

# The New Me and Sabbath

Redefining the New Me (message 2)

Mark Series Message 12

1.7.18

CP: The new me needs to understand and practice Sabbath

Mark 2:23–28 (NIV)

<sup>23</sup> One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

<sup>25</sup> He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? <sup>26</sup> In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Let's talk about Judaism for just a minute to help establish the context for today's passage.

## 1. There are 3 things that characterize a good Jew.

A. Those three things are:

1. Kosher food.
2. Love of the Torah.
3. Sabbath observance.

B. During Jesus' day, the Sabbath was a big deal.

1. In fact, the Sabbath distinguished Jews from other religions and people.
  - a. To worship and not work on the Sabbath was a weekly sign that the Jews were God's chosen people.

- b. To work on the Sabbath was close to blasphemy.
- 2. And to pick heads of grain was considered reaping, a form of work that was absolutely forbidden.
- C. One Sabbath day, Jesus' disciples were out for a walk.
  - 1. Walking through a grainfield, someone in the group picked off a head of grain, rubbed in their hands and ate the grain seed.
  - 2. This was permissible.
    - a. God established Judaism with a great concern for the poor.
    - b. And part of that concern meant that the edges of the fields were not to be harvested.
    - c. Instead, they were to be left so the poor could go and pick grain to eat.
  - 3. The problem was that picking grain, and then rubbing it in their hand was considered work by the elitist Jewish leaders.
    - a. Jesus, remarkably, defended his people.
    - b. Instead of saying, "Sorry guys but there are some people who don't like this",
    - c. Jesus told the Pharisees, God did not institute the Sabbath to oppress his people but to refresh them.

## 2. No One Argues with King David.

A. Jesus refers to King David in verse 25 and 26.

Mark 2:25–26 (NIV)

<sup>25</sup> He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? <sup>26</sup> In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

1. In Jesus' day, no one spoke against King David.

a. David was not perfect.

b. But he was a man after God's own heart.

c. And King David's rule was prophetic of the future Messiah.

2. Jesus reminds the Pharisees of the time that David broke the Law of Moses.

a. David and his men were fleeing from King Saul.

b. They were hungry and came to the Old Tabernacle where the priest gave them bread that was meant only for the priest.

c. Did David break the Law? Yes.

d. But, the Scriptures never condemned it Jesus showed them.

B. Jesus was not against keeping the Sabbath holy.

1. What he was against was using the Sabbath as a way to oppress people and apply more hardship to their lives.

2. The Sabbath's intention was to be a blessing for God's people, not a curse.

3. That's why Jesus had no problem with his disciples picking grain on the Sabbath: They were hungry and needed to eat.

4. Next week, Jesus heals a lame man on the Sabbath and the Pharisees are again angry.

5. But Jesus refused to allow this man to suffer one more day in order to satisfy the rules of religion.

C. This morning, I am not going to condemn you if you have to work weekends.

1. I'm not going to condemn you for missing a church service.

2. But what I want to show you is what Jesus showed the Pharisees:
3. The practice of a Sabbath is a good and holy thing.
4. It is also an act of worship to work six days and to rest the seventh.

### 3. The Sabbath is for our benefit.

A. When God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, was He tired?

1. Absolutely not.
2. God did not become tired when creating the universe.
3. So what was God doing?

B. God was instituting a weekly rhythm for His people to benefit from.

1. God is a God of order:

- a. He created the days of the earth to have a specific cycle and order of 24 hours.
- b. He created Earth to rotate around the sun in a 365-day cycle.
- c. All of this allows us the opportunity to experience the seasons of nature.

2. When God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, he was instituting a cycle of rest and worship into our lives.

- a. Why?
- b. Because He knew we would need it.
- c. And He also knew we would not rest unless someone told us to.

