

# The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #17

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[ 0 : 00 ]      Keep your place where you are, if you will, please, because we will spend a little bit of time here and then we'll be going to March Gospel. And in this particular session on the difficult sayings of Jesus, we are going to engage the subject of the Sabbath.

And it is a subject that is found throughout Scripture, Old and New Testament. And it is a subject that lends itself to an enormous amount of confusion, not only in our day, but for the hundreds and hundreds of years after this commandment was actually given.

And when Barbara and I were in Israel and we had the privilege of spending about six weeks there in 1990, one particular day we were scheduled to visit this place in the Jewish quarter.

And there were a great deal of shops there. That's business establishments, etc. And they sell all kinds of things to the tourists. And it was Saturday.

And sunset was just a few minutes away. And, of course, in Israel, when the sun sets on Saturday, that's the end of the Sabbath.

[ 1 : 26 ]      And then everything cranks up full speed ahead until next Friday evening with sundown, because the Sabbath is from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday.

And we were in this particular Jewish quarter of the old city. And it was about 10 minutes until the sun set. And the Jews, of course, they have the same atomic clock capability that we have.

And they know exactly what time the sun is going to set. And when that sun sets, it's almost like a bell ringing and the shops open and everything. Well, anyway, there was a great deal of commotion down on this particular corner.

And these Jewish businessmen were screaming at each other back and forth and shaking their fist and whatnot. And they kept calling out this particular word.

I don't even recall what the word was in Hebrew. But they were yelling it at this one particular shopkeeper. And it just had a real hubbub going down there. And the crowd was gathering. And they were making faces and gestures and shaking their fists back and forth and everything.

[ 2 : 35 ]      And I was curious. What is this all about? Is there going to be a riot or what? What is this guy saying? He kept screaming this word in Hebrew over and over.

And I turned to our guide, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, and I said, What's he saying? What is he talking about? And Arnold just smiled and said, Well, the word, and he repeated the word, and he says, It means transgressor.

And he is yelling at his fellow shopkeeper across the street. Transgressor! Transgressor! Or transgressor in Hebrew and shaking his fist at him. Because he had the audacity to open up the front of his shop and prepare it for business.

When the Sabbath had not yet ended. It was just a couple of minutes away. But this kind of judgmental attitude exists among these people who regard the Jewish Sabbath as something so absolutely sacrosanct and sacred that you stand almost under the penalty of death.

And you know, a man was stoned to death. In the book of Numbers, I believe, for gathering firewood on the Sabbath.

[ 3 : 51 ] And we look at that as being rather extreme. And how is it that Jesus seemed to take a rather libertarian view regarding the Sabbath, when yet they regarded it so strictly in the Old Testament that they would actually stone a man to death who didn't do anything but go out and gather sticks to make a fire on the Sabbath.

And we are told that kindling a fire on the Sabbath is work. And that is against the law.

Matter of fact, in Orthodox Jewish homes today, and there are some right here in Springfield, not a great many, most of the Jews who live here in our area are of the Reformed Jewish persuasion rather than Orthodox.

But if you go into an Orthodox Jewish community, you will discover that they make arrangements for the Gentiles who live next door to come into their home on the Sabbath and flip the light switches off and on.

Because that is to them the equivalent of kindling a fire. Well, we don't kindle a fire by daylight now. No, we don't. To see.

[ 5 : 14 ] But they transform that from building a fire to see by or a candle to see by to modern day electricity and flipping a switch. So they equate that with the kindling of a fire.

And if you are a strict Orthodox Jew, you will not even flip that light switch because that would be considered working on the Sabbath. And that is forbidden.

And another trip to Israel was rather amusing and a little frustrating, too. We were all down in the lobby prepared to go. I think that was a day that we were going to, I don't remember where it was, but one of the tourist sites we were going to visit.

And we were waiting on our bus to arrive, and it was due there in about five minutes. And one of the ladies says, oh, no, I forgot my purse. Well, you know, you can't let a woman go anywhere without her purse.

But so we very graciously said, well, we'll just hold the bus. You go back up to your room, get your purse. And so she left, and the bus came.

[ 6 : 19 ] And we waited, and we waited, and we waited. How long does it take a woman to get a purse? Okay, she was on the eighth floor.

