

Jesus and the Sabbath

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[0 : 00] We'll take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Mark. We're going to be looking at Mark chapter 2, beginning in verse 23. We'll read to chapter 3, verse 6.

One Sabbath, Jesus was going through the grain fields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?

He answered, Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which was lawful only for priests to eat, and he also gave some to his companions.

Then he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Another time, he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath.

[1 : 20] Jesus said to the man with a shriveled hand, Stand up in front of everyone. And Jesus asked him, Which is lawful on the Sabbath?

To do good or to do evil? To save life or to kill? But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger, and deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, Stretch out your hand. He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Our God is holy, but not everyone who meets him bows down and worships, and then rises to do his will in consecration to him.

We just read in Mark chapter 3 of some people that met the holy Jesus, and then went out and plotted to kill him. We've come to the fourth of the tenth commandments.

[2 : 35] Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. God is holy. He is set apart from everything else, and his name is holy.

And we are therefore to keep it holy, to keep it in reverence and awe, to hallow his name. God's day is holy, and therefore we are to keep it holy.

Last week we saw the origin of the Sabbath day. Back on the sixth, the week of creation, Genesis 2, we saw that six days God created, but on the seventh day he rested, setting a pattern for those he made in his image, that they might imitate him in their weekly cycle of work and rest.

And so God blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Jesus said, this Sabbath day was made for man, for the good of man.

And we saw it's good last week, that it's good not only for our souls, but also for our bodies. Indeed, all that we are as body, soul creatures. This is a gift to us, a benefit, an advantage from our maker.

[3 : 48] And then what God makes holy, we are to keep holy, whether his name or his day. Now, any study of the fourth commandment needs to consider Jesus.

Jesus and the Sabbath day. After all, he claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath. So, what did Jesus do with this fourth commandment?

Some think he broke it. Others that he abolished it. As something no longer to be kept in the New Testament. In fact, Jesus upheld the Sabbath day, first by keeping it himself, keeping it holy, and then by defending its proper use against all the abuses.

He kept it. He defended it. So, let's dig right in to this study of Jesus and the Sabbath day. And again, first of all, we want to notice that Jesus kept the Sabbath day holy.

Why is this so important to us anyway? Well, there is no salvation without Jesus' perfect obedience to God's love. law. There is simply no Savior without His perfect obedience to all of God's commandments.

[5 : 06] If He sins, then He deserves to be damned along with the rest of us sinners. And we, therefore, have no Savior, no salvation, only a fellow sinner under God's wrath with us.

You see, it's only if Jesus obeys perfectly without sin that He deserves eternal life. And so, He is qualified to be our substitute, to step in in our place and to receive our punishment of death under His wrath.

And that's exactly what happened. The sinless one, Jesus, offered His blood and died that I, the sinful one, might live. The righteous dies for the unrighteous to bring us to God.

He bears the wrath of God that I deserved, that I might receive the unending favor of God that He deserved. He suffers the torments of the damned on the cross, that I might have everlasting pleasures at God's right hand.

None of this could be, you see, if Jesus had just once, as a young boy, as a teenager, a young man, an older man, broken the Sabbath day.

[6 : 29] So this keeping of the law is at the very heart of why Jesus came to earth in the first place. Why is He even here? Well, it was to save sinners like us who hadn't kept God's law.

And so Galatians 4 and verse 4 says that in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those under law.

So in becoming a man, He humbled Himself. He put Himself in the position of man, which is to be under the law of God. All men owe obedience to God's law.

And Jesus, the lawgiver, put Himself under the law as a man, made Himself obliged to keep God's commandments, under the obligation to obey, all of it, all the time.

And then, having perfectly obeyed that law, He worked out a righteous record to credit to the account of any sinner who will trust in Him.

[7 : 38] He'll put His righteousness, His report card, to our account in the books of heaven. For all who trust in Him. And He qualifies to die in the place of us who trust in Him.

You see, the lawmaker, God's Son, became the lawkeeper that He might redeem us lawbreakers. So that's the first reason why we must say it is very important when we come to all the commandments of God and the fourth included to say that our salvation hangs upon His perfect obedience to this command.

So what does that mean concerning Jesus and the fourth commandment in particular? Well, it means that growing up, He learned the carpentry trade from His adoptive father, Joseph.

And as a young man, He worked in that trade and later made His living from the sweat of His brow and glorified God by manual labor of His hands, teaching us this too as a glorified, honorable thing to do.

