

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is authority to counsel others.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of October 18, 2014*

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and **not in accord with the tradition that you received from us**. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. *It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.* For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: *If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.* For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. *I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write.* (2 Thess 3:6–17 emphasis and double emphasis added)

1.

What tradition did the saints at Thessalonica receive from Paul: no work, no eat? Yes, this the holy ones received. But they received more: they weren't to mind each other's business, going about as busybodies. Every person was to be busily involved in supporting him or herself, not growing weary of either work or doing good works—and the antithesis of *good works* was being a busybody. Plus, there was no local ministry, no local church hierarchy to whom Paul wrote, no church organization to be supported by the tithes and offerings of the holy ones. Elsewhere (2 Corth 2:7–15), Paul more specifically addressed

asking for support, but here Paul merely cites his example of himself and those with him working day and night to not be a burden to the holy ones, thereby not themselves becoming a stumbling block for these holy ones ... those who teach weren't to ask for money even though their ministry had the right to be supported by those whom their ministry taught, and those who were taught had the obligation to support their teachers.

Again, in his second epistle to the holy ones at Thessalonica, Paul commanded these saints to spend their time engaged in work; in working with their hands, not being busybodies, engaging in the affairs of others, offering counsel to lonely women who complain about their husbands ... what sort of counsel can a *friend* offer to lonely women without producing the appearance of evil? Can this *friend* do anything about a husband stressed by long commutes, job uncertainty, poor diet, thereby coming home too tired to engage in chitchat with his wife? Can this *friend* fix the financial problems of the couple? Can this *friend* do anything more than confirm the wife's anxieties? Will this *friend* not attempt to give spiritual counsel to the couple when it isn't spiritual counsel that is needed, but the *friend* telling the lonely wife that he doesn't want to hear her problems; *take them to Christ Jesus, and wait until He addresses them, if He ever does for usually the problems aren't worth addressing except as a matter of you examining yourself to see where the fault lies within you, the one who complains, with such an examination annually commanded prior to Passover.*

In Scripture, find the idleness of retirement if you can? Where is the command to stop working when the body is old and no longer capable of laboring in the same way as when young? Where does it say that old women and old men can be gossips and busybodies, yakking away on cell phones instead of laboring with hands? Where does it say that any person has the right to retire and labor no more? Does not Paul, with his own hand, write that the holy ones are to separate themselves from any brother who walks in idleness; that he, himself, wasn't idle when with these holy ones, and they are to imitate him in that they were not to be idle but were to toil for their daily sustenance?

The person not called to ministry—and very few are called to ministry, far fewer than those who think they have a call—should not presume to spiritually counsel anyone. This person is a witness for Christ Jesus, with the person's "witness" being how the person lives his or her life. The person will only speak of spiritual matters when asked, not whenever he or she can, thereby doing Christ more harm than good by casting his or her pearls before swine, unclean persons through being spiritually dead ... what kind of testimony does the person offer when the person turns every conversation into a sermon? Is this the sort of person Christ Jesus wants as a witness for Him, a presumptuous person, one who acts without discretion? Does this person not alienate many, turning the many away from Christ because of the person's inability to discern the spirit in those to whom this person offers spiritual counsel?

The Father has not yet chosen to save this world.

This world and all who dwell in it (with very few exceptions) remain the "property" of the Adversary, the slaves of disobedience and unbelief, even when these slaves are basically good people. So who is presumptuousness enough to think that he or she can bring another person of Christ Jesus when the Father hasn't drawn the person from this world? Who is so errantly presumptuous that upon meeting a humanly good person, this presumptuous one begins preaching Christ to the good person, who really doesn't want to

hear how the presumptuous one worships God; for why is the humanly good person *good* if not because the person already has a well-developed sense of right and wrong? This good person, more than any other, is secure in his or her own righteousness and doesn't want nor needs to hear a sermon about spiritual matters. Rather, for this good person to grow in grace and knowledge, this good person needs to "see" the witness, the testimony of another good person who is more mature in his or her spirituality.