But how long does it take to go up to the eighth floor and get your purse? Even if it's a big purse, how long does it take? So we waited and waited and waited. And everybody was looking at their watch, and the bus driver was pacing back and forth, swearing under his breath in Hebrew.

And we almost sent somebody up to find out if that dear lady was okay. And finally she came down. She walked into the lobby. She was all red-faced. And when she walked up, Arnold said, oh, no.

He said, I just remembered. Arnold was our Hebrew Christian guide, and he said, I just remembered. Now I know why she took so long. This is the Sabbath. Well, on the Sabbath, they do not have elevator operators on duty.

Because that would be work, to punch that button. So they program it to work automatically on the Sabbath.

[ 7 : 30 ] So the elevator goes up to the first floor and stops, and the doors open, and nobody gets off, and nobody gets on. And then the doors close, and then it goes to the second floor.

Nobody gets off, nobody gets on. And the doors close, and it goes all the way up to the eighth floor. Then when she came down, it stopped at the seventh floor.

Doors open, nobody gets off. This is their estimation of observing the Sabbath. And we think it's humorous, and it is.

But they take it very seriously, and they are very sincere about it. They just don't want to be in a position where they violate the Sabbath. Now, I say all of that to say this.

Jesus is going to make it quite clear in a passage we'll be looking at shortly in Mark's Gospel. That it is true, the Lord God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and he rested on the seventh.

[ 8 : 34 ] And you are to sanctify the seventh day and separate it, consecrate it. That means it's a special day. It's a holy day. And you are to keep it distinct from the other days because that's the day that God rested.

And the word Sabbath means rest or cessation. It means you stop. You cease activity. And that was the whole point.

God stopped creating after six days, and he rested or he ceased from his creative activity on the seventh day. And he wants you, the Jewish people, to commemorate that day.

And looking at your text here, I want to point this out because this is so critical, and it ties in with much of what the Bible has to say. In verse 3 of Exodus 19, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel.

Now, who else are you supposed to tell? Nobody else. Just those that I tell you, God says. And they are the house of Jacob, that's the twelve tribes, and the sons of Israel.

[ 9 : 55 ] That's synonymous with the twelve tribes. And with whom else is he entering into a covenant that is mentioned in verse 5? Nobody else.

Just these people. Just the sons of Jacob. Just the Jews. And when you come to chapter 20, and verse 1, and 2, I am the Lord your God, brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

And all of this content in which the Ten Commandments is incorporated, these are all given to the children of Israel. They are not given to anyone else.

Now, you would think that that in and of itself would say something. These are special obligations for special people in a special place, and it has no direct application to anyone anywhere else in the world.

Well, what about the Egyptians? No. What about the Babylonians? No. This does not involve them.

[ 11 : 09 ] This involves only the people of Israel. Nobody else. The text makes that quite clear. And it makes it quite clear not only here, but in numbers of other places.

Now, if you are of the persuasion that the church, which is the body of Christ, is a replacement for the chosen people of God, and that Israel as a nation has lost their status with God because of their disobedience, and God has replaced Israel with the church, then I can understand how you might take some of these things that were originally given to Israel and pull them over and try to apply them to the church.

This is what our pilgrim fathers did in the 1620s. When they landed at Plymouth, Brewster and Bradford, governors and leaders of the people, had strict regulations regarding the keeping of the Sabbath.

Only, guess what? They had changed it. They had recognized the change, supposedly, from Saturday to Sunday.

And this has been adopted across the board in Europe and in the United States. That the Sabbath for Christians is no longer Saturday.

[ 12 : 43 ] It is now Sunday. Well, there are some correctives that need to be offered. In the first place, the Sabbath has never changed. It is still the seventh day.

It always will be the seventh day. That's the day God rested. And the word Sabbath means to rest or cessation from activity.

We have never changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. We have never, ever, at any time, been under the Sabbath restrictions or obligations.

We never have been. Not that we aren't today. We never have been. Yet, many of our ancestors adopted that thinking that the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday.

The Christian Sabbath is Sunday. No, it isn't. Never has been. The Christian day of worship throughout the week is the first day of the week.

