

{The Book of Mark}

**Sermon Series:** Who is this man?

**Sermon Title:** The lord of the Sabbath [Sermon #11]

January 8, 2017

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Remember the **structure** that we have seen in the last few sermons in Mark?

- \* Jesus {or his disciples} do/does something controversial
- \* Questions come from the religious teachers
- \* Answer by Jesus

We saw:

- Jesus eating with the tax collectors and sinners. They asked why he would do such a thing. Jesus responded that it was the sick who need a doctor, not the well.
- Jesus' disciples weren't fasting though John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees were. They asked why the disciples weren't fasting. Jesus responded that there is no need to fast when Jesus is with them. Later when Jesus is gone they'll fast because the essence of fasting is to get more of God. Can't get more of God than God in human flesh.

Now today we come to the final conflict in this section between Jesus and the religious teachers/Pharisees. Jesus and his disciples seem to be breaking the Sabbath day.

Mark 2:23-3:6

**23 One Sabbath he was going through the grain fields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" 25 And he**

said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: 26 how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” 27 And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

3:1 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. 2 And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” 4 And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

**I. The disciples do something controversial.** As they are walking about on the Sabbath Day, they pluck some grain and eat it.

**II. The Pharisee’s question v.24 “Why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”**

Matthew’s gospel tells us that they were hungry.

Were they doing something wrong?

Were they stealing?

Were they ‘working’ on the Sabbath by taking grain?

Let's look at the O.T. law to see what it actually says.

### **Exodus 20:8-11**

**“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 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. 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.**

### **Exodus 23:12**

**“Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.**

Intending to clarify what God meant, the Pharisees had redefined what 'lawful' was.....What 'work' was and what 'labor' was.

They had taken the rules of God and made them more specific, beyond what God had intended.

-They said that a person couldn't travel more than 1999 steps. If you traveled 2000, you broke the law. This was called a 'Sabbath Day's Journey'.

-They said that if a person's shoe came untied, they couldn't tie it back because that was work or labor.

**illustration: Jewish people with key cards in SF hotel. (wouldn't open the door to the room on the Sabbath but went sightseeing the whole day. I had to let the people into their rooms).**

Certainly in the eyes of the Pharisees, the Disciples had committed 2 possible Sabbath crimes.

1. They were working by picking the grain. You couldn't harvest your crops on the Sabbath, so they were guilty of harvesting by plucking.
2. They could have been walking too much. More than the 1999 strides. So they were 'traveling' which was work.

### **III. Jesus' response & what we learn about the Sabbath.**

Jesus' response was 3 parts and a demonstration.

**A)** 'Don't you remember that King David and his men (just like me and my men) did when they were hungry? They ate the twelve loaves of the Showbread that they weren't supposed to eat.'

God nowhere condemns David for eating the priests bread even though it was not lawful. Because it would be better for God's anointed king to not die of hunger. God's holy bread became David's daily bread.

**B)** Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Jesus is making it clear that God's idea for the Sabbath and the Pharisee's idea are not the same. The Sabbath is a gift from God. He gave it so that we 'would be refreshed' that the animals might be refreshed and etc. Oh, what a gift it is. Not just a rule.

**C)** Jesus declared himself the lord of the Sabbath. Ha. They must have thought he was crazy. What he means is....I have authority over the Sabbath because I created it. I established it.

\* In fact in chapter 2 Jesus makes some striking statements about his DIVINITY.

-He says he can forgive sin.

-He says that he is the doctor sinners need.

-He says that people don't need to fast around him.

-He says that he is the one who created the Sabbath.

**D)** Now look at chapter 3:1-6 as Jesus demonstrates something.

The key is verse 4. "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?"

They were silent.

Jesus was angry and grieved at their hardness of heart.

He healed the man.

They then planned on how they were going to kill him.

**\* Summary** of what Jesus is saying:

Pharisees care about rules not people.

Notice that the disciples are hungry. Notice that David and his men were hungry. Notice that the man had a withered hand.

Jesus asked, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?"

They probably would've said yes. It is better that David starve. Better that the man wait to be healed.

The Pharisees were concerned with the OUTSIDE, how people viewed them. They loved the applause of people and they kept the laws of God to impress others. But they didn't love people. Read Matthew 23 to see how they treated people.

#### **IV. In closing, we need to ask 2 questions.**

##### **Question 1:**

**Does Jesus mean that the Sabbath isn't important or that we shouldn't keep the Ten Commandments?**

No. He's just clarifying that the Pharisees have taken it too far. The Sabbath is for man but the Sabbath is to be kept holy. The Commandments are to be obeyed. Why? Because God loves you and knows what is best for you. You need to be 'refreshed'. You need to worship. You need to unplug from the office and your work. It's a command of God.

How are you doing with remembering the Sabbath? Holy?

##### **Question 2:**

**Are we like the Pharisees in any way?**

Do you gauge your closeness to God by the rules you keep?  
Trying to impress people with your devotion?

'I don't hang out with sinners. I fast regularly. I attend church every Sunday. I'm a great Christian. Hey, I'm even reading through the Bible this year.'

But how's your heart? Are you in danger of doing these things to impress others? Man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart!

Do you love God?  
Do you love the church?  
Do you love your neighbor?

\*Maybe there is someone here today that would say, 'In my heart, I know that I am not a follower of Jesus. I've been pretending. It's just religious exercise but I don't know God.' You can know him today.

Jesus said, **"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."**

Let's pray together.