

Theme: As the Son of Man, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath and He cut through the extra-biblical burdens that had been added to the Sabbath to return it to its original purpose as a gift for humanity.

I. Intro - Tevye and Tradition

- A. Classic play/movie Fiddler on the Roof
- B. The whole musical focuses on Tradition, Tradition!
- C. A memorable scene about Sabbath - Sunrise, Sunset
- D. Sabbath was God's gift and command - but like so much else it had become distorted
- E. The next two weeks - The Son of Man and the Sabbath

II. Your Disciples Are Violating the Sabbath!

A. A controversy on the Sabbath

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Mark 2:23–24

1. They are walking - must be close to the village
2. They are in fields and start picking and eating
 - a. This seems strange to us - but the law allowed this
If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain. Deuteronomy 23:25
 - b. The problem is not with picking grain from someone's field - it is when they are doing it!

B. The Sabbath is the central issue in this passage

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields ... ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ... ²⁷ Then 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." Mark 2:23–24, 27–28

III. The Sabbath and Judaism

A. The clear biblical teaching on the Sabbath

1. The Sabbath was part of God's design in creation
By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Gen 2:2–3
2. The Sabbath was a covenant sign between Yahweh and Israel
The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. ¹⁷ It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested." Ex 31:16–17
3. Jews were not to work on the Sabbath
For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death. ³ Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day." Exodus 35:2–3
4. Violating the sabbath years was part of what led to the exile

The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah. 2 Chronicles 36:21

5. The Sabbath was to be celebrated and delighted in. The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. Exodus 31:16

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the Lord... Isaiah 58:13–14

- B. To “protect” the Sabbath, many extra laws were created
 1. The Mishnah listed 39 categories of work that must not be done on the Sabbath
 2. This included plowing, hunting, and butchering
 3. It also included tying or loosening knots, sewing more than one stitch, or writing more than one letter
 4. It even said you could not set a dislocated foot or hand on the Sabbath!
 5. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, it forbade carrying children, helping an animal give birth, or saving an animal that had fallen into a pit!
 6. “The rules about the sabbath, festal offerings and sacrilege are as mountains hanging by a hair, for Scripture is scanty and the rules many.” Mishnah Hagiga 1:8

- C. The tradition regarding reaping on the Sabbath
Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest. Exodus 34:21

1. This clearly prohibited going to the field to actively harvest crops - daily farm work
2. The tradition said even a person rubbing grain was therefore prohibited
3. Thus the disciples had not violated actual Old Testament commands, but they had clearly violated the traditions that had developed around Sabbath

IV. The Son of Man and the Sabbath

- A. Jesus goes to the Scripture to determine what is lawful
He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶ In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” Mark 2:25–26
 1. A story from 1 Samuel 21:1-7
 2. Abiathar vs. Ahimelech - special After Hours
 3. David is fleeing from Saul, lies, and gets the Consecrated bread that only priests were allowed to eat and eats it with his companions.
 4. This actually violated the Torah - and yet God allowed it to meet David's need.
 5. This meant that the endless rules were not in line with the tenor and purpose of Scripture and God's Law.

6. Tradition taught this occurred on the Sabbath ('how much more then today') - so it was applicable
 7. If David could do this because he was the Lord's anointed - what about Jesus the true Anointed One to whom David pointed?
- B. Jesus goes back to the original intent of the Sabbath
Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Mark 2:27
1. He cuts through all of the oral tradition and goes back to the Scripture to determine the meaning of Sabbath.
 2. God did not make humans to honor the Sabbath - He gave Sabbath as a gift to humans!
 3. Sabbath is a gift and a joy - but their extra laws were turning it into a burden.
 4. Rubbing a few heads of grain did not violate God's gift of Sabbath even if it did violate the endless rules of the Pharisees.
- C. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath
So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. Mk2:28
1. As the Son of Man, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath
 2. Jesus, not the Pharisees, is the one who interprets what is lawful on the Sabbath.
 3. Jesus uses "Son of Man" for several reasons
 - a. It does not have the baggage of 'Messiah'
 - b. It is meant to make them contemplate His actions and claims
 - c. It points to Who Jesus is - the 2nd Adam, the fulfillment of God's call for all humanity, the Son of Man from Daniel 7 - the One full of Divine Authority.

4. The Son of Man is truly Lord of the Sabbath - and everything else!
This statement boldly affirms that as Lord the Son of Man is the one who decrees what is lawful and unlawful, permissible and impermissible, and any customs ordained by the Pharisees or their traditions are thereby rendered null and void. It is Jesus who makes plain the humanitarian purpose of the Sabbath, and his word is final. - David Garland
5. The identity of Jesus is THE CENTRAL issue!

V. Applying the Word

- A. Do I see the danger of adding to God's Word?
1. Jesus & the Pharisees had many conflicts over this
 2. The problem was not the Word of God - it was the extra-biblical traditions and rules they had added to God's Word
 3. They claimed these extra rules helped people keep God's Word, but Jesus said they actually prevented people from truly receiving and obeying God's Word.
 4. The end result of adding to God's Word
 - a. It caused them to forget the real purpose of the gift of Sabbath!
 - b. It turned a gift into a legalistic obligation, a blessing into a curse, and a joy into a burden!
 - c. They were more committed to the rules not in Scripture than they were to God's Word!
 - d. Their hearts actually were drawn far away from God

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?”⁶ He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’⁷ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.” Mark 7:5–8

5. This can be a temptation for us today as well - because people try to get around God’s Word we can begin to add to it and turn God’s gifts into burdens.
 6. As always, God is after our hearts, not mere external rule keeping
 7. Stephanie and soccer - her heart was not in it!
 8. Do I know, love, and walk with God, or do I merely legalistically try to set up and follow rules?
 9. Do I let the Spirit search my heart and keep rigorously revealing idols and pointing me to Jesus?
- B. Do I receive God’s gift of Sabbath?
1. God is the One Who gave us Sabbath as a gift
 2. In our day Sabbath is totally ignored - to our own detriment and slow destruction!
 3. As always, God is after our hearts, not mere external rule-keeping, even regarding Sabbath
 4. Do I have daily and weekly Sabbath, when I truly shut down and rest?
 5. Do I receive the gift of Sabbath, or is my soul shaped by our cultural obsession with non-stop activity, efficiency, and productivity so that I can’t rest?

C. The Table of Sabbath Rest

1. We come to this Table to rest from our works
2. We come to this Table to have our hearts renewed in the Presence of Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath
3. We come to this Table to receive refreshment and strength from Jesus our Sabbath

The Son of Man and the Sabbath (Part 1)

Mark 2:23-28
February 5, 2023
Communion
Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: Sabbath and rest; Christology; legalism; God’s Law

The Lord bless you and keep you;²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

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