[ 13 : 50 ] And on your calendar, that's Sunday. Sunday. If you lived in Philadelphia as late as the 1950s, you could not go to a major league ball game where the Philadelphia Phillies or the Philadelphia Athletics, and they're not even there anymore.

They moved to Kansas City years ago. But there were two teams in Philadelphia, National League and American League, Philadelphia Phillies and the Philadelphia Athletics. And neither team was allowed to schedule a home game in Philadelphia on Sunday.

They had a thing in Philadelphia. They had a thing in Philadelphia. They had a thing in force called the blue laws. And that meant that all business establishments, sporting events, etc.

Had to be shut down on Sunday. Now, I suspect that the preachers and the churches applauded that because it made more people available to go to church on Sunday.

And I'm all in favor of that. But it is nothing but crass legalism to demand that businesses and people refrain from any activity on Sunday just so they can go to church.

[ 15 : 06 ] I think that's just a manipulative act and an effort to get people in church. Don't get me wrong. I want people in church, and I think it's a great thing. But it isn't right to impose some standard upon them that is unreasonable and unfair and unscriptural in an effort to shoo them into church on Sunday morning.

That just won't fly. And yet, it goes on a lot. We decry business establishments and places like that, things operating on Sunday because they ought to be closed.

Well, says who? And what really was the purpose for the origin of the Sabbath anyway? I mean, it was to commemorate the fact that God had finished creation and he rested.

It was to memorialize it because of that. It's tied in with creation. And there is a very practical benefit for the instruction of resting on the seventh day.

That is just a kind of common sense thing. And that is, God designed the human body in such a way that it was never intended to run full speed ahead seven days a week.

[ 16 : 21 ] The body is designed by God to be capable of enormous amounts of work and energy output, but needs periodic times of rest and rejuvenation for the body to recoup itself and repair itself.

You need to come aside and rest from labor and activity and every now and then just take it easy and slow down and relax and smell the roses, as they say, and set the humdrum activities of work and hustle and bustle aside for a while.

Give yourself a breather. Give yourself a break.

All week long so we can have that weekend off. And that's just one more thing that man takes and completely reverses from the way God intended.

Because God intended for us to be able to rest one day a week so we would be fit and able to labor and work six days a week.

[ 17 : 56 ] But in our culture, work has become a dirty word. Only fools work. Only suckers work.

Only people who can't figure out how to get out of work work. And you know something? We pay an enormous price for that negative kind of attitude that is as wrong as it can be.

Because, hear me well, man's greatest and most noble and most rewarding endeavor is work.

You don't get any self-satisfaction out of just being lazy and doing nothing. Well, I don't know. Maybe. Some, I think, have made that an art form.

And they remind me of Garfield. You know, the cat. And he's always horizontal or wants to be. Just anything but work. Anything but labor. And we've developed that mentality.

[ 18 : 58 ] Work is for suckers. Work is what you do when you can't get out of it. And we shortchange ourselves and the nation's productivity bottoms out.

And we're not the cock of the walk in this either. If you're in... Greece is having some problems right now, isn't it? And so is Spain.

And so is France. Well, when you get ten weeks of vacation a year, that's kind of ridiculous. And now the chickens are coming home to roost and they don't like it.

And part of it has to do with the lack of productivity because people have developed laziness as an art form. And they see it as the thing to do. And it's too bad.

Everybody wants vacations. Everybody wants time off. Everybody wants off the job. And in defense of some relaxing time, I am...

[ 20 : 01 ] No, I am not advocating workaholism. That is an extreme that goes in the other direction. And that too is wrong. So a workaholic has nothing going for him and a shirker has nothing going for him.

There is that happy middle that God intended where we labor and are productive and we derive a sense of satisfaction from it. And the Sabbath is all built into this.

And the day off thing is built into it. And we aren't into Sabbath keeping and there is no regulation there. But it is just common sense. That you take some time off and relax and rest a little bit.

Don't get carried away with it. But you need that every week. And this is exactly why Jesus said when he was criticized. And you know, he had more conflict with the religious establishment over the Sabbath than anything else.

And he said, every time he turned around, they were criticizing him for something about the Sabbath and the way he approached it. And he made this very profound statement and it puts the whole thing in perspective.