[8 : 50] But each weekly Sabbath, the closed sign, went up on this carpenter's shop. And the tools were laid aside for the day as He remembered the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day.

Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Growing up in a godly Jewish home, Jesus early learned to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Parents, there's a lesson in that for us. Parents, are you laying down this same good example that Jesus found in His home with regard to your children in the new covenant, Lord's Day?

Do they see that this day is special? It's not just like all the other six, but it's set apart from the six as unique and unique for the things that God has set it apart for, for rest and worship.

[10 : 05] And do they see you guarding it from all the other things that would intrude into the day to draw you aside from God's purposes of rest and worship? We have no record of Jesus' Sabbath keeping during His youth.

The Bible's silent about Jesus' youth after the wise men came and visited Him around age two. It's silent about His upbringing with the one exception that we read about His visit to Jerusalem at age 12 to go to the feast there and He was lost by His parents and found three days later at the temple. But His early years are veiled in silence. But we still know of His perfect obedience to the Sabbath day even as a young child.

How do we know that? Again, because of the general statements in the scriptures that tell us that He was tempted in every way like us and yet was without sin.

Now sin, breaking the law is what sin is. That's how John defines it in 1 John 3, 4. He was tempted but He never broke God's law.

[11:18] And that means He never broke the fourth commandment. Peter tells us He committed no sin. So this means He never misused the Sabbath day. He always kept it holy.

He always set it apart to God. Now were there other boys in Nazareth looking to skip worship and go play instead? Well Jesus was never found among them.

No one said more heartily than Jesus. I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord. And so the pattern of six days work one day rest and worship was the way that Jesus grew up.

It was the way that He spent His weekly cycle reflecting the pattern left by His Father in heaven. Here's the true Son who is exactly like His Father in heaven.

And according to Isaiah 58 verse 13 and 14 that means that Jesus kept His feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as He pleased on God's holy day.

[12:18] He called the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable and He honored it by not going His own way not doing as He pleased or speaking idle words. And so He found His joy in the Lord and He feasted on the inheritance of His Father Jacob those promised blessings for God's people.

Well that was His boyhood. And then at age 30 He starts His public ministry and suddenly the Holy Spirit inspires men to record what happened from that point on from age 30 till His death and resurrection and ascension into heaven.

So during those three years we have much given to us in the four gospel accounts. And what stands out on the pages of Holy Scripture is that Jesus kept the Sabbath day holy.

Indeed what we find is that His habitual routine is to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus was a sought after man wasn't He?

We often find people looking for Jesus and not always for the right reasons. Some came looking for Him to fill their bellies. Others came for the healing and the miracles alone.

[13:41] Others wanted to really hear His teaching because He taught with authority and not like their scribes. But there are others who looked for Jesus because they were envious of His growing popularity.

authority. And they wanted to catch Him in something that He would say that would discredit Him in the eyes of the people or in the eyes of the Roman authorities. And so they were looking for Jesus. And so the oft-asked question was where's Jesus? Have you seen Him? Where is He? But there was one day each week when nobody was asking that question.

Nobody had trouble finding Jesus. It was the Sabbath day because they would head for the local synagogue and sure enough that's where they found Him. He was there. Whether friend or foe they could count on finding Jesus in the public worship of God on the Lord's day.

So we read in Luke chapter 4 in verse 16 speaking of our Savior He went to Nazareth where He had been brought up and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue as was His custom in the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

[14:59] And Luke's wanting us to know that this wasn't a sporadic thing with our Lord rather it was His custom it was His habitual way of life His consistent thing that He did His consistent routine.

Is it the Sabbath day? You'll find Jesus in the synagogue. Sure enough there He is. Even His enemies were often found waiting for Him there because they knew where He'd be.

Robertson comments this is one of the flashlights on the early life of Jesus. He had the habit the custom of going to public worship in the synagogue as a boy a habit a custom that He kept up when a grown man.

it was part of His perfect keeping of the Lord's holy day. I wonder if people who are looking for you on the Lord's day know where to find you.

Maybe on any other day of the week I'm not sure where He's off to. I'm hardly sure whether He's coming home for supper tonight. But I know one thing I know where you'll find Him on the Lord's day.

[16:12] He'll be with His people with the people of God worshiping God on the Lord's day. Do people know that about you? Do your customers know that about you? Do your fellow workers

know that about you?