What will the Christian teach a Buddhist about patience, about suffering, about tolerance for others? Preaching Christ to the Buddhist is of no avail when the Christian lives his or her life with less patience, less tolerance than the Buddhist. What has Christianity to offer to the Buddhist when the Christian presumes to *save* the Buddhist from death by the Christian's presumptuousness?

In the same place where Paul wrote that those who do not work should not eat, Paul also said, "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men" (2 Thess 3:1-2).

Indeed, pray to God that the word of the Lord may be spread, not by the preaching of presumptuous Christians but by the good, decent, moral lives lived by Christians. Imitate God, who said nothing to the Christian in bringing the person to Christ Jesus ...

Did anyone audibly hear the voice of God—His words spoken by Him—when the person ceased being a son of disobedience and began to keep the Commandments? Did not the person who today keeps the Commandments begin to do so by coming to know that Christ Jesus is the Holy One of God, expressed by Peter thusly,

After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray Him. (John 6:66-71)

Among Sabbatarian Christians today—even among the Elect—is/are the one/ones who will betray endtime Christians ... the one who will betray looks like another of the Elect, but secretly, the one who will betray has been overcome by the world, with the evidence of having been overcome being the betrayer's inability to keep silent, saying nothing when foolish women complain about husbands or finances or whatever frustrates them today; saying nothing when husbands talk about the shortcomings of their wives, regardless of whether these shortcomings stem from laziness or frustration.

The Elect have been born of spirit and in effect are inwardly as angels are outwardly: the Elect have already glorified inner selves. Salvation has already been given to the Elect, who only wait receipt of glorified outer bodies [houses] in which the already glorified inner self will dwell in heaven and outside of time. But because the Elect are as angels are, the Elect who do not believe God will perish as fallen angels will perish when this creation comes to an end; will perish as the Adversary will perish, for the Adversary already has spiritual life, is a spirit, but will perish because he has been given the mind of a man when cast from heaven and will not know how to escape from the *Abyss* when the heavens and earth are consumed by fire.

The person who is today numbered among the Elect, but who persists in acting presumptuously will perish as the Adversary will perish.

2.

Paul faced a situation different from that faced by 21st-Century disciples; for many today preach Christ Jesus as Lord to the world. They preach without faith, without belief of God. They preach without being foreknown by God, predestined, called, justified, and glorified while still dwelling in fleshly bodies. These many do great works in the name of Jesus. They preach gospels of love. Yet they do not believe either God or Jesus enough to keep the Commandments. Rather, they hold that Jesus fulfilled the Law thus they are under no obligation to keep the Law; plus they hold that a sinful man cannot keep the Law, that it is *legalism* for the Christian to attempt to keep the Law. And they cite Abraham's example, Abraham's belief of God that was counted to him as righteousness. They are quick to mention that Abraham didn't keep the Sabbath; that the Sabbath hadn't been given when Abraham lived. And this is true even though Genesis 26:5 says otherwise:

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And [YHWH] appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because *Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*" So Isaac settled in Gerar. (Gen 26:1–6 emphasis added)

What did Abimelech, king of the Philistines, know about keeping the Commandments that were not yet codified and spoken by the Lord from atop Mount Sinai?

When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he feared to say, "My wife," thinking, "lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah," because she was attractive in appearance. When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife. So Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Behold, she is your wife. How then could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought, 'Lest I die because of her.'" *Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."* So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death." (Gen 26:7–11 emphasis added)

Abimelech knew that marriage vows were sacred. He knew that one person committing sin could bring guilt upon all of his people; yet the Law had not been given so *sin* was not counted as sin (Rom 5:13) so how did he know what sin was?

Philistines weren't sloppy when it came to keeping of marriage vows; they were not like modern Americans or Europeans who change husbands and wives about as often as Medieval Europeans changed undergarments. Was it because of where Philistines lived? And what were Philistines doing living in the land of the Amorites and Hittites, with the sins of the Amorites not yet being complete?

