

## Lesson 3: *The Lord of the Sabbath*

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

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In Mark 2:23, 24, the Pharisees accuse the disciples of breaking the Sabbath. According to Jewish tradition, 39 forms of labor were forbidden on the Sabbath, which, in the Pharisees' minds, included what the disciples had done.

**Read Mark 2:23–28. How does Jesus counter the charge brought by the Pharisees?**

<sup>23</sup> Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

<sup>25</sup> But He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: <sup>26</sup> how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?”

<sup>27</sup> And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”—**Mark 2:23-28**

Jesus responds with the story of David's eating the sacred shewbread (*1 Sam. 21:1–6*). The shewbread was removed on the Sabbath; so, David's journey may well have been an emergency escape on the Sabbath. Jesus argues that if David and his men were justified in eating the shewbread, then Jesus' disciples are justified in plucking and eating grain.

Jesus further indicates that the Sabbath was made for the benefit of humanity, not the other way around, and that the basis for His claim is that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

**Read Mark 3:1–6. How does this story illustrate Jesus’ point that the Sabbath was made for humanity?**

And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. <sup>2</sup>So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. <sup>3</sup>And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.” <sup>4</sup>Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent. <sup>5</sup>And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. <sup>6</sup>Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.—

**Mark 3:1-6**

Again Jesus faces controversy with the religious leaders over the Sabbath. (Notice, however, that the controversy is never over the Sabbath day itself.) The religious leaders want to accuse Jesus if He heals on the Sabbath. Jesus does not shy away from confronting them. He sets up a contrast between doing good or doing harm, saving life or killing. The answer to His question is obvious; doing good and saving life are much more appropriate as Sabbath activities.

Jesus proceeds to heal the man, which angers His opponents, who immediately start to plan His demise. The irony of the story is that those looking to catch Jesus in Sabbath breaking were themselves breaking the Sabbath by plotting His death that same day.

**Illustration: Sabbath Extreme Pendulum**

<sup>13</sup> “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,  
*From* doing your pleasure on My holy day,----- Cephets  
And call the Sabbath a delight,  
The holy *day* of the Lord honorable,  
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,  
Nor finding your own pleasure,  
Nor speaking *your own* words,  
<sup>14</sup> Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;

And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,  
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.  
The mouth of the Lord has spoken.” —**Isaiah 58:13, 14**

<sup>3</sup> ‘Why have we fasted,’ *they say*, ‘and You have not seen?  
*Why* have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’  
“In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure,  
And exploit all your laborers.—**Isaiah 58:3**

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.—**Exodus 20:8-11**

<sup>15</sup> In those days I saw *people* in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all *kinds of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about the day on which they were selling provisions. <sup>16</sup> Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

<sup>17</sup> Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, “What evil thing *is* this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?... <sup>19</sup> So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath... <sup>21</sup> Then I warned them, and said to them, “Why do you spend the night <sup>[d]</sup> around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will lay hands on you!” From that time on they came no *more* on the Sabbath. <sup>22</sup> And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and

that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day.—***Nehemiah 13***"***15-17, 19, 21, 22***