Do your neighbors and friends know that about you? They knew it about Jesus. The topic of Jesus and the Sabbath day is clear. Luke 4.31 He went down to Capernaum and on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue.

Luke 6.6 On another Sabbath He went into the synagogue and was teaching. Luke 13.10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

That was His custom. Why? Not just because He was raised that way. It's just the way I was brought up. Not just because it was a routine that He thoughtlessly gave Himself to but rather because it was the command of His Father in Heaven.

And I always do what my Father commands are His words. And Father says remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

[17 : 21] And that meant not only laying down His hammer and saw for the day but it also meant worshipping God and not by a private walk in the woods but to gather with His people and to worship Him in public.

Yes, as well as in private but to gather with the gathered people of God for public worship. So what did Jesus do with the fourth commandment? Well, He kept it. Here's your Savior.

Here's your salvation. Here's the lawmaker becoming the lawkeeper in order to save us lawbreakers. Lawbreakers of the Sabbath day.

He kept it because we had not. And so He keeps the fourth commandment but not only to fulfill all righteousness, not only to have a righteousness to put to our account but also to leave us an example that we might walk in His steps for whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. So Jesus and the Sabbath day, what did we learn? He kept it perfectly. He kept it holy. But that's not all that Jesus did with the Sabbath day.

[18 : 35] And so we'll turn secondly to the fact that Jesus defended the Sabbath day against the abuses of it.

Now He claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath as we read in Mark chapter 2. As Lord of the Sabbath, He is its master. It's Lord.

It's rightfully His. He's the lawgiver who knows exactly what He intended for the Sabbath day and how it's to be kept holy.

He's uniquely qualified therefore to defend it against all the abuses of the day. Now there's more than one way to skin a cat.

Have you ever heard that phrase? I'm not sure where they even have it in England. How about that? I'm not sure where where it originated. Maybe we could blame it on them.

[19 : 30] We've received a lot from them. I'm not sure why anyone would be skinning a cat in the first place. It's disgusting to think they were fixing to eat it or something.

Nevertheless, we understand the saying there's more than one way to skin a cat. It means there's more than one way to do a certain thing. And I want to say that there's more than one way to break the Sabbath day.

There's more than one way to break the fourth commandment. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Indeed, more than one way to break any command as we've seen as we've studied the first four.

You don't just break the commandment to not misuse the Lord's name by swearing and taking his name in vulgar conversation.

You can do it as we said sitting here in church and just taking the name of God in the hymns and the prayers thoughtlessly not thinking of his name and we can misuse his name when we go out and we have the name of Christ upon us as Christians and we bring that name down many different ways and so there's more than one way to break the fourth commandment as well.

[20 : 44] I'm going to give you two basic ways because what we find is that with any command here's the way now walk in it with any command there's always a ditch on either side of the road.

There's never just one ditch. You'll not find a road out there that has just one ditch. There's always a ditch on both sides of the road and that's true of every commandment and here's the two ditches the two ways there's first the outright neglect of God's command not keeping the day holy in other words not setting apart as anything special no different from the other six just treating it something that is holy as something that is common that's to defile it it's when it's used for our own purposes instead of God's stated purpose for the day of rest and worship and that's a common abuse today

but there's another way that's not the only way to skin a cat it's not the only way to break the Sabbath day command the ditch on the other side of the road is to add to God's commands not only by neglecting God's command outright but adding to God's command and that's what the Pharisees did to the fourth commandment now the Pharisees were among the spiritual leaders of Israel they were the ones that were teachers in Israel much in a way that I'm standing here to teach you the word of God the Pharisees and scribes many of them

Pharisees they were the teachers of Israel Nicodemus that Pharisee was the teacher of Israel so they held a high and an important place in Israel to take the law of God and to explain it interpret it apply it to the people well those are the Pharisees and what they did was added gobs of their own rules that they claimed were hedges to protect God's command so here's the fourth commandment remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy oh we want to keep it holy so we're going to put up all these additional rules as a hedge to make sure we keep God's commands but in fact they buried God's command under their many man-made rules and they destroyed God's original design for the Sabbath day which was something that was good for man because they prohibited things don't do this don't do that they prohibited things that God never prohibited on his day and these Pharisaical additions were preserved in the Mishnah and the Mishnah was given an authority and a status equal to the law of God and even in sometimes higher than the law of God as Jesus accuses them on the fifth commandment when he says that you have you've broken the fifth commandment in order to keep your own rules well that's the Mishnah they have their additional rules that they've added to God's laws so God's simple command is remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy and to that the Mishnah added 24 chapters not 24 laws 24 chapters of what Edersheim calls endless burdensome rules external things all not addressing the heart at all just don't do this don't do that and so they did no service to God's commandment but actually broke his command when they added their own because