Then [YHWH] said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall

be buried in a good old age. *And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.*" (Gen 15:13–16 emphasis added)

Abraham lived as a sojourner in *the Sabbath*—

Once Abraham left Egypt, Abraham never left the geography representing the Promised Land. And the author of Hebrews equates the Promised Land with the Sabbath, and the Sabbath with the Millennium and with heaven (see Heb chaps 3 & 4). So how can a Christian claim that Abraham didn't keep the Sabbath when he didn't leave the geography representing Sabbath observance during his later years ... Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans [Babylon] and journeyed with his *old man* to Haran, in the land of Assyria, the land representing death. There he left his *old man* and journeyed south into the Promised Land, then even farther south to Egypt, the land representing sin before he was expelled from Egypt/sin and sent north into the Promised Land. In his person, Abraham did physically what an endtime Christian does mentally, in that the Christian leaves spiritual Babylon to journey to *the Land Beyond the River* where the Christian enters into Sabbath observance, a shadow and type of entering the Promised Land/heaven. If the Christian doesn't cross into Sabbath observance through figuratively crossing the Jordan, the Christian dwells in the land of Moab—and no Moabite will inherit eternal life. The Moabite must be as Ruth was, who left behind her people and crossed into *the Land beyond the River* to become part of Israel. The Christian's *old man* or old nature dies in baptism when the Christian crosses into *the Land Beyond the River*.

It is here where unbelief prevents that vast majority of Christians from entering into the Promised Land as unbelief prevented the nation of Israel that left Egypt with Moses from entering into God's rest, the Promised Land ... the vast majority of Christians build houses for themselves in theological Moab. They never enter into Sabbath observance. In fact, they go out of their way to spurn the Sabbath, to mock Sabbath keepers. They are truly heathens, having the appearance of godliness and professing that Jesus is Lord, but consumed with unbelief; for they do not know what became of the man Jesus who doesn't dwell among them but in heaven, where they plan to go upon death.

No one can, in this present era, come to Christ Jesus unless the Father draws the person from this world and delivers the person to Christ (John 6:44, 65), with this drawing coming by the Father raising the person from death—raising a dead inner self, a dead spirit in a dead soul from death through the indwelling of Christ Jesus, a life-giving spirit [*pneuma*] (1 Cor 15:45).

Yet there are busybodies within the Christian Church who have so little spiritual discernment that they cannot recognize spiritual birth, believing that every nice person who professes that Jesus is Lord has been born of spirit whereas every evildoer cannot possibly be born of spirit ... these busybodies are not themselves evil, and really have no experience with the depravity of which humans are capable. So they speak without knowledge; they counsel without knowledge. They need to shut their mouths and engage in work with their hands.

There are persons who have experienced true depravity; who have cried out to God, to Christ, for help when they were truly without hope. Some have committed suicide when Christ did not answer their pleas made with genuine tears, but some pleas, prayers were answered, with the person turning the person's life around in a moment. For whatever

reason, God heard and responded, for the person wasn't to die then and there, but was to physically live to do a work for God, then or in the future.

The same applies to soldiers, to people everywhere when there seems to be no hope—

But because God hears and answers a plea for help doesn't mean the person is suddenly born of spirit, but means that God doesn't want the person to physically die at that particular moment; that God has been watching the person who has human potential that could be of value to God, potential that the Adversary sought to destroy, and had effectively destroyed.

How is the busybody to spiritually counsel adulterers, murderers, or thieves? How is the busybody to counsel the homosexual who insists that he or she has been the way the person is since birth? What counsel is to be given to the humanly good person who has never knowingly committed a transgression of the Law? Does the one who counsels without being called to do so pick and choose his or her *victims*, selecting those who really have no need of counsel, thereby inserting him or herself into the *victim's* relationship with God instead of butting out, hearing the complaints of lonely women without saying anything, hearing without speaking as God hears without speaking? The busybody has no real understanding of God, Father or Son, and remains in need of spiritual milk.

Why doesn't God answer every prayer, every plea for help? Why did God permit the Holocaust, or the Killing Fields, or the Gulag Archipelago? Could He not have intervened to save lives? Surely there was someone in Germany, in Cambodia, in the former Soviet Union that God wanted to save ... indeed there were many. But those whom God sought to save physically didn't necessarily escape premature death for their own sake. Often they escaped physical death for the offspring they would bring forth, and these "many" that escaped death, escaped in varied venues, as varied as their situations.

