

MARK 2:23-3:6

REST VS RELIGION

SERMON POINTS

- LORD OF THE SABBATH
- IS IT LAWFUL TO DO GOOD OR BAD?

MAIN IDEA: Religion turns rest into work but the gospel turns work into rest.

BACKGROUND

After having established Jesus as the Messianic King through teaching, healing, and confronting evil Mark now gives five examples of Jesus in conflict with the religious leaders of his day. We are skipping forward to the fourth and fifth of those conflicts but will return to them later this month.¹

Who were the Pharisees? The phrase, “Pharisee” means “separated” and that is the heart of their movement. Israel is an occupied nation, and the people of Israel are beginning to be more and more influenced by the Gentile culture rather than their faith. The Pharisees believed the best response was to separate themselves but in their separation, they formed elaborate systems and rules and regulations as additions to God’s laws. They created “Litmus tests” for who was faithful to God and who was not.

QUESTIONS

P: The Sabbath (cease; pause; rest) was the seventh day of the week (Saturday for the Jewish faith), and was the fourth of the ten commandments.

Q: What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”? What does it mean that he is “Lord of the Sabbath”?

Q: The Lord gave us the fourth commandment to rest, but the Pharisees turned what was meant as a gift of rest into a type of works righteousness, which was truly breaking the principal.

Q: What litmus tests are Christians today creating? How do you turn what God’s rest into works?

¹ Scott preached a vision sermon in the new year based on Mark 2:13-17, and so pastor Josh will preach this passage in two weeks.

P: The second story in our passage shows what legalism does to our hearts. The Pharisee's desire for self-righteousness through their rule keeping has led them to a place where they would rather keep the rules than do good, or save a man's life, or heal a man. Jesus knew that they are plotting his demise---they are judging him for healing a man on the Sabbath, but they don't understand that they too are working on the Sabbath—they are working their plan of attack—to kill and murder the Messiah. Beware of your inner Pharisee---works righteousness will always turn you into a hypocrite.

P: Religion turns rest into work but the gospel turns work into rest.

Whose work is turned into our rest? Jesus'!

John 19:30

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Q: What would it look like for us to turn Jesus' work into our rest?

OTHER PASSAGES

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.

1 Samuel 21:1–6

Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?" [2] And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. [3] Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." [4] And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women." [5] And David answered the priest, "Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?" [6] So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.