Deuteronomy 4:2 says you shall not add to the word which I command you nor take anything from it that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you we're to keep God's commands and the Pharisees added to it which detracted from the right keeping and destroyed the very design of God's own commandment let me give you some examples of these endless additions from the Mishnah the Mishnah prescribed in detail what could and could not be saved if your house caught fire on the Sabbath day only those clothes that were absolutely necessary could be saved but you could put on a dress and run out of the burning house and then take it off and go back in and put on another one and wear it outside as long as the house was burning you could do that but you couldn't just go in and grab them you see it had to be necessary clothes so put it on as necessary clothing and go out

[25 : 27] I'm not sure what that looked like but you see the level of ridiculousness that the Mishnah would stoop to furthermore you couldn't lift water to extinguish the flames yourself and neither could you ask your gentile neighbor to extinguish the flames for you but if he did so voluntarily he should not be hindered from putting out your house that's a caught a fire there were detailed regulations regarding what constituted a burden that could not be carried on the Sabbath here are some of the things that were forbidden pieces of paper horse hairs wax a piece of broken earthenware or animal food generally a burden was anything as heavy as a dried fig or a quantity sufficient to be of any practical use so a scrap of paper that was too small to be put to any use you could carry that on the Sabbath but if it was large enough to actually write a message on or to wrap something in it was forbidden you could not eat food on the

Sabbath or one could eat food on the Sabbath lawfully only if it had been specifically prepared for the Sabbath on a weekday and if a laying hen laid an egg on the Sabbath it could not be eaten but if the hen had been kept for fattening and not for laying the egg could be eaten since it would be considered a part of the hen that had fallen off picking the slightest grain now this will come to light in a moment picking the slightest amount of grain from your field was prohibited in the Sabbath day yet if a man wanted to remove a sheaf of grain from his field he could lay a spoon on it and then in order to retrieve the spoon he might also lawfully remove the sheaf on which it lay now you won't find any of those laws in the Bible we'd like to say stop the madness this is ridiculous this is foolishness and it filled 24 chapters of the

Mishnah added commands and it just buried the law of God it's like the US tax code so cumbersome that no one can understand what's in it and what happens to God's commandments in that atmosphere they get lost they get buried what really does God want on this day was a lost thing