[ 21 : 08 ] Jesus said, there's one thing you've got to keep in mind. The Sabbath was made for man. God didn't make man for the Sabbath. And that's exactly what happened in the Jewish mindset that became so meticulous and so iron-fisted about the Sabbath.

And so not flipping a light switch and all the rest. And Jesus, on one occasion, said, you criticize me. You condemn me for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.

And you say, I'm practicing medicine on the Sabbath. And that's work. And I shouldn't do that. Let me ask you a question.

If you have a poor, dumb ox. And he falls into the ditch. On the Sabbath. What do you do?

[ 22 : 24 ] You just let him stay in the ditch and suffer because it's the Sabbath? No. You go and you get your friends and your neighbors and you say, I need help right now.

This poor animal is falling into a ditch on the Sabbath. Help me get him out. And you're going to work to get him out. Use a little common sense, will you?

That's what Jesus is saying. These people just go to extremes with this thing. And you know, legalists always have a tendency to do that. And yet, in the midst of it all, they manage to find loopholes to enable them to do things that they want to do.

There's another provision said that on the Sabbath, keep in mind, this is strictly for the Jewish community. On the Sabbath, you are only permitted to travel so many furlongs.

I don't recall what it is. So many furlongs, like a half a mile or something like that. On the Sabbath day. And you're not allowed to go any further than that because it's the Sabbath. However, grandma lives three times that distance away.

[ 23 : 37 ] So what are you going to do on the Sabbath? You're only allowed to go so many furlongs from your residence on the Sabbath.

So, you go that far. And you take off your backpack, some sticks, and a piece of cloth. And you put them down on the ground. And you put the cloth across the top.

And you declare, this is my residence. And you strike your tent, put it back in your back. And you walk on however many furlongs are allowed on the Sabbath.

And you plop them down and you say, this is my residence. And then, creative, huh? Isn't it amazing how we can justify things and be able to do what it is we really want to do?

So, with this in mind, I want you to come to that passage in Mark's Gospel, chapter 3. Mark chapter 3.

[ 24 : 44 ] Actually, let's start in chapter 2. We'll be in chapter 3 in a moment. But let's start in chapter 2. It came about, verse 23, that he was passing through the grain fields on the Sabbath.

And his disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. Now, these were not their fields.

These were strangers' fields or neighbors' fields. They were fields of grain that had not completely ripened, but had come to the stage where they were edible.

And it was called fareek. F-E-R-E-E-K. Fareek. It was a grain that had ripened, not fully, but to an edible state.

And they would pluck the heads off of those wheat stalks and rub the heads together between their hands, like this. And then, blow the chaff away and eat the grain.

[ 25 : 56 ] That was commonly done. And the law even permitted that to be done. But you had to eat it there. No takeout allowed.

You had to consume it on the premises. And that was one of the ways that the Jew built into their system a provision for anyone who was a traveler not having to go without food or go hungry because they could stop in anyone's field and do that.

And you could get a meal. And they could stop in anyone's vineyard and pluck grapes or figs or dates and eat them on the spot. But you couldn't take any with you.

That was designed to provide for people being hungry and to allow for hunger while they were en route.

You didn't have to take a bunch of food with you. And this was common. And this is exactly what the disciples were doing. Picking the heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, See here. Why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

[ 27 : 07 ] Well, what were they doing? They were harvesting and winnowing the grain. Now, you say, That is really nitpicking.

Well, of course it is. But these people were experts at nitpicking. And Jesus said to them, Have you never read what David did when he was in need and became hungry, he and his companions?

How he entered the house of God. This is the tabernacle. In the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests.

And he gave it also to those who were with him. No. David the king did that. This bread, this was the table of showbread.

And they put out 12 loaves, fresh baked loaves, every day. And each loaf represented one of the 12 tribes of Israel.

[ 28 : 16 ] And there in the temple, they put it on the table that was called the table of the bread of presence, or the table of the showbread. And there were 12 cakes of bread there.

Well, David was there in the area with his men, and there was nothing to eat. But this bread was only to be eaten by the priests. David wasn't a priest.

He wasn't qualified. He wasn't a Levite. He was from the tribe of Judah. The men who were with him weren't qualified either. But guess what? Their hunger, and the practicality of it, and the necessity that accompanied it, overrode the protocol, and the provision that was ordinarily in place, so that David and his men were not struck dead when they ate the bread.

