

Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6: Should Christians Observe the Sabbath?

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[0 : 00] And today, we're going to look at two passages, but both of them focus on the Sabbath. And so, this morning, we're going to be talking a lot about the Sabbath, about this particular, these two different accounts, and then really ask the question, well, what are we to do with this whole thing called the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is an observance that the Jews were required to keep related to the last day of the week.

And as part of the law of Moses, they were to rest and not labor on that last day of the week. And so, this comes up in both of these two passages.

We'll start here in verse 23. We're going to read the last section here of chapter 2, and then we're going to get into the first section here on chapter 3. In the one case, Jesus and his disciples are eating, and they're criticized for breaking the Sabbath.

And in this first part of chapter 3, there is a healing that takes place, in which there is, at least, they're being accused of also breaking the Sabbath.

[1 : 22] So, let's start with this last passage, verse 23 in chapter 2. Now, it happened that he went through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and as they went, his disciples began to pluck the heads of grain.

And the Pharisees said to him, look, why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath? But he said to them, have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him?

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. And he said to them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

So, Jesus and his disciples, you know, are traveling around. They're going around from place to place, and don't always have, they don't have a home to go to to have their meals.

[2 : 33] And sometimes they're just eating on the road, on the go. They didn't have McDonald's or Taco Bell back then, right? So, you just had to make do with what you had.

You'd carry some, maybe some food with you. But in this case, they were just plucking some grains from a local wheat field. Now, you might think, well, that's kind of rude.

Was it, you know, did they have permission to do that? This was actually a common practice and has been not just in Israel, but throughout the world, right? People who are traveling, and you are hungry, and there's people growing crops of some kind.

You take the opportunity to just take a little bit while you're on the go. Actually, in the Jewish law, this was an affordance in the law of Moses itself. It's something that we call gleaning.

And so, those who had fields were actually commanded to allow for this kind of gleaning. It was meant for travelers, strangers, foreigners, people who were poor or destitute.

[3 : 39] And so, this wasn't something that was unheard of and, in fact, was an affordance given in the Scripture. In fact, in Deuteronomy 23, verse 24, it says this, So, this was part of the law of Moses.

If you're traveling and you're hungry, whether you want a snack or whatever it might be, you can go ahead and take some of the grapes and eat them, take some of those heads of grain and eat them. But you might think, well, somebody might take advantage of that, right? And so, it's not your land. You're not going to take a sickle out there and just fill up your bushel of grain, right?

This is just for small amounts to be used to eat immediately. Otherwise, it would be what? It would be stealing, right?

And so, this affordance was made and this is what Jesus and his disciples were doing. They were just taking advantage of the gleaning that they had opportunity to do.

[5 : 07] And so, basically, they're grabbing these little heads of the wheat. And it doesn't say it here, but it says it in another passage.

I think it's Luke. Luke 6, verse 1 is a parallel of the same account. And it says that they were rubbing them in their hands.

And so, when you have wheat like this, it has chaff. Yeah, you call it the chaff or the husk. It's the inedible part.

And so, you want to kind of rub it. And the chaff is very lightweight. So, as you rub it, the chaff just kind of drifts off. And the good part, the edible part, you know, stays right there. So, that's what they were doing.

You grab the little heads. You just kind of rub the chaff away. And you can kind of blow it off. And there it goes off into the wind. The Bible talks elsewhere about chaff, right?

[6 : 03] But so, that's what they were doing. And they were just providing some food for themselves. But this was a special day. This was the Sabbath. And so, it says here in verse 24, And the Pharisees said to him, because they saw his disciples doing this, Look, why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

So, the first question to ask is, is this really, were they really breaking the Sabbath? Is this really something that was unlawful? And you'll notice in this account that Jesus never explicitly denies that he's breaking the Sabbath.

He doesn't say, well, this isn't breaking the Sabbath. You know, this is, this is certainly, doing something like this isn't, isn't unlawful in and of itself.

You never see anywhere in the Old Testament law where it mentions that you're not specifically allowed to pluck grain and stick it in your mouth.

It doesn't seem like it's, would be considered what the Sabbath, what was, what was disallowed for the Sabbath was what? It was labor. So, it certainly would seem quite a stretch to call plucking little grains and putting them in your mouth, I guess there's a little rubbing of the fingers, as labor, right?

[7 : 33] But, nonetheless, this is what the, they were being accused of. Interestingly enough, one of the things that Jesus rails, and if you look in Matthew chapter 23, Jesus rails against the Pharisees.

One of the things he says is in Matthew 23, he criticizes them. He says, you hypocrites, you strain out a gnat, but you'll swallow a camel.

Strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. What does that mean? Well, it means you make, you make out of little things, you make them big things.

And you take things that are little things and you turn them into big things. And you shouldn't do that. The law was not meant to be used that way. But here was Jesus' response.

He said to them in verse 25, Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry? He and those who were with him. And then he tells this account of what happened with David.