in Israel and it took the Sabbath day from one of a day of delight and finding our joy in the Lord to a burdensome day with God's command buried under this whole pile of man's picky prohibitions well that's the situation that Jesus lived and moved and ministered in now it wasn't our day our day is different but the day in which Jesus those were the teachers that's what they're preaching to the people of Jesus day and this to him was equally a sin against the Sabbath day even as the outright neglect of it was and since they were the leading teachers of the law it was this ditch that Jesus spent most of his energies rebuking and correcting so the Pharisees where'd they come from well it seems that they came from a time of Israel's declension and many Israelites were just becoming worldly and becoming like the world they weren't studying the Bible and living by the word of God they were studying their neighbors and what does the world do and that's what they started doing and there was a reform movement that said no that's not right let's get back into the word of God and and they were called Pharisees so there might have been a true right sense originally for what they wanted to call their their strained worldly brethren back to to the word of God but they over corrected the car of Israel you know that's a problem when you get off the edge on one ditch there's the problem of over crafting and you go shooting off into the other ditch and that's what the Pharisees did and it's seen on many scores of commands but especially on the fourth commandment they saw their neighbors breaking the Sabbath day and they so tightened the screws and laid down all the additional rules that they just shot off into the other breaking of the Sabbath by adding their own laws to it and by doing so they bound heavy burdens hard to bear and laid them on men's shoulders according to Jesus and so Jesus straddled the road and said over my dead body and he did everything he could to defend a right understanding of the fourth commandment so let's consider his defense against the abuses of the Pharisee that were so rife in his day we saw it there in the scripture reading in Mark 2 that one day Jesus and his disciples are walking through a grain field and they're talking and the disciples are hungry and it is a Sabbath day and so as they're walking along the disciples just reach down their hands and grab a head of wheat and pull the grains up into their hands and then they rub it together to blow the chaff away and then they start popping the grains into their mouth and suddenly as if out of nowhere these Sabbath policemen jump up out of the grain fields and say ah we caught you look they said to Jesus with their bony fingers pointing at [30 : 59] Jesus look why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath there's the accusation they're breaking the Sabbath now let's let's be fair to the Pharisees harvesting crops and separating the wheat from the chaff taking your crops and going to the threshing floor and they're scattering it out and pulling your oxen around with pulling a sledge of a cart with sharp edges and rocks to pound out the grain from the chaff and then to take their fans their big rakes and throw it up in the air and let the chaff blow here and a grain pile threshing harvesting was part of the six days labor that is to be set apart on the seventh day to be rested from that they might give themselves to the worship of God but this was never considered to be harvesting and threshing by any stretch not by God it was never forbidden by God in the fourth commandment so says Jesus the one lawgiver the Lord of the Sabbath the one who ought to know notice he's not saying well I am changing the rules I realize I'm making exceptions for God's command no it's none of that he's upholding the original intent and meaning of God's command of the seventh of the fourth commandment Hendrickson says Christ's enemies were burying the real law of God which did not in any sense forbid what the disciples were now doing and they buried the real law of God under the mountain of their own man-made foolish traditions so Jesus will have none of it and he he's haven't you read and he talks about what David and his men did when they were hungry and on the run and in need they ate! some of the twelve consecrated loaves that were only for the priests to eat and yet they were innocent and if in their hunger and need God was willing to lay aside for the moment his ceremonial requirement how much more could the Lord of Sabbath lay aside a Pharisee's man-made rules especially since those rules were completely out of touch with God's original design that the Sabbath was made for man for his good man didn't exist for the Sabbath it exists for his good and so he says if you only knew what it means I desire mercy and not sacrifice you would not have condemned the innocent you'll find that in Matthew's account of this event you would not have condemned the innocent in other words these men my men are not guilty of breaking the Sabbath they're innocent you guys are wrong you're barking up the wrong tree and you should have known it from

God's own word the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath again he's not changing the rules he's simply harping back to God's original design and giving it to us by his own example on the seventh day from creation anything oppressive to man is not part of my day Jesus is saying the Sabbath was made for his benefit you're twisting God's good command you're ruining it by your addition to God's law can you see how important this day is to Jesus and it has an important place in his gracious kingdom he's willing to take off the gloves to defend this day of his we see that as we go on chapter three another time Jesus is in the synagogue and he's there on the Sabbath day and a man is there with a with a with hand not everyone there that day in the synagogue was there to worship

God we know that Jesus knew it all together they were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus and so they watched him closely to see if he would heal this man with the withered hand on the Sabbath then they could discredit him as a sinful Sabbath breaker you know it's it's even possible that this man with the withered hand was a plant maybe even unknowing to himself that they put him up to where they knew Jesus would be teaching and just had him sitting there to see what's he going to do he's going to face this guy with the withered hand what's he going to do that they might catch Jesus with their Sabbath sting operation well Jesus knows what's up he knows the hearts of men and he calls this man to stand he's not going to let this pass in front of everyone if you're the man with the withered hand that would be quite a task you're not the kind of guy that likes to be up front maybe but

[36 : 16] Jesus calls you to the front he's got an important lesson for everyone there in synagogue that day and the man stands up in front of everyone you see Jesus is out to defend the Sabbath day from its pharisaical perversions they must be corrected these teachers of Israel on such an important matter so Jesus has a question for them which is lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil to save life or to kill I just love Jesus questions put to them they often are asking questions to trick him he asked a question that had them over a barrel how could they say well yeah it's lawful to do evil but not good no they knew the answer of course it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath but they wouldn't say so they're so stubborn so so locked in they don't care what

God's law says or means or anything they wanted to win this occasion they wanted Jesus looking stupid and now he's starting to make them look stupid so they act coy they're not going to answer him again we see the importance of the Sabbath day to Jesus by what follows behind these silent mouths of these teachers of Israel were stubborn hearts that deeply distressed him and so looking around at them in anger how did Mark know that probably through Peter but how did Peter know that that Jesus had anger as he looked around ever looked at a man's eyes when he's angry I believe they saw his anger in his eyes in his face and Jesus the meek and mild Jesus looks with anger at these teachers of