Why did they eat that bread? They were hungry. It was all there was to eat. And God never held it against them. Why? Because in the law, as God gave it, there were great examples of practicality.

The law, all of the law of Moses, was never given to tie people in knots, and make a whole bunch of long list of do's and don'ts, and encumber them, and give them all kinds of fits about details, and nitpicking stuff.

[ 29 : 50 ] The law was intended to serve man, to be a blessing, to put parameters around him, to give him boundaries for his protection, for his blessing, for his benefit.

It was never something to be slavishly observed, like they made out to be. And this is the attitude that prevails all through the Gospels.

And Christ encountered this every time he turned around, because these legalists and their nitpicking details were using the law as a club.

And they were slicing and dicing it so thin, and so fine, and so detailed, that it just got ridiculous. And Jesus spoke of it as the religious establishment placing a burden.

On the people, that neither they, nor themselves, could bear. And they did it constantly. While we're here, in Acts 2, look at the conclusion of this.

[ 30 : 55 ] And he was saying to them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath.

And there's an interesting play on words here, because what Jesus is saying is, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man, referring to himself, of course, is Lord, even of the Sabbath.

Interesting distinction that is made there, and a very powerful one. And while we're at it, let's come over to chapter 3. We've got another difficult saying here, and we'll see if we can work it in in time.

Verse 23. Well, let's start with verse 20. He came home, and the multitude gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

And when his own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of him, for they were saying, he has lost his senses. This is Jesus' own relatives and friends, thinking that he had gone over the side.

[ 32 : 07 ] And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, he is possessed by Beelzebul, and he cast out the demons by the ruler of the demons. In other words, they're saying, yes, we know, we acknowledge that Jesus has actually cast demons out of people.

And you know how he did that? He's in cahoots, with the adversary himself. He has struck a deal with the devil, and the devil is cooperating with him.

That's how he is able to cast out demons. And then Jesus utters this, really significant statement. He called them to himself, in verse 23, and began speaking to them in parables.

How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. In other words, if Satan is countering his own moves, how can he possibly succeed?

And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. This was a line that was immortalized, not only by Christ, but was followed up on by Abraham Lincoln, as he gave his address, talking about the division of the Union, and the North and South, and saying, a house divided will not be able to stand.

[ 33 : 29 ] And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished. But no one can enter the strong man's house, and plunder his property, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.

It is remarkable how many people, worry, fret, and stew, may even lose sleep at night over, having committed the unpardonable sin.

And you ask them, what is it? And their response is, I don't know, but I'm afraid I've probably done it. Well, it's hard to reason with somebody like that, especially in light of the fact that Jesus gives the meaning of the unpardonable sin, and what it is.

And it has to be kept and understood in context, and that is this. The unpardonable sin is attributing the works and the miracles that Jesus performed to the power of Satan.

[ 34 : 52 ] And as you look at the context, in all of the Gospels where this incident is recorded, that is the context. The accusation was made, yes, Jesus is able to do these miracles, he does them through the power of the devil.

Well, if you believe that, and any Jew in that day who believed that, couldn't possibly believe that Jesus was even the Messiah. And they didn't. Couldn't possibly believe that Jesus was the Savior.

And they didn't. So, when you deny both his person and his work, where are you? You are in an unpardonable situation, because it is only an acknowledgement of who Jesus Christ is and what he did that there is salvation for anybody.

And anyone who denies that has cut themselves off from all possibility of being forgiven, or of ever reaching heaven, because they have excluded themselves from that.

Now, some take the position, and I've been in this position, where the only ones who could commit it were that present generation who was there when Christ was there, who witnessed his miracles and then reached that erroneous conclusion.

[ 36 : 06 ] But when you stop and think about it, anyone who denies the person and work of Jesus Christ in any dispensation, including ours, has cut themselves off from any possibility of forgiveness or of heaven.

You don't have anything left. You have eliminated your only possible path to salvation, to forgiveness, or to heaven. Because, if not Christ, who?