The person who in the midst of his or her depravity cries out to God and is thereby saved physically may or may not be saved for his or her sake, but saved for the sake of the progeny the person will bring forth. No hard rule exists for when or why God chooses to physically save a person, but He does intervene in the lives of many whom He doesn't choose to call at this time or in this era. And how is the person to counsel another when the person doesn't know why God calls or doesn't call a third party person?

Children imitate parents: this is humanly true. It is also spiritually true. And God doesn't say much. Abraham didn't say much. Moses really didn't say much. Christ Jesus didn't say much; for much of the speech assigned to Christ Jesus was never said in the context in which it is recorded, especially as recorded in Matthew's or Luke's Gospel. For example, from which tall mountain can all of the kingdoms of this world and their glory be seen? And if no such mountain physically exists—none does—what answer would Jesus give from that tall mountain to the Adversary? See the problem? The Temptation Accounts in Matthew's Gospel, and in Luke's Gospel didn't happen, not that how Jesus answered the Adversary wasn't exactly correct. Rather, the Temptation Account in Mark's Gospel is more believable:

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my [Son, the Beloved]; with you I am well pleased." The spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him. (Mark 1:11–13)

According to Bishop Papias, a contemporary of Polycarp, John Mark wrote Mark's Gospel, with John Mark writing down faithfully what Peter, whom he served, preached and taught. But Peter did not teach in a straight-forward manner, but taught using analogies and metaphors. Apparently Peter didn't present a chronological narration of events to those whom he taught, thereby making John Mark's task of recording Peter's teachings more difficult.

The Greek of Mark's Gospel is not that of an accomplished writer whereas the Greek of both Matthew's Gospel and of Luke's Gospel is more polished, the work of experienced writers. So where stories told in Mark's Gospel appear in Matthew and Luke with hardly a change other than cleaning up Mark's grammar and syntax, it is fairly safe to assume that Mark's Gospel was the first Gospel [biography of Jesus] to be written, that Matthew and Luke were written sometime after Mark was written; for a writer doesn't take grammatically correct passages and deliberately turn them into grammatically incorrect passages. Or at least, one would not think that a writer would do so.

The author of Luke's Gospel tells his reader[s] that he is not writing an inspired biography of Jesus, but a redaction of other writings and testimonies about Jesus (see Luke 1:1–4). Unfortunately, the author of Matthew's Gospel doesn't say why he writes, but presents narrative in which Peter was present but about which Peter never preached, notably the Sermon on the Mount. The disciple Matthew wasn't even present for the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt 9:9), and what will be discovered when Matthew's Gospel is closely read is that the *Jesus* of Matthew's Gospel is the indwelling Jesus that gives spiritual life to disciples. But this isn't taught by the Churches of this world.

When is all authority in heaven and on earth given to the Son of Man? Is not all authority taken from the Adversary and his angels and given to the Son of Man in the following accounts?

As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before Him; a thousand thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Dan 7:9–14)

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Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." (Rev 11:15–18)

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Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" (Rev 12:7–12)

All authority in heaven and on earth will be given to the Son of Man when this authority is taken from the Adversary and His angels, not until then. Therefore, what Matthew's Jesus tells His disciples in Matthew 28:18 will not be true until halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation. Until then, the Adversary remains the prince of this world, and what Matthew's Jesus declares as true is only true for those disciples genuinely born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus. Hence, Matthew's Gospel is about the indwelling Jesus, not about the man Jesus who physically lived two millennia ago.

There is much to be considered, but one more thing especially: Paul wrote, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). ... Did we live before we were conceived? No, we did not. So if Christ died for us while we were still sinners, He died for us after we were conceived and humanly born. This means that He died at Calvary after we were born, which doesn't make sense in this world. But considering the timelessness of heaven, makes perfect sense from the perspective of heaven. It is this Jesus, the one that dies for us after we are conceived in heaven—born of spirit—that is the Jesus of Matthew's Gospel, which now functions as prophecy, not biographical history.

The person who would spiritually counsel another needs to be as Paul was before he or she opens his or her mouth to speak.

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[[Home](#)] [[Sabbath Readings](#)]