[8 : 41] But before we get to that account, one of the things I want to point out is, what was his response to them? His response was, have you never read?

And is this the only time that Jesus said that? If you read through the Gospels, you'll see Jesus say this, specifically to the Pharisees, this phrase several times.

Have you never read? He's saying, hey, what do the Scriptures say? Look to the Scriptures. This is our rule of life for us as Jews. Of course, it's the same for us as Christians.

The rule for our life is the Scriptures. And what, have you not read the Scriptures? And so he takes them to a specific passage to look at.

I think it's important to point out, Jesus expects these people to understand what the Bible teaches. It's easy, right? It could be easy to just say, oh, well, you know, people are ignorant.

[9 : 39] They're probably just don't know any better. But Jesus did know, right? He knew their hearts. In fact, it says later on here, as we will look in the beginning of chapter 3, he knew it was because of the hardness in their hearts.

What the law said about the Sabbath and kind of, you know, the restrictions around it, it was clear in the Bible, it's clear, but sometimes because of the hardness of hearts, people make it less clear,

add things to it that shouldn't be there.

And I think one lesson that we can take from that is, you know, God expects us, too, to understand things from the Bible.

The Bible is a book that is meant to be read, but not just read, but to be understood. And it's a book that is understandable if we'll spend the time working to understand it.

It's not something that is, you know, only accessible to academics, those who can read Greek and Hebrew, right?

[10:52] This book that we have before us is something that God gave to us to be read and to be understood. But so many people, right, will use the word of God to their own ends.

They'll abuse it. And that's what the Pharisees were doing in this example. So he gives this example of David.

And there's this account back in the book of 1 Samuel about David, in which he's being pursued by King Saul.

And he's fleeing, fleeing away because King Saul wants to kill him. And he's got a small band of men with him who are followers of his. And the account goes that they're hungry and they come up to the, not the temple, but the tabernacle at the time.

The temple had not yet been built, but there was this tabernacle in which there were all the things that were part of the tabernacle or later the temple. And so he goes and he asks the priest, he says, me and my men are hungry.

[12:08] And he tells a story. It's not an accurate story. He doesn't say that I'm fleeing from the king because he doesn't want to get in trouble. But he says, we're hungry.

And so he goes to the high priest. And the high priest says, well, we don't have any food. Well, except we have this bread called the show bread. And the show bread was just some bread that would be baked once a week.

And there was a table that it would be set on. And at the end of each week, actually on the Sabbath, new bread would replace the old bread.

And well, what do you do with the old bread? Do you just throw it out? Well, actually, the law of Moses said that that bread was to be eaten by the priests.

Not anybody else, but only by the priests. And so Jesus uses this account. And in the account, the priest, the high priest himself, tells David, well, you guys, I guess, really need food.

[13:14] This is all we have. So this bread that we just took off the table, we replaced it with new bread for the week. The old bread is supposed to go to the priests to eat. But since you guys are really in need of it, we'll go ahead and give it to you to eat.

And so this was an example that Jesus gave to the Pharisees to say, hey, listen, you should have taken note of this story and know that the way you are abusing the Sabbath is inappropriate.

That there are times, especially when there are needs, where the Sabbath should not be, or these more ceremonial type laws, these symbolic type things, should not get in the way of meeting someone's needs.

Now, I imagine, right, that if David had showed up to the priest and there was some other bread that was not holy bread, it was not bread that was separated, not part of the Mosaic law, that that priest would have given David and his men that bread, right, instead of the other.

And that would have been more appropriate. But in this case, the only thing that was available was that showbread. After giving this account to the Pharisees, Jesus continues on, and he said to them, the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.

[14:55] The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. And what does that mean? Well, that means, who does God value more? Does God value, did he create the Sabbath day as the pinnacle of, to put his love on and affection?

Or did he create man as the pinnacle of his creation to put love on? Is that what God cares about? Is it God cares about a Sabbath ritual more or does he care about man and his needs more?

The Sabbath was something that was created in order to benefit the Jewish people. It was a day of rest for them to provide a rest for them.

Now, don't get me wrong, it was a law that was a requirement. It wasn't just an option. It was something that was required as part of that Mosaic code.

But it was meant for their good. Not something to be used to abuse people, to put a heavy burden on people. Yet one of the things that Jesus says, again, this is another one from Matthew 23, that

famous passage in which Jesus rails against the Pharisees.

[16:23] He says this in Matthew 23, verse 4, talking about the Pharisees, For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

This is just another one of those examples of taking one of God's laws and turning it into a heavy, heavy burden.

Now, God's laws were somewhat burdensome, right? Anytime you have a law, there's a burden to bear in keeping that law. But is God happy when somebody decides that they're going to take it on themselves to add, to make that burden even heavier than it was, to make it even harder to obey, like the Pharisees were doing.

But yet this seems that this is a favorite pastime of the religious, isn't it? We want to create our own laws, our own rules.

