



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.1, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

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Program 68 **Sunday Songs**

When I was a youth, I was instructed that there were several things I could not do on Sunday – most notably, I could not go to a movie or eat in a restaurant. But at some point my parents' views shifted, because in their twilight years, they welcomed the opportunity to patronize the local buffet after Sunday morning service! We found several pop songs that are about or mention Sunday – a day significant to Christians – so much so that many "blue laws" were enacted in early America to govern what one could or couldn't do on a Sunday! Most blue laws prohibited selling alcohol, but a few others went a step beyond, such as prohibiting racing, car sales and even barbering. In some southern and midwestern states, "Numerous people were arrested for playing cards, baseball, and even fixing wagon wheels on Sunday"¹ as violations of blue laws. "In Virginia, people were arrested and fined for such activities as selling Coca-Cola or peanuts, and for showing movies or operating public swimming pools."² Where did "Sunday" come from, and what should it mean to us?

- The Roman Emperor Constantine is credited (or blamed!) for the first blue law...

*"Sunday has been the state-decreed day of rest in Christendom ever since A.D. 321, when the Emperor Constantine, a convert to Christianity, decreed that citizens 'shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun.' With that same decree, though, Constantine set a pattern for future blue laws: he made an exception. He said that farm people might work on Sunday to take advantage of fair weather. Ever since, every blue law seems inevitably to have picked up similar variations."*³

- The states' right to enact blue laws was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in 1961...

Chief Justice Earl Warren, writing for the majority, said in effect that blue laws would violate the First Amendment only if their essential purpose were to aid religion, but nowadays "most of them, at least, are of a secular rather than a religious character. Sunday, said Warren, has come to be "a time for family activity, for late sleeping, for passive and active entertainments, for dining out and the like."³

- So, what, if anything does the Bible say about what we should do or not do on Sundays?

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." – Exodus 20:8-11, NIV

¹ http://wapedia.mobi/en/Blue_law

² <http://www.vahistorical.org/onthisday/11574.htm>

³ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,830508-1,00.html>

- In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was Saturday. Some dictionaries today give the Sabbath secondary meaning for Christians...

n.

1. The seventh day of the week, Saturday, observed as the day of rest and worship by the Jews and some Christian sects.
2. The first day of the week, Sunday, observed as the day of rest and worship by most Christians.

[Middle English *sabat*, from Old French *sabbat* and Old English *sabat*, both from Latin *sabbatum*, from Greek *sabbaton*, from Hebrew *šabbāt*, from *šābat*, to cease, rest.]⁴

- “Sunday”, per se, isn’t mentioned in the Bible. Scripture refers to “...the first day of the week”.

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...” -- Acts 20:7a

- In both Latin and Greek, Sunday was named for “Day of the Sun”, or “Sun’s Day”, just as Monday stems from “Moon’s Day”.⁵
- So is our Sunday the same as the Sabbath? If so, when and how did the switch occur?

“...in 325 C.E. (A.D.) the Nicene Council under the leadership of the Roman emperor Constantine the Great started the change...”⁶

“... The sacredness of Sunday was not yet sufficiently established, because a divine warrant for its observance was still unprovided...”⁶

“But in the very midnight of the Dark Ages, when the papal power had reached its highest elevation, Pope Innocent III., in A.D. 1201, sent into England by Eustace, Abbot of Flaye ... a roll which fell from heaven, containing the long-needed divine authority for Sunday”⁶

- Legalists challenged Jesus concerning what should or shouldn’t be done on the Sabbath...

“One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” – Luke 6:1-2, NIV

“Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” – Luke 6:5, NIV

“On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.” – Luke 6:6-7, NIV

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?’” – Luke 6:8, NIV

⁴ <http://www.answers.com/topic/sabbath>

⁵ <http://www.crowl.org/Lawrence/time/days.html>

⁶ <http://www.mayimhayim.org/Rabbi%20Mike/Sabbath%20article.htm>

Sunday morning, up with the lark
 I think I'll take a walk in the park
 Hey, hey, hey, it's a beautiful day
 I've got someone waiting for me
 And when I see her I know that she'll say
 Hey, hey, hey, what a beautiful day

Hi, hi, hi, beautiful Sunday
 This is my, my, my, beautiful day
 When you said, said, said, said that you loved me
 Oh my, my, my, it's a beautiful day

Birds are singing, you by my side
 Lets take a car and go for a ride
 Hey, hey, hey, it's a beautiful day
 We'll drive on and follow the sun
 Making Sunday go on and on
 Hey, hey, hey, it's a beautiful day

- From "Beautiful Sunday", by Daniel Boone (1972)
- Here we note a theme common to many Sunday songs, i.e., enjoying the day, walking in a park, going for a ride, etc.
- People frequently associate Sundays with rest, recreation and time to enjoy our Lord's beautiful creation



