

Good News From Mark

The Sabbath: It'll Do You Good

Mark 2:23 – 3:6

Intro

Do you remember the CBC panel game show from the 70's called *This is the Law?*

Let's apply that approach to the setting we find in Mark 2:23-24. What law were the disciples breaking?

- A) they were stealing grain that didn't belong to them.
- B) they were breaking God's law by reaping grain on the Sabbath (Exodus 34:21).
- C) they were breaking the Pharisees' interpretation of Sabbath law.
- D) none of the above

Setting

Mark 2:1-3:6 contain 5 controversies...

1. Jesus heals a paralytic after forgiving his sins.
2. Jesus eats with tax collectors & sinners.
3. Jesus' disciples don't fast like John's and the Pharisees'
4. Jesus' disciples pick grain on the Sabbath
5. Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath

Overview

Jesus teaching on the Sabbath:

- A day to enjoy
- A gift of rest
- A day to do good

1. A Day to Enjoy (2:25-26)

How does this story in 1 Samuel 21:1-9 fit with Jesus and his disciples?

In 1 Samuel, the priest giving David & his men the bread was clearly forbidden (Lev. 24:8-9) but David was not condemned.

The bread was needed to accomplish a greater purpose – to strengthen David & his men to escape from Saul's rage.

Here Jesus and his men are on a mission.

The Pharisees were sniping at Him for breaking a rule they had invented.

Jesus demonstrated that since David wasn't condemned for his action, the Pharisees' restrictive interpretation of the law doesn't fit with the spirit of the Scriptures.

And besides, Jesus is the greater David.

2. A Gift of Rest (2:27-28)

The Pharisees were treating the Sabbath as something that man was made to observe.

But Jesus taught that the Sabbath was made for us – a gift from God.

A) a call to rest in God – (Ex. 20:8-11)

B) a celebration that slavery had ended (Deut. 5:15).

Jesus could interpret the Sabbath this way because He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

3. A Day to do Good (3:1-6)

The Pharisees were watching Jesus closely after having their knuckles rapped a few times.

Jesus intentionally calls the man with a shrivelled hand out in the open so that everyone could see.

He clarifies that the intent of the Sabbath was for doing good and promoting life.

Jesus was deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts and commanded the man to stretch forth his hand.

Results:

- the man was immediately healed
- the Pharisees began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Summary & Application

1. Embrace God's gift of the Sabbath.

A) rest from your labours because God did

B) rejoice in your liberation from slavery – don't fall into the trap of frantic activity.

The world will not fall apart if you take a break.

2. Answer Jesus' call to come to him and find rest.

Matthew 11:28-29 (NIV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Psalms 62:1-2 (NIV)

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.