What? There's nothing left. There is no forgiveness. There is no pardon. There is nothing that is available. This comes right on the heels of the Sabbath situation in Mark chapter 2, and here he is in Mark chapter 3, and all of these things are converging as Christ goes through his earthly ministry, and it is one conflict after another, one controversial issue after another, and always the Sabbath is never far away.

Now, as regards to the Sabbath, let's put a lid on this for a moment and particularize it for where we are today, there is no Sabbath restriction for believers.

Not only is there not one any longer, there never was one. There just never was one. We are not under law, we are under grace.

[ 37 : 35 ] And even if you want to extract from this a like principle and translate it into Sunday instead of Saturday, you have no biblical basis for it whatever.

None. And there are groups today that adhere to this very stringently and very seriously. I do not question their motive. I do not question their sincerity.

I just believe they are really wrong. Have you ever heard of Seventh-day Baptists? There is almost every kind of Baptists that you could imagine. But there is also Seventh-day Baptists and they observe the Sabbath.

And of course, we all know of Seventh-day Adventists and Kettering Memorial Hospital, one of the finest institutions in our whole area was founded by Seventh-day Adventists.

And these are good people, decent people. But I feel that they make the mistake of not distinguishing the dispensational distinctives that are so clearly given in Scripture and they see those things given to Israel as being binding upon them.

[ 38 : 56 ] Our forefathers did the same thing. I mentioned earlier the pilgrims where they actually would punish people for not attending church services on the Sabbath, which they regarded as Sunday.

Isn't it amazing? It's kind of ironic, these people who fled Europe because of religious persecution, they come over here to the United States and they persecute each other for not crossing their T's and dotting their I's like they're supposed to and why weren't you at worship on the Lord's day?

And they would actually impose fines on people for missing church. How's that for legalism? And when they passed the plate down through the crowd, they would follow it along and they would note who put in what and you had better be adequate with your giving or see these people I'm convinced their heart and their intentions were in the right place and you know we are capable of doing some pretty nasty things in the service of God that God doesn't have anything to do with.

We just kind of go bonkers on some of these things, go overboard. We have a tail wagging the dog. We have man made for the Sabbath instead of the Sabbath made for man.

And these are just some of the principles and there are many others that could be incorporated into this. So where do we stand then regarding the Sabbath? We don't. We don't have a Sabbath.

[ 40 : 35 ] We never have had a Sabbath. We worship on the first day of the week and we do so willingly and voluntarily, not out of necessity. You realize, don't you, you don't have to be here.

You could be doing what most of the crowd is doing, home, watching television, having an extra portion of scrambled eggs and reading the funny papers. You could do that.

And you won't go to hell. Isn't that amazing? The restrictions that people put upon one another that God has nothing to do with are often just a flat out embarrassment.

And I'll tell you something else. When Christians involve themselves in all of this kind of legalism and nitpicking and nastiness and demands and regulations and rules and everything, there is a watching world on the outside that's looking in and says, yeah, I wouldn't want anything to do with that.

Well, I don't blame them. I wouldn't either. for the believer, for the one in Christ, there is only one biblical solid reason for observing a day.

[ 42 : 02 ] And let me close with this. It's in Romans chapter 14. And you will note it is in one of the Pauline epistles.

And I want you to understand that the man under the inspiration of the Spirit of God who is giving us this directive is a man who has come out of a full blown Judaism as a Pharisee.

And in Romans chapter 14, he addresses this issue because it was a point of contention among people who were believers there at Rome.

and in chapter 14 and verse 5.

14. 5. One man regards, well, let's go back to verse 1.

[ 43 : 15 ] We'll establish the setting. Okay. Now, except the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions, one man has faith that he may eat all things. And this is the guy who also eats pork chops and bacon.

That he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. He is not a meat eater. Let not him who eats regard with contempt, that is, not to look down his nose on those who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted it.

In other words, what he's saying is, look, you really believe in your heart of hearts that you should not eat meat. I don't agree with you, but if that's the way you feel, don't eat it.

Serve your own conscience. I do not have the right to impose my standards on your conscience, and you don't have the right to impose yours on mine.

So if you insist on being a vegetarian, I say, ugh, I don't know how you can live that way, but if that's what you think it takes for you to please your conscience and satisfy your conscience, okay, go ahead, that's your choice.