We'll just add to it. You know, if God's rule, if God's law is good enough, hey, let's just build on top of it, build our own rules surrounding it.

[17:34] This is what the Pharisees were known for. This is what many Christians are known for, unfortunately. God forbid that we should do the same thing.

Then he finishes up with this. He says, Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Who's the Son of Man? Jesus. And this is something he referred to himself as, as the Son of Man, so they knew who he was talking about.

He was given this as an additional reason for the liberty that he has with his disciples. The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. What does it mean to be a Lord?

Well, in this case, it means master. There's actually two different words used for the word Lord in the New Testament. One is actually the word for Jehovah.

[18:34] It's translated in our English Bibles as Lord. And you can actually usually tell in most translations, if that word Lord means Jehovah God, that word Lord is in all uppercase.

Every L-O-R-D, they are all uppercase. But if you see it in a different way where maybe L is capitalized, but the rest of the letters are lowercase, well, that's a different word.

It doesn't mean God. It doesn't mean Jehovah. It just means a master. And so you might call someone who has authority in some way, whether it's religious authority or secular authority, they would be called by this word, a Lord.

You were Lord of whatever it might be. You were the master, maybe of servants or some other responsibility. And so Jesus is saying here, he's saying, as the Son of Man, I am the Lord or Master of the Sabbath.

Now that's quite a claim. Because who established the Sabbath day? It was God himself, right? What is it here that Jesus is saying?

[19:53] And we might ask the question, well, because some people have said about Jesus, well, he was a great prophet. He was a good man.

He was a good teacher. Maybe he was the greatest of all the prophets. But could you imagine any of the other prophets saying of the Sabbath, well, I am Lord of the Sabbath.

Could you imagine that at all? Maybe even Moses, right? Moses was the one who delivered the law of God to the people. He delivered that Sabbath law. Would Moses ever say, I am Lord of the Sabbath.

I am Master of the Sabbath. Would he say that? I can't imagine. Would David say that? I am Master of the Sabbath. This is, even an angel, can you imagine if an angel, like the angel Gabriel came and he told someone, I am Master of the Sabbath.

That would seem blasphemous, wouldn't it? And I think it would be. And so, of course, Jesus was accused of blasphemy because of many of the things that he said.

[21:02] This, I'm sure, being among them. But this seems to me to be a very clear indication that Jesus is giving of who he is, that he is God himself, come in the flesh.

But he's saying, hey, listen, I have the right, just like that high priest, that high priest who broke the law.

He broke the law about the showbread. It was something that he wasn't supposed to do. But there was a scenario there where it was needful. It was needful to break that law.

And so Jesus, as the Lord of the Sabbath, he can do the same thing, if needful. The other thing I think that it shows, and we'll talk about this more in a moment, is it shows the symbolic nature of both the Sabbath and the showbread.

That these are symbolic commands. Not just moral commands. Could you imagine if Jesus said this same thing about, let's say, you shall not commit adultery.

[22 : 14] And Jesus, well, my disciples, they commit adultery, but hey, I'm the Lord of adultery. Would that, does that sound right?

That sounds horrific, doesn't it? Horrific that Jesus would ever do anything like that. And so, adultery is a matter of fundamental morality, whereas things like the Sabbath day and the showbread were not issues of fundamental morality.

They were just regulations given to the Jews. And we'll talk about that in a moment. Let's go ahead and continue on with the next chapter and looking at another issue related to the Sabbath.

And then we're going to ask the question, as Christians, what is our obligation when it comes to the Sabbath day or the seventh day or the first day or Saturday, Sunday, all these things.

So, chapter 3, verse 1, and he entered the synagogue again and a man was there who had a withered hand. So they watched him closely, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him.

[23 : 25] And he said to the man who had the withered hand, step forward. 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. 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. Then the Pharisees went out and they immediately plotted with the Herodians against him how they might destroy him or how they might destroy him.

So he enters into a synagogue. It's on the Sabbath day. There's a man there. He's got a withered hand. Who knows what kind of condition it was, but his one hand was emaciated and shriveled in some kind of way.

And it says here in verse 2, so they watched him closely. They were watching him closely. And why were they watching him closely? Well, it says whether he would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him.

[24 : 39] They weren't watching him closely because they wanted to find out more about him and see if he really was who he said he was, to see if they could learn something from him.

They were looking for an opportunity to accuse him. And notice what Jesus does. He does not wait for them to accuse him. He sees them watching him.

And he decides, it seems to me, I'm going to do something that is intentionally offensive to these Pharisees.

I'm going to do something to show really the hardness of their own hearts. So he says to the man, step forward.

Then he said to them, so he says, I'm going to make a, I'm going to make an example out of this.

So come forward, stand right here. And then he says to the crowd, including to these Pharisees, is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?

[25 : 56] And then I'm sure he just paused and waited for an answer. And what does it say?

They kept silent. What were they going to say? Is it wrong to heal somebody on the Sabbath?