C. Jesus showed the Pharisees this when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

1. The Jews had elevated the Sabbath to a place equal to or even above God.

2. Jesus showed them that nothing is to be elevated to that place.

#### 4. Do believers have to practice the Sabbath?

A. We always want to know what we can get away with.

1. What Christians usually ask is, "If I don't practice Sabbath, will I go to hell".

2. That's the wrong question.

3. This is not a heaven or hell issue.

4. But it is a blessing issue.

B. Practicing Sabbath is a lot like Tithing.

1. I don't think you will go to hell if you don't tithe.

2. But I do believe you miss out on God's blessing when you don't.

3. Same way with Sabbath.

4. We miss out on blessings that God intended for us when we don't practice a Sabbath.

C. Maybe you are thinking, **Yes! I Don't Have to feel guilty for not taking a Sabbath.**

1. But that is just as wrong of an attitude as the Pharisees had.

2. Most of us don't break the Sabbath out of necessity but out of desire.

a. We elevate all kinds of things above what God has set in place and we call it good.

b. But God, resting on the Sabbath, called the 6 days of labor good and the Sabbath day Holy.

c. We cannot declare evil what God has declared to be holy and good.

3. Honestly, most of us need to practice Sabbath more often.

- a. Not just a day off.
- b. But a day invested in worship, in rest, in celebrating with your family, and being alone with God for a little while.
- c. In a world that has gone crazy, we need the discipline of Sabbath more now than ever.

## 5. Why the new me should consider taking a Sabbath.

### A. #1. To fight the tyranny of chaos.

- 1. God is a God of order.
- 2. When he designed Creation and us, he designed the 7<sup>th</sup> day for rest and worship.
  - a. This was a day designed for humanity to rest, worship, and experience God's peace/wholeness.
  - b. Have you ever seen a day when people have been so harried, frazzled, frustrated, and wore out?
- 3. Could it be that the further America runs from God's design of a Sabbath rest, the more we will experience chaos and turmoil?

### B. #2. Because Sabbath reminds me that I can't do it all and I should stop trying.

- 1. Many of us are constantly working.
- 2. Part of that is because, if you are like me, you believe that if I stop then everything will fall apart.
- 3. The reality is that you are probably not as indispensable as you think.
- 4. There is a God, and you are not Him.
- 5. Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the fact.
- 6. And knowing that I'm not God reduces a lot of stress in my life.

C. #3. The best version of myself shows up when I am rested.

1. God knew this.

a. We get cranky when we don't get rest.

b. Whether it's nightly, weekly, or a vacation, we all need time to recharge.

2. The need for rest is not a weakness.

a. God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

b. Not because He needed it.

c. But because He wanted to set an example for us.

3. As I am Redefining the New Me for 2018, my goal is not only to work hard but to rest hard as well.

a. This balance is needed for me to do what God has called me to do.

b. The challenges before us require the best versions of ourselves.

1. Not the tired me,

2. The stressed me,

3. Or the rushed me.

c. The challenges before us require a person who is operating in the blessing and rhythm of God.

a. Fasting,

b. Prayer,

c. Reading my Bible,

d. And Sabbath are all part of that rhythm.

## Closing: If God is Calling you to a deeper place, are you able to hear Him?

### A. The Holy Spirit rarely shouts.

1. That's why we need times in our days and weeks where we set aside the noise, the hustle, and the work to worship and listen.
2. Maybe you have been wanting to hear from God.
  - a. Could it be possible that God has been speaking all this time, you've just been too busy to hear Him?
  - b. Sabbath is an opportunity to set aside the noise for a little while to hear God speak.

### B. Don't forget, that it is our heart that determines whether we properly observe the Sabbath or not.

1. The Jews kept it outwardly, and yet they received none of the blessing or benefit.
2. The Disciples broke the Sabbath by working and eating, and yet received the blessing of refreshment and restoration.
3. What was the difference?
4. The heart.

### C. This morning, I'm not telling you to stop working on Sundays.

1. If you need to work and provide for your family, then do so.
2. There is no condemnation here.
3. But, if you are feeling called to a deeper walk with God, consider practicing Sabbath.
4. Sabbath has to be more than an hour and a half on Sunday.
5. It is