Israel who aren't after the truth but just out to win and score points for themselves and he says to the man stretch out your hand and he stretched it out and his hand was completely restored and Luke tells us that that did not melt the Pharisees to repentance it did not call them to change their mind on the matter of the sap it says that they became furious Luke tells us that they had been caught in their own trap it was them not Jesus who was being made to look stupid in the eyes of the people and Jesus defense of healing on the Sabbath was clear to everyone God never meant for this kind of work of healing to be forbidden on by the fourth commandment it perfectly fits the rest the refreshment the restorative purpose of the Sabbath for man to see this man who's burdened with a shriveled hand to be put at rest by having it made whole and the

New Testament makes the same point by recording nine different healings of Jesus on the Sabbath day not the same one repeated four times no nine different healings of Jesus on the Sabbath he's making the point you see this was never a breach of God's purpose for the Sabbath day another day in Luke 14 finds Jesus in the home of a prominent Pharisee on the Sabbath and there's a man with dropsy I guess it was internal water problems for him and Jesus asked is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not he knows his audience and so he he raises the question doesn't even give them a chance to ask it is it lawful and they remain silent again as if they hadn't learned enough by then and so Jesus healed the man sent him away and then Jesus asked him if one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the

Sabbath day will you not immediately pull him out he had him he had them didn't he of course they would and indeed their mission allowed for that on the Sabbath and what inconsistency how how twisted and perverted is their thinking to think that they could do that for a lamb for an ox an animal

but not to set this man free from his infirmity how inconsistent and cold and we find the same in John's gospel in John chapter 5 we're introduced to an invalid at the pool called Bethesda there in Jerusalem he's been paralyzed for 38 years Jesus comes and he says get up pick up your mat and walk and at once he was cured and he picked up his mat and he walked happy man rejoicing wonderful story end of story not so fast John says the day on which this took place was a [41 : 30] Sabbath oh no we immediately say oh those are troubling words he healed on sure enough the Jews there said to the man who had been healed it is the Sabbath the law forbids you to carry your mat and I suppose the mat might have weighed more than a dried fig but that was not the Lord's rule that was their own man made rule it was probably just a light straw mat that was rolled up and he lay on it and Jesus says roll up pick it up and walk and in no way violated God's purposes for this day they were rather in violation for not rejoicing in the Lord's works for the sons of men that day as he showed grace and mercy now Jeremiah 17 God's law did say be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work

Sabbath but keep the Sabbath day holy as I commanded your forefathers what were they doing they were carrying on as if it was just another market day hauling loads of merchandise out to the market hauling loads who knows where as if it was no different from the other six days normal work but this man's straw mat was hardly such a load and did nothing to violate God's command nevertheless to pick up your mat and walk he had no idea because Jesus had slipped away into the crowd and later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him see you're well again stop sinning or something worse may happen to you and the man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well so because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath the Jews persecuted him Jesus said to them my father is always at his work to this very day and I too am working for whatever the father does the son also does this kind of work of healing and bringing rest from suffering was never forbidden by God on the Sabbath day indeed it fulfilled his purpose for rest in verse 18 of John 5 says for this reason the Jews tried all the was he breaking the Sabbath abolishing the Sabbath but he was even calling God his own father making himself equal with God did you know that that's why they killed Jesus because in their eyes he broke the Sabbath he couldn't be God he couldn't be God's son not only was he breaking the Sabbath but he was also calling God his father those two went together this this was no small thing was

Jesus what have we seen is Jesus a breaker of the fourth commandment or isn't he he rebukes them and tells them to stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment John 7 24 so what we've learned about Jesus and the Sabbath day about the fourth commandment and Jesus well 9 16 this man is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath but what we found is that he did not keep all their rules about the Sabbath day but that he perfectly kept all that God had required him to do on the Sabbath they said he was breaking the Sabbath because on the Sabbath day he did three things he healed people he told a man to pick up his mat and he allowed his disciples to pluck and eat grains of grain as they walked through a field but we have seen this morning that none of these things were

Lord of Sabbath Jesus knows exactly how to keep it holy and he did so he always did what his father commands even when it didn't line up with the Pharisees additional laws in the Mishnah but think about those three things healing people on the Sabbath telling a man to pick up his mat on the Sabbath and being okay with his disciples eating grains from the field on the Sabbath if these three things were the worst things that his enemies could pin on him to prove that he was a breaker of the Sabbath think how carefully he must have kept the Sabbath day holy I mean they couldn't say you took the oxen out and we're planting your field or we're harvesting your field or thresh they couldn't find anything else other than the fact of these three things oh how careful