[ 44 : 41 ] I'm not criticizing you for being a vegetarian, but don't you criticize me for enjoying a t-bone. It's to each his own.

And then he goes on and gives another illustration, and by the way, he says, for God has accepted him. If God has accepted him, how in the world can you not accept him?

Is your standard higher than God's? Do you make demands that God doesn't make? Well, yes. Christians do. Christians do sometimes make demands on other Christians that God has nothing to do with at all.

and we assign their compliance with those demands, we use that to determine whether or not they are spiritual.

And they're spiritual if they live like me. And then the next text. Who are you to judge the servant of another?

[ 45 : 49 ] To his own master he stands or falls, and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. Here, one man regards one day above another.

He really believes in his heart of hearts that he is not allowed to mow his grass on Sunday. If he is going to feel conflicted and convicted for mowing his grass on Sunday, don't do it.

But it doesn't bother me, especially if it rained Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and Sunday is the only time I've got that stuff is growing out of sight.

Yeah, I'll mow my grass on Sunday. Please keep your mouth off of me. Each man stands or falls to his own master. We just don't have the right to write heard on one another, point a finger at one another, say, you can't do that, this is Sunday, you can't do that, you can't, nonsense.

One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. And I have to point this out to you. If you've got a new American standard, do you see the word alike?

[ 47 : 14 ] It's italicized. What does that mean? It means it's not there in the original. The translators put it in, thinking that it would help make more sense.

Actually, what it does is it detracts. What Paul is saying is, one man regards one day above another, another regards every day. That's where you're supposed to be.

Every day is the Lord's day. If it's wrong to do something today, it's wrong to do it tomorrow. tomorrow, and the next day. Wrong and right isn't determined by the day it falls on.

But we have become so accustomed to this because this was handed down by a previous generation. The whole gamut of the blue laws was built upon that.

Businesses have to close. And you know, you can go down south now. Certain places in the south, especially in some of the small communities, and you'll find everything closed up on Sunday.

[ 48 : 15 ] Hey, I'm not opposed to that. If a man runs a business and he wants to close on Sunday, close on Sunday. If he wants to close on Thursday, close on Thursday.

It's his business. Nobody else's. He can do whatever he wants to do. And I think it'd be great if things did slow down and a lot of people didn't have to work on Sunday and would be available to go to church and worship.

I think that'd be great. I'd be in favor of that. But I certainly wouldn't be in favor of legislating it and making it against the law. Because there's no valid basis for doing that.

None. Neither culturally nor socially and certainly not biblically. And yet, old traditions die hard, don't they?

Questions or comments? Anybody? Lynette in the back. Do we have a mic? Mike? I have two comments.

[ 49 : 39 ] one is I was thinking I can really really understand how they would be so legalistic because if you look back at where the guys were carrying the Ark of the Covenant and it started to fall and they caught it and they were told not to touch it.

Well, the rule wasn't don't touch it, but use your common sense and be reasonable and if it's starting to fall, okay, we understand that.

No, God said don't touch it and he didn't say it depends on the circumstances or anything like that. He was very adamant, you don't touch it no matter what, don't ask questions and then they did touch it for the sake of wanting to keep it safe and here they were smitten dead.

So you can understand or I can understand how anybody back, you know, following the Sabbath and following those Jewish laws are thinking, hey, I'm not taking any chances.

He said don't do it, I'm not doing it. Yeah, you're talking about Uzzah in I think in the book of Numbers. Okay. And this is when they were bringing the Ark of the Covenant from the Philistines who had it impounded and they were bringing it back to the tabernacle and the ox cart apparently hit a rock or a rut or something and it tilted and it looked like the Ark of the Covenant was in danger of falling off and Uzzah, I would surmise, innocently reached out to steady the Ark, touched it and God smote him dead on the spot.

[ 51 : 22 ] So in connection with what Lynette said, yeah, I can understand some of that. But also keep in mind that the nation was under divine discipline at the time and that's why the Ark wasn't even in their presence which is why the Philistines had it because of their disobedience to the Lord and it wasn't even supposed to be on an ox cart.

That wasn't the way God designated for having it transported. It had poles that passed through either side and they were to carry it on their shoulders, the Levites, so they were wrong probably on four or five different counts.

