

OUR CALENDARS ARE *OUT-OF-WHACK*

Remember to observe the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. You have six days from each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath Day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God (*Exodus 20: 8-10*).

When it comes to professional sports right now, their calendars are *out-of-whack*. Take for instance Thanksgiving Monday. Normally on this day the Canadian Football League would have its usual Thanksgiving rivalries: the Toronto Argonauts playing in Hamilton against the Tiger Cats and the Calgary Stampeders playing against Edmonton. There was no CFL football being played this past Monday due to COVID-19.

Normally a new NHL season starts in early October, but this year is different. The Tampa Bay Lightning just won the Stanley Cup a few weeks ago and a new season is not expected to start until January 2021. The same is true for the NBA. A new NBA season starts in October as well, but its season ended this past weekend with Lebron James and the Los Angeles Lakers winning the title. Tennis has been experiencing the same. The French Open, which is usually played in June, happened over the past two weeks instead. Golf has done the same with some of its events. The Masters, usually played in April, will be played this year in November. Although some professional sports calendars are still normal like the National Football League, many other sports calendars are *out-of-whack*.

Our calendars are usually filled with things like work, school, medical appointments, activities for kids, meetings, church, Bible studies, get-togethers, and social outings. This pandemic has certainly caused many of our calendars to become *out-of-whack*. Many things that filled up our calendars have either been cancelled due to COVID-19 or postponed to a later time. Some people have enjoyed their calendars being freed up and less busy, while others have struggled with this change.

We see in the *Book of Exodus* that God set a strict calendar for the Hebrews to follow. A Hebrew month began in the middle of a month instead of on the first day. God instituted certain holidays to be part of the Hebrew calendar. For instance, PASSOVER and the Jewish Holiday of the FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD were part of the Hebrew's March-

April calendar. These annual celebrations included in the Hebrew calendar were meant to remind the people of how God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt. On these celebrations the Hebrews would thank God for saving them from death and bringing them out of the land of slavery and sin. Another important thing that God included in the Hebrew calendar was the Sabbath day to be observed each week. It was a day set aside each week on the Hebrew calendar for worship and rest. When God set the Hebrew calendar, we can see how He carefully chose opportunities in the calendar year for the Hebrews to draw close to Him on a weekly basis and remember His faithfulness at various times through the year in the annual celebrations.

This pandemic has resulted in many of us having our calendars become *out-of-whack*. Worship has been one of the activities in our calendars that has been *out-of-whack*. With churches having to close in mid-March we lost our weekly calendar routines of going to church on Sunday morning or coming to Bible study on Wednesday mornings. In the early months of this pandemic we had to switch our weekly calendars to watching church online or on the TV or feeding ourselves spiritually through the week by means other than Bible study. Some of us may have adapted very well to fulfilling our spiritual needs with our calendar becoming *out-of-whack* while others of us may have been finding it a struggle adapting to the changes.

As we saw from how God designed the calendar, it is important for us to make it a part of our weekly calendar to experience the Sabbath for us to worship and rest. We cannot let the changes to our calendars as a result of COVID-19 cause us to miss out on the importance of being blessed through worship on the Sabbath. We must make every effort to keep worship part of our weekly calendar despite COVID-19:

- If you are comfortable, start coming to church each Sunday morning now that we have reopened and make it part of your weekly calendar.
- If you are not comfortable returning yet, keep in the habit of watching the services online on Sundays or through the course of the week.

We need to spend unhurried time in worship every week. This is especially critical in this time of uncertainty brought upon us by the pandemic. Holidays were also a part of the Hebrew calendar. God intentionally included these holidays as reminders to the Hebrews to remember God's

actions and faithfulness such as the Passover. We just celebrated a holiday last weekend with Thanksgiving. I hope we all took time over this Thanksgiving weekend to remember God's blessings upon us.

This Sunday we will be celebrating our 142nd Anniversary at the church. Whether you worship with us in person or online, I pray that you will remember the ways God has blessed you with His spiritual, emotional, and physical care through the years you have been part of the church. More holidays will soon be upon us. I spotted Christmas items this very morning on the shelf at Home Hardware as I was getting some leaf bags that I needed to finish my fall raking. Before we know it, the Christmas holidays will be upon us. Every week we need to make sure our *out-of-whack* calendars still includes time for worship. Also, at each holiday during this *out-of-whack* season of COVID-19, we also need to make sure we remember God's faithful love and care for us.

Sports calendars may be *out-of-whack* right now. Our calendars might be *out-of-whack* too. Let's make sure our calendars always include time to worship God each week and time to remember God's faithful love and care for us, be it on a holiday or a regular day.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean