday is popular and socially accepted. But, it has proven itself to me, when people who are hungering and thirsting after God's Truth, never have heard of the Sabbath really, but just come in cold turkey on a Sunday, hear the word, be invited to a study, come to the study and six weeks later they're keeping Sabbath!

Kenny: Wow!

Charlie: So, I think we should be open, and I tell my people, and I tell you or anyone, yes, I minister on Sunday. I keep Sabbath. I know when the Sabbath is. But, if circumstances arise and we have to go to a dungeon to carry God's word or to Mt. Everest, or wherever Jesus leads and opens the place, I don't think we should shun that.

Kenny: Amen. Well, I am sure the two of you have found that suddenly, with this understanding, just like He said, He made this day for us, we now have 24 hours when we can shed all the hectic pace of all the other things in our lives, and concentrate on Him and His word and fellowship with other brethren who truly want to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Well, the time has flown by. My prayers are with you, to bring more brethren to a like mind and heart in the Lord of the Sabbath and keeping the holy days the LORD God appointed for worshipping Him.

I just want to thank you two for sharing your perspective with us today. I am wondering would you like to hear from any of our listeners who have gone through a similar transition?

Charlie: I sure would.

Dewey: We sure would, Brother Kenny. If they have any questions or comments or whatever, we would entertain that also.

Kenny: Excellent. If any of you listening to our program, or reading the script that I send all around the world, have experience in transitioning a congregation from first-day to seventh-day worship and are willing to share advice on how best to accomplish this, will you please write or contact me or the station and I will pass your contact information or experience on to these two brothers in Christ that the LORD may be glorified and His worshippers edified.

I am sure that the two of you know that according to Isaiah 66: 23, during the kingdom of God on the earth, "all flesh will worship before the LORD from Sabbath to Sabbath." While us Sabbath keepers are in a small minority now, we can be sure from the word of God that someday the entire world will know Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath and keep the day holy that He made just for them. Amen.

Charlie: Amen.

Dewey: Amen.