[46 : 45] Jesus was to keep the Sabbath day holy and it's shown even by his enemies who were constantly on the lookout it's like being a politician today you got a lot of people digging through the files looking for something to accuse you of Jesus was that man and they were looking for anything they could find and this is all they could find this is all they could muster and none of it was a true breach of the Sabbath day commandment well it only proves that he did keep the fourth commandment he regarded it as a day to be kept holy and he did and in so doing he not only worked out a righteousness for us his believing people that we could be saved and presented righteous in God's sight through Jesus but he was also laying down an example for us that we might walk in his steps and walk as Jesus did and then we learned that Jesus defended the fourth commandment against the

Pharisees abuses! Against their efforts to rob it from its original design of being a real blessing and benefit for man they made it a ball and chain around a man's leg with all their cumbersome rules and prohibitions and they were serving the devil's cause in that whatever they were claiming! we're just putting up hedges they were serving the devil's cause in that because he wants to slander God's good name it was his first temptation of he he wanted to slander God's good name and he wants to portray God and his commands as less than good for man God's heart really isn't good toward you and Jesus hears that and he fights to uphold the goodness of God in giving us this fourth command showing it's not for our oppression but for our good and our joyful delight in him and Jesus fight to maintain the right view of the Sabbath day proves it's abiding importance to him for his kingdom that he came to establish some today would say there's only nine of the ten commandments repeated in the New Testament as if it proves that there's no longer a Sabbath day to be kept holy but Jesus spoke more in defense of the fourth commandment than he did of any other commandment of the ten we don't find

Jesus vigorously defending other biblical institutions that were strictly Jewish and were soon to be abolished and to have no place in his new covenant kingdom like the ceremonial laws we don't see Jesus fighting to defend right ceremonialism or the judicial laws of stoning adulterous women he's not fighting for those things they're soon to be gone fulfilled in the old testament and no longer continuing having any place in his new covenant community but in each gospel record we find Jesus fighting tooth and nail to defend a right understanding of the sabbath day demonstrating its importance to him and to its enduring place in his new covenant community this is a good law and I want to do good to my people he defended it furthermore the gospel writers those who wrote Matthew Mark and Luke and John wrote their stories their accounts 20 years after

Jesus resurrection and ascension and they would not have given so much space to Jesus defense of the sabbath if it was already an abolished thing of the past this is a relic it has no abiding relevance to us rather the beneficial purposes of this creation ordinance fit perfectly with Jesus kingdom work of restoring man to his garden rest free from all the burdens that have been brought in by sin and its curse to bring us to a new day without suffering sickness and disease he had come for this he was sent for this he was anointed for this his was a kingdom in which he invited sinners to come to him to find rest for their souls rest from their feverish works of the law to try to save themselves now just come to me and rest on what I have done on my works my obedience that's how you come to soul rest his was a kingdom that preached rest from the heavy burden of sin and guilt rest from the heavy yoke of man's commands and rules to lead them into the future in the future to enter into a sabbath of eternal rest there is still a sabbath rest for the people of

[51 : 34] God free from all the oppression and the burdens that we know God has a day to keep Jesus has a day to keep special in his kingdom in his new covenant community well there's more than one way to break the fourth commandment we focused on the Pharisees breaking by addition I fear that our own day knows more of its subtraction and its neglect and I have no doubt that if Jesus were here today he would preach as much if not more so on the neglect of the day than all the additions there may be a few Hasidic Jews and there may be a few Christians even who have gone too far professing Christians that go and add all their legalism to the day but

Jesus loves the Lord's day and he loves it for his people he wants us to taste all that God has intended for us on this day so we honor him he kept it and defended it we then honor him by giving him his day rejoicing in him for his work of salvation a gracious king who invites weary men and women to come to him and to find rest for their souls because my yoke he says different from the Pharisee's yoke my yoke is easy and my burden is light let's pray we thank you our father in heaven for your word we thank you that it's there that Christ is revealed and in Jesus Christ we see perfection perfect obedience to all your commandments and so we give you thanks for what you have left on record for us for our training in righteousness for our instruction our rebuke and our correction thank you for a savior who kept the fourth commandment perfectly to atone for all my breaches of this command and thank you for his glorious example in laying down an example of giving himself and giving the day that you have set aside for the very purposes for which you've set it aside help us to do the same and to honor you and to delight in you we bless you for such goodness at your heart as to send a savior for us we praise you in Jesus name amen