And I think when Uzzah reached out to touch it and he wasn't of the priestly tribe, I think God simply saw that's the final straw. Bite the dust, Uzzah. And that's my explanation of it.

You had something else? Yeah, I was thinking of when you were in Israel and the businessmen were yelling at each other and saying transgressor, I wonder if they were more mad not being judgmental at the guy who was opening because he was opening on the Sabbath but more because of how it would hurt their business.

Oh yeah. If they opened early then people would go to them and they would already get customers beforehand so you're saying you're hurting me. Absolutely. Absolutely. You can be sure that that place.

[ 52 : 45 ] I couldn't agree more. It wasn't out of concern for the integrity of the Lord. It said I don't want that rotten skunk competitor neighbor of mine getting those goyim customers in his store and taking all their money before they come over here and see what I got.

Of course that comes into play. Yeah. That's just part of the two-facedness. We're all well equipped with that. Another comment or question?

Somebody? Over here Mike. Mike. Just an ironic statement.

In my lifetime I remember when stores had to be closed. It was against the law to keep them open. And my, such a well, I'll slip and say a hell of a clue that went on when they decided to keep the stores open and so many Christian people refused to shop on Sunday.

Yeah. Well, that's their prerogative. You know, if you feel strongly about that, don't shop on Sunday. Don't buy gas on Sunday and don't go out to a restaurant on Sunday.

[ 54 : 07 ] Joanne? You do realize that if you go to the mall on Sunday afternoon that whatever you purchase could deteriorate rapidly.

I say that with tongue in cheek. Genesis chapter 2 verse 3 God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because that in it he had rested from all his work.

Which you mentioned, yes, we do need a day of rest. But, you know, if the seventh day was sanctified and blessed, that was before the laws were given.

And, you know, maybe we should take that into consideration. Well, I do think we should take it into consideration and I do think we should see it as a broad, general principle.

I think it is saying, like I said at the first, God knows that our body needs some time to recuperate. And he's saying, I've given you a marvelous tool. Now, don't be stupid about it.

[ 55 : 17 ] Okay? Give it adequate rest that it needs. Give it time for recreation and rejuvenation. I think that's a given. And I think that's cross dispensational.

That doesn't apply just to Jew or Gentile. That applies to humanity. It is just a common sense thing. But it is not binding legally where you have to do this or you have to do that.

Yes? One more thing on the Ten Commandments. Is it true that the majority of them then are restated somewhere in the Pauline epistles other than that one?

I think all of them are at least in principle stated in the Pauline epistles with the exception of the fourth, which is the keeping of the Sabbath. I think they're all found in Pauline documents, either verbatim or in principle.

And is there another comment up here? This will be our last one and we'll have to dismiss. Loretta? I just finished reading a book that was based on a lot of biblical principles, but he was saying that the body does need rest and that we and he kept saying that we had a we could take a Sabbath each and every day.

[ 56 : 47 ] We should take a Sabbath every day. And so I didn't understand until I kept reading and his principle is that every day belongs to the Lord and we need rest and that we should recognize that when we need it and take the Sabbath at any time.

Absolutely. It's just mind your body. Don't abuse your body. Give it the rest it needs. Give it the nourishment it needs. Give it the rejuvenation that it needs.

Give it seven, eight hours of sleep at night. You need that. You really do. And each time you go to bed and get seven or eight hours of sleep, that's a time of cessation.

That's a time that even gives your brain a rest. And Lord knows we all need that, don't we? may I ask for those who are elders and their wives to dismiss themselves right now as I speak.

Would you just get up and leave now and go back to the classroom back there? And the two folks for candidates for membership do likewise and we'll facilitate this meeting.

[ 58 : 04 ] And all the rest of you, if you will stand, and we'll close with a word of prayer. Father, we are so grateful for the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, and how we are not to be entangled with the yoke of bondage, such as those that we've been hearing about.

And we know that only the grace of God can liberate us from legalism and the demands that men would place upon us. At the same time, we want to be very sensitive and obedient to what you require.

Help us to see the distinction between the demands of man and the just requirements of a holy God. Thank you for the whole text of scripture and for the distinctions that are included therein, and for the practicality that you've built into your word.

Lord, we pray that each of us today has learned something that we can take from this place with us that will alter our life in the times to come. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.