I remember Sunday morning
 I would meet him at the park
 We'd walk together hand in hand
 'Til it was almost dark

Now I wake up Sunday morning
 Walk across the way to find
 Nobody waiting for me
 Sunday's just another day

Sunday will never be the same
 I've lost my Sunday-song,
 He'll not be back again

I remember children
 Feeding flocks of pigeons
 I remember sunshine
 And you were mine

- From "Sunday Will Never Be The Same", by Spanky & Our Gang (1967)
- Nothing in lyrics links Sunday to anything particularly religious or spiritual
- Could have just as easily used other days of the week instead of Sunday
- Here again, the theme deals with walking in a park on Sundays

The local rock group down the street
 Is trying hard to learn their song
 Serenade the weekend squire,
 who just came out to mow his lawn

Another Pleasant Valley Sunday
 Charcoal burning everywhere
 Rows of houses that are all the same
 And no one seems to care

- From "Pleasant Valley Sunday", by The Monkees (1967)
- Written by Gerry Goffin and Carole King, "The lyrics were a social commentary on status symbols, creature comforts, life in suburbia, and "keeping up with the Joneses"⁷

See Mrs. Gray she's proud today
 because her roses are in bloom
 Mr. Green he's so serene,
 He's got a t.v. in every room

Another Pleasant Valley Sunday
 Here in status symbol land

Mothers complain about how hard life is
 And the kids just don't understand

Creature comfort goals
 They only numb my soul
 and make it hard for me to see
 My thoughts all seem to stray,
 to places far away
 I need a change of scenery

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasant_Valley_Sunday

Groovin' . . . on a Sunday afternoon
Really couldn't get away too soon
I can't imagine anything that's better
The world is ours whenever we're together
There ain't a place I'd like to be instead of . . .
Groovin' . . . down a crowded avenue
Doin' anything we like to do
There's always lots of things that we can see
We can be anyone we want to be
And all those happy people we could meet just . . .
Groovin' . . . on a Sunday afternoon...

- From "Groovin' (On a Sunday Afternoon)", by The Rascals (1967)
- Again, this song focuses on enjoying the day and good company

...Then I crossed the empty street,
'n caught the Sunday smell of someone fryin' chicken.
And it took me back to somethin',
That I'd lost somehow, somewhere along the way.

- From "Sunday Morning Coming Down", by Kris Kristofferson (1969)
- See notes for Program 11 for detailed information on this song

On the Sunday morning sidewalk,
Wishing, Lord, that I was stoned.
'Cos there's something in a Sunday,
Makes a body feel alone.
And there's nothin' short of dyin',
Half as lonesome as the sound,
On the sleepin' city sidewalks:
Sunday mornin' comin' down.

In the park I saw a daddy,
With a laughin' little girl who he was swingin'.
And I stopped beside a Sunday school,
And listened to the song they were singin'.
Then I headed back for home,
And somewhere far away a lonely bell was ringin'.
And it echoed through the canyons,
Like the disappearing dreams of yesterday.



Ooh, that's why I am easy
I'm easy like Sunday morning
That's why I'm easy
I'm easy like Sunday morning

- From "Easy", by the Commodores (1977)

Oh, you can kiss me on a Monday, a Monday,
A Monday is very very good
Or you can kiss me on a Tuesday, a Tuesday,
A Tuesday, in fact I wish you would
Or you can kiss me on a Wednesday, a Thursday,
A Friday and Saturday is best
But never ever on a Sunday, a Sunday,
A Sunday, cause that's my day of rest

- From the film "Never On Sunday", by Manos Hadjidakis (1960)
- In this one, a lady declares Sunday as her day of rest from work; oddly, her line of work is prostitution!

Most anyday you can be my guest
Anyday you say but my day of rest
Just name the day that you like the best
Only stay away on my day of rest

I want a Sunday kind of love
A love to last past Saturday night
And I'd like to know
 it's more than love at first sight
And I want a Sunday kind of love
Oh yea yea...

• From "A Sunday Kind of Love", by Etta James (1961)

And my arms need someone
Someone to enfold
To keep me warm when Mondays
 and Tuesdays grow cold
Love for all my life to have and to hold
Oh and I want a Sunday kind of love
Oh yea yea yea

Other popular songs about or mentioning Sunday include "What Are You Doing Sunday?" by Tony Orlando and Dawn, "Lazy Day" by the Moody Blues, "My Sunday Feeling" by Jethro Tull, "She Gives Me Religion" by Van Morrison, "Little Lady Preacher" by Tom T. Hall, and U2's "Sunday, Bloody Sunday".

Final Thoughts...

These Sunday songs bring back fond memories, but they lead me to consider the significance of Sunday to Christians... Does the 4th Commandment apply to us today? If so, why and how? Christian leaders disagree over this issue, and entire denominations have emerged as a result. Let's carefully consider what the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote to the Romans...

"One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" – Romans 14:5, NIV

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