Is that really something that is evil, that is wrong? You know, the Jews today those who are Jewish not just by their ethnicity but by religion who are faithful to keep the law of Moses.

They, and who want to, for example, honor the Sabbath day, they will, they have allowances in their law for certain different things.

That if somebody is in need, somebody needs critical medical attention, even today, the Jewish people will have an allowance regarding the Sabbath to help a person in need.

[27 : 06] And of course, that seems very obvious that that would be the case. Jesus is just making very clear, hey, if you have somebody who's in need, need, we have an opportunity to save a life, to heal.

Is it appropriate to do that on the Sabbath day? And then it says this, and when he had looked around at them, and there's two emotions that it expresses here.

He looked at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts. He was angry because he knew what was in their heart.

He knew the reason. Now, there might be some, right, who would just be confused. Well, we want to be faithful to the Lord and we want to make sure that we obey his law.

And so, in that case, Jesus might be more compassionate and just explain, simply explain. Well, actually, you know, this is how the law should be observed and this is how the law should not be observed.

[28 : 18] But in this case, he knew the hardness of their heart. And it made him angry. And sometimes it's appropriate to be angry when people are defying God's word, especially when they're doing it with a pretense of honoring God's word.

Does that still happen today? People defy God's word with a pretense of honoring God's word? And then it says that he was grieved.

He was grieved. He was angry and he was grieved that people would twist and abuse God's word like this. So he said to the man, stretch out your hand.

The man stretched it out and his hand was restored as whole as the other. And then it says this, then the Pharisees, they went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against him how they might destroy him.

So what was their response? We got to get rid of this guy. We got to get rid of him. They plotted on how to destroy him.

[29 : 41] Well, real quick, who are the Herodians? The Herodians were those, so there was some controversy in Israel. Herod was the king of the Jews, but he was just really a puppet of the Romans.

the Romans. And so there were some people that thought, well, that's fine, we just need to get along with the Romans and do whatever it is that they want, and so we're going to support Herod. And then there was those other Jews who said, you know what, God gave us this land, we should have an independent nation, and so we shouldn't put up with this puppet king who pretends to be a real Jewish king.

He's not a real Jewish king. He's a total fake. You know, he's just a puppet of the Romans. And so the Herodians were those who were just, they were fine with the whole Roman rule thing, and they supported Herod.

And so you can imagine, and we read about this when Jesus was born, well, this is supposed to be the king of the Jews, and so Herod and the Herodians were definitely against anybody who would claim, have any kind of claim to the throne of Israel other than Herod.

[31 : 02] And so they plotted with these Herodians against him how they might destroy him. All right.

Having gone through this, I wanted to just ask some questions, because this brings up this whole question of the Sabbath. Sabbath. And so we as Christians, is the Sabbath something that we ought to observe?

Or is it something just for the Jewish people? So the first question I want to look at is, in these passages, some have made the claim, because of the response that Jesus had to the Pharisees, that through his actions and his words, Jesus took this as an opportunity to basically make the Sabbath obsolete across the board for Jews, for anybody.

And is that what we see happening here? Well, no. Jesus actually is just pointing out how the Jews were adding to the law of Moses, and they weren't observing the Sabbath appropriately.

They were doing it inappropriately. They were adding to it, making it an even heavier burden. But Jesus, if you read through the scriptures, it was important to him that the Jews kept the law of Moses.

[32 : 28] That's what they were supposed to do. They were supposed to keep the law of Moses. In fact, in Matthew 23, again, this is our third time referencing Matthew 23, his woes against the Pharisees, he says this, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, for you pay tithes of your mint and your anise and your cumin, and you've neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith.

These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. So he's saying, listen, you have the law of Moses, and you should keep the law of Moses, but you're adding things that shouldn't be there, and then you're removing things that you shouldn't remove, like mercy and justice.

Mercy and justice should be part of the law, right? Justice and mercy and faith. So you should have included the mercy and the justice and the faith as part of your keeping of the law, but that doesn't mean that you should neglect these other things.

You should pay tithes on your crops, as the law says. And so, nowhere do we see Jesus undermining the law.

In fact, he says in another place, he says that I did not come to abolish the law, but to establish it. And he says not one jot or tittle will be removed until, and he points to a future time.

[34 : 09] Not that time. He says I'm not getting rid of the law now. There's coming a time when things will change, but not now. And so, Jesus did not end the Sabbath with his ministry.

And so, since Jesus, it seems, upheld the Sabbath, is that something that we should hold to? The Bible teaches that there was a change that happened later on after the cross.

And so, if you have your Bible, turn to Colossians chapter two, and we're going to focus on two passages, and then maybe we'll take some questions.

Colossians chapter two. Paul here is speaking to the Colossians. Paul is, as many of you know, the apostle to the Gentiles.

he was sent to the Gentiles to bring the message of the cross to the Gentile people, to let them know that Jesus Christ, that God loves them, and that Jesus Christ died for their sins.

[35 : 23] Not just for the sins of the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. God loves the cross. And because of this, because of what was accomplished on the cross, there was a change in how God was interacting with his people.

Previously, for his people, they became children of God by following the law. But no more. So, Colossians chapter two, verse 13, says this.

Let's actually start at verse 11. In him, he tells the Colossians, in him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands. He's making reference to the law.

The law required circumcision of children, of boys on the eighth day. But he's talking about a circumcision made without hands, by the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.

Verse 12, buried with him in baptism, in which you also were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. Then he says this in verse 13, and you being dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh.

[36 : 38] You were spiritually dead, you were separated from God as Gentiles. But you, he made alive together with him. Just as Jesus was risen from the dead, he was made alive from death, so also you who were dead in your sins.

have been made alive just as Jesus rose from the grave. Having forgiven you all trespasses, all of your trespasses, all of your sins have been forgiven.

And then verse 14, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. What is that handwriting of requirements that he's talking about?

The handwriting of requirements that was against us? That's the law of Moses. See, the law of Moses was one of these things, in fact, Paul in Ephesians calls it a wall, a middle wall of separation. This law of Moses separated Jew from Gentile, the people of God, from those who are separated from God. And those handwriting of requirements, that middle wall of separation, that law of Moses, is taken out of the way for those who are in Christ, for those who trust in him.

[38 : 01] It's no longer a wall, it's no longer separating people from God. He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

There's this picture of what being nailed to the cross? Well, Jesus was nailed to the cross. And sometimes we say that our sins were nailed to the cross, and I think that's an appropriate illustration.

But here, what is nailed to the cross? The law of Moses was nailed to the cross and put to death. And in other places, Romans 7, it talks about us being put to death, that we might be made alive unto God.

There's a lot of things nailed to the cross so that we might have life, so that we might be united to him, so that we might be reconciled to God and be his children.

And then verse 15, having disarmed principalities and powers, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing, triumphing over them in it.

[39 : 10] This is talking about his death on the cross and what that accomplished spiritually. Then verse 16, he says this, so let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

For those of us who are in Christ, Christians, let no one judge you. don't let someone put a burden on you that is not yours to bear.

If you were a Jew before the cross, this was a burden for you to bear. It was required. But for those of us in Christ, the burden, the middle wall of separation, the handwriting of requirements that were against us, it's taken out of the way.

And he includes some specifics. He doesn't include all the specifics, but he talks about rules and regulations about food and drink.

Did the Jews have a few of those? They certainly did. Or regarding a festival or a new moon, did they have festivals, feasts? They certainly did. Or Sabbaths.

[40 : 31] And there were many Sabbaths. You might think, well, there was a Sabbath every week, right? But there were actually Sabbaths in regard to their festivals and their feasts. Every time they, or most of their feasts, they also had a Sabbath day of rest included with those.

So there were many Sabbaths. But what does he say? He tells us a little bit about what these things were for, these regulations. Verse 17 again. Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Christ. So all these rules and these regulations, they had a purpose. They weren't just for kicks and giggles, right? They weren't just for God to kind of have fun with making up commands for people to do just to see if they would do it.

Let's see if they'll actually do this. These silly things. Some of them seem silly, right? You can't wear clothes that have mixed fabric, wool, and cotton. It's like, that seems bizarre.

You can't mix different seeds on the same field? Why not? What's wrong with that? Seems like there was some amount of no logic really in kind of some of the food laws.

[41 : 44] Well, how come we can eat some of these things and not some of these things? It just didn't seem to make sense. Many of these laws. But they had a purpose. And the purpose pointed to something in the future, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

They were a shadow of things that would be fulfilled in Christ. Turn to the book of Hebrews, chapter 4.

This is a book, and nobody really knows who the author is. Some people have guesses.

Some people think they're pretty confident. I don't know if I would be able to have that kind of a confidence in a book that does not indicate who the author is.

But everybody knows who the book of Hebrews was written to. And it's actually pretty easy because it's in the title. The book of Hebrews was written to the Hebrews.

[42 : 58] Not too complicated. But in here, as a warning to the Hebrews, to not neglect what Christ has accomplished. Don't neglect it.

Don't walk away from it. And in this chapter 4, he talks about what happened to the Jews in the wilderness. And they were promised a land, the promised land, a land of milk and honey, in which they could rest from all their labors.

They were in slavery in the land of Egypt. They wandered in the wilderness. They were taken out from that land of heavy labor in Egypt where they were enslaved.

And here was a land of their own, full of abundance, where they could relax, where they could have a restful and peaceful life.

And what happened? The story goes that they sent spies in to check out the land and the spies came back with what was called an evil report. The people there, there's people there and they're too big and we won't be able to, we won't be able to take the land.

[44 : 10] And so most of the people, they went with that evil report. And there were a few that said, no, we can do it, but just a few. And so they didn't enter the land.

The rest that God had for them. And so the author of Hebrews uses this as an illustration to say, Jesus is providing a rest for you as Jewish people, as the Hebrews.

He's providing, he has offered you a rest. Don't turn away from it. enter into the rest that God has provided.

And we'll read specifically where we are. Let's just read a couple of verses here. Hebrews chapter 4, verse 9 and 10. There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God.

For he who has entered into, entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works, as God did from his. So in this admonition to enter into God's rest through Jesus Christ, through the sacrifice that he provided, through the grace that he offers.

[45 : 38] He says in verse 9, there remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God. He's talking to, when he says the people of God, he's talking about the Jews. Now, they're not the only people of God anymore, but that's who he's talking to here.

For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works, as God did from his. And what's that talking about? God rested? When did God rest?

Does God need to rest? Does he need to sleep? Well, it goes back to the very beginning in Genesis. Six days God took to create the heavens and the earth.

Six days. And what does it say he did on the seventh? He rested. He rested. That's what the author of Hebrews is talking about here.

Just as God rested on the seventh day, from the very beginning, he showed that he was going to provide a rest for his people.

[46 : 44] For he who has entered into his rest has himself also ceased from his works, as God did from his. And, you know, there's the works of labor, you know, of digging ditches and building homes.

There's also a different kind of works that we rest from, and that's what's in view here. And what are those works? Keeping the law. Trying to do all the things in the law.

And in Christ, we have the opportunity to rest. To take a deep breath.

Jesus provided a way where all the requirements that we have to do to try to make our way to him. We can just relax.

And enjoy him. At any time. Without having to worry about any of those labors. What he's done for us has already been accomplished.

[47 : 50] So, when it comes to the Sabbath day, and whether we should keep it, the Sabbath has been fulfilled. All these kind of rest things in the Bible, these symbolic things, they've been fulfilled.

Because the rest that God had for us, the target or what was in view for each of these symbolic things, it's done.

It's accomplished. We don't need to do these symbolic things anymore. Let's finish there. And let's, if we can, we'll take some time to take some comments or questions.

There are a lot of questions when it comes to the Sabbath. And maybe actually, maybe I'll just talk to a few things to give people maybe some time to think about questions or comments that they might ask.

But some people say, well, you know, the Sabbath was actually established before the law of Moses. And so, you know, we should just observe the Sabbath because, well, you know, it came before the law.

[49 : 06] And so, we're not supposed to be under the law of Moses, but, hey, the Sabbath came before the law. But that's actually not true. The Sabbath, do you know when the Sabbath was first established? It was established, and I guess it was before the law, but not very much.

It was, what, weeks maybe before the law of Moses? It was during the time of Israel in the wilderness. Remember when God provided them manna?

This is in Exodus 16, if you want to look it up later, Exodus 16. God was providing them manna. But on the sixth day of the week, so on Friday, the last day of the week is Saturday, on Friday, the amount of manna, well, actually, so each day they were supposed to gather the manna, and they were to eat it for that day.

And if they tried to keep it for another day, what would happen? It would spoil, it would rot. And so God said, I don't want you to do it, because I want you to trust me.

Because you can imagine, right, well, there's not any food around here, and now there's, like, lots of food on the ground, so let me just get as much as I can to make sure I have enough for as long as possible.

[50 : 21] But God said, listen, I'm going to provide for you, I want you to trust me. I want you to trust me. So just eat what's provided on each day. But on that sixth day of the week, there was double the amount.

He said, on that day, that'll be special. I want you to go ahead and keep extra, but just for one extra day, because that last day of the week, I'm going to make for you a day of rest. I don't want you to

gather any of the manna.

On that day, just stay in your homes and just enjoy the food. You don't have to gather it up, you don't have to go out, just enjoy. And that will be a Sabbath rest for you. That was the very first Sabbath.

Later, in the Law of Moses, there's more detail put in there, but that was the very first one. There was no Sabbath for Abraham, for anybody before that time.

So, anyway. Any questions or thoughts? Yeah, right over here. Paul mentions in Romans 14, 15, that one man esteemeth one day above another, and others esteemeth every day alike.

[51 : 34] Let every man be persuaded in his own mind. So, at this point, you know, he's pretty much dismissed the previous law-keeping, day-keeping, Sabbath-keeping, and all that.

Yeah. So, in Romans 14, and that has caused a little bit of confusion for people. People have different ways of trying to parse out what Paul's teaching there. But my view there of Romans 14, he's talking about, well, we have Jews who are actually still under the law, but they're trusting in Christ.

And then we have Gentile Christians who are not under the law. And so, you have people who think that they need to keep the law, specifically the Sabbath, and those who know better, basically, these Gentile believers.

And so, how should you, you want to be kind to your brother, and so don't be intentionally offensive. Because if somebody thinks that they have to keep a certain ceremony, and they don't do it, well, that's, they think at least that they're sinning, and you don't want to cause somebody to stumble, right?

But, his approach, basically saying, the ones who are not keeping the Sabbath, they're the ones that know better. They're the ones that know better. That you don't need to keep the Sabbath, or any of these laws of Moses.

[53 : 00] Ron? Colossians chapter 3, verse 1. Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things of the earth. Christ is seated in the heavenlies with God. The work has been accomplished.

It's a sign of rest. The priests could not do that. They couldn't sit down that day of atonement, because there was still work to be done. Yeah.

We can rest in the fact that Christ has done it all. Jesus is seated. He's accomplished his work. And it says, is it in Ephesians? Somebody correct me if I'm wrong. That we are seated with him, it says, in heavenly places.

In Christ Jesus. Because our lives are in him, we are seated. We rest with him, just as he rests in his throne in heavenly places.

[54 : 04] That's a great point, Ron. Anyone else? The Sabbath ends up being quite controversial, especially over the years.

I mean, we have even laws on the books today. We have what we call blue laws. You're not allowed to have stores do commerce on the Sabbath day. And then there's the question of, well, is the Sabbath day Saturday?

Which is what the law says. It's the last day of the week. But then over time, Christians have said, well, actually, there's a new Sabbath. It's the Christian Sabbath. And that's Sunday. And so we need to kind of keep the Jewish law, but only kind of in a different way.

And so there's all kinds of different ways that people do that. Go ahead, Lynette. I know that we're under the age of grace, and we don't have to keep those laws. We're not Jewish, so it wasn't meant for us anyway.

But since God gave them those laws to the Jewish people for their benefit so that they wouldn't work continuously every day and not take a break and not rest, and some of the other laws like circumcision on the eighth day, and we see now through medical technology and everything of how that is beneficial than any other day, do you ever think that maybe we should keep the laws because they're to our benefit anyway?

[55 : 34] Like even when God said not to eat the scavengers of the sea and the hoofed animals and stuff like that, we know now that ham and bacon and all that is not as good for us as even though I love it.

You offend some people. I'm not even close to being a vegetarian. But since we know those things are not as healthy for us, do you think that we should, for our benefit, keep those laws?

Yeah, I think it's difficult to discern sometimes. You know, when it comes to food, you know, every, I don't know if anybody's ever looked at dieting and what kind of food you should eat, but there's only one, like, opinion out there, right, on what you should eat.

It's like everybody has a different opinion on what's healthy and what's not, right? And so, you know, there's, you know, so it's difficult to discern when it comes to, especially the dietary things, you know, which foods are really healthy and which aren't.

I think some things are maybe easier to discern. For example, the Jews, when it came to their ritual washings, were always required to use running water, which that is definitely, you know, running water is much healthier and less disease prone than what?

[56 : 56] Stale water, right? And so you definitely see those things in the law of Moses. There were things around impurities and dead bodies and all kinds, and leprosy.

We talked about that a few weeks ago that are definitely geared around good health and hygiene and things like that. I don't think all the laws were that way, but I will say this about the Sabbath. Is it good to work all the time, seven days a week and never rest? No. Everybody knows that. You ought to rest.

You ought to rest. It's in the Proverbs that talks about, do not overwork to be rich. And how many, especially men, right? How many men are like so prone to that?

Oh, man, I can build an empire if I just, you know, work 80 hours a week. I think of Elon Musk, and if you're familiar with Elon Musk kind of in the culture, and he's like famous for working 80 hour weeks, seven days a week all the time.

[57 : 55] I don't know how he survives, but he does. And he's definitely very rich and wealthy and powerful at this point in his life. But we ought to rest, and so it's appropriate to rest.

And, you know, I think the Sabbath points to that. But the Sabbath is very specific. It's a very specific day of the week, very specific on what you can and cannot do.

And so we might rest on Wednesday instead of Saturday. What's that? Every day. Every day.

Yeah, or you might, you know, rest in different ways.

You might, you know, take certain nights of the week off or whatever it is. Do fun things with your family. Take vacation, right? Take a vacation once or twice a year with your family just to kind of get away from the regular parts of daily living.

All of those things are good things that represent the kind of rest that we should take. But so many people have said, well, if you're going to rest, you have to do it this way because this is what God told the Jews.

[59 : 01] So if you don't do it this way, God's going to be upset at you, and he's probably going to curse you. Some people say, if you open up your business on Sunday, then you're going to be under the curse of the law.

And I've heard people give testimonies. I closed my business on Sunday or I stopped working on Sundays, and then God gave me an extra blessing. You know what? That's completely bogus. In this age of grace in which we live, there's no extra blessing for not working on Sunday.

There's none. There's zero. Do you know why? Because God has given us every spiritual blessing in heavenly places because we are in him. Every spiritual blessing. There's none that he has withheld from us.

So you don't get any extra blessings from not working on the Sabbath. We have it all. Now, those are spiritual blessings. It doesn't say that God's going to make us rich, at least not in monetary terms.

But so anyway, thank you for that, Lynette. I think there's something to that for sure. But we do, I think, need to be careful about kind of how we always parse it out.

[60 : 07] Yes? Shall I look up front? Yeah. Yeah. And that's a dilemma. Some say it's Saturday and some say it's Sunday.

And also, what you were just talking about, don't you think some businesses that aren't open on Sundays are looked up to and honored as being more, you know, like, price-like?

Yeah. Chick-fil-A is an example. There's a funny song about Chick-fil-A that we sing in our house. Chick-fil-A. And it's by a community.

You want me to sing it? How does it go? Chick-fil-A. It's about how he loves Chick-fil-A. He loves to get his chicken and sweet tea from Chick-fil-A.

And then he says, the song goes, what a dirty, rotten trick to play. Because now it's Sunday and you're closed, so Chick-fil-A, something, something like that.

[61 : 16] Yeah. Has anybody ever tried to go to Chick-fil-A on a Sunday and you're like, oh, man, I forgot to close on Sunday? So, yeah. And, you know, I don't know why they do that, but it's actually kind of common in the South for places to be closed on Sunday.

And I know Chick-fil-A is based in the South. They're based in Atlanta. And so they actually, what I have read is that they do it for their employees, for their employees to have a day off, which is neat and great. And, again, we have freedom in Christ.

We can take Saturday or Sunday or Monday or Tuesday or whatever day of the week we want.

Now, we typically take Sundays off. Why? Well, because that's the easiest day.

That's when everybody else takes the day off, right? And so that makes sense for a lot of people.

But some people work on the weekends. I know people, they only work on the weekends. And they have the rest of the day off, the rest of the week off.

Nurses, you know, they have these schedules where they, you know, or firemen, you know, three days on, one day off. Yeah, another comment? Well, it's on what she was talking about and you were talking about on Sundays.

[62 : 20] We live in London. Yeah. There's an ice cream shop that shuts down on Sundays. And you get on Facebook and people will dog them like crazy. Oh, really? And they will tell you specifically.

They close on Sundays so families can be together. And they also close because they have teenagers working. So at the end of the year, if they have kids that are graduating, they will close certain days.

So those kids can be at their graduation parties. And people will dog them so bad. And I'm like, leave them alone. They've got a business. They care for their people. Yeah.

And it seems to me that people would specifically do that because they don't like the kind of maybe the religious connotation involved. Yeah. Let it be. Yeah. It's like, it's so weird.

Yeah. Yeah. So we shouldn't have religious pride. You know, if somebody says, well, I close my store on Sunday because, well, that makes me a better Christian.

[63 : 17] And that is exactly antithetical to the gospel. There is no opportunity for us to boast in Christ, is there? No opportunity to boast. All right. All right.

This is a lot of questions. Yeah. I like this. Are you going to ask it a hard one? Okay, Joanne. No, I'm just going to mention how different it was when I was growing up.

Yeah. Yeah. On Sunday. Okay. Because you couldn't often, many gas stations weren't even open. Okay. Okay. And restaurants were not. It was a day when we went to church.

We had fried chicken for dinner at home and had family come in. In the afternoon, sometimes my dad and mom would take a nap and I'd think, oh, no, how boring.

But nevertheless, it was a day of rest or visiting with family or friends. And most places, as I said, were closed.

[64 : 25] So you didn't go shopping, which now the kids, you know, seven days a week, they can go to the grocery. There isn't a day where you just sort of stop and relax and enjoy your friends and family.

And even my dad, we didn't bale hay on Sunday because it was Sunday. You know, that was a day, unless it was going to rain on Monday.

So somehow, I don't know that they were necessarily based on the Bible. Yeah. But that was a tradition and it was wonderful.

And I'm sorry we got away because I see my grandkids and great-grandkids, you know, shopping and just doing everything seven days a week instead of taking a day of rest.

Yeah. So, okay. John, did you have something? Okay. I was for... Yeah. Yeah. It's certainly... It is wonderful, isn't it, to take the time off and get away from work and just focus on enjoying each other's company.

[65 : 38] Yeah. I can remember hearing about the blue laws that used to be in Ohio. And I just Googled that. And it says, in 1809, Ohio legislators outlawed sin and antisocial behavior on Sundays, including sporting, gambling, rioting, quarreling, hunting, horse racing, shooting, or

common labors, except necessary work.

And they were called blue laws because one or more of the regulations had been printed on blue paper. Okay. Yeah. That's neat.

Thanks for sharing that. Well, we've... I don't want to extend our time, but thanks for all the interaction there. And we'll finish...

Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for what you did for the Jews. But then thank you for what you've done for us, that we have every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

It's unbelievable. Father, help us to understand what that means. For each one of us. That all of our work is done and we can rest in you.

[66 : 58] I'm sure all of us have opportunities where we can take advantage of that rest more than we are today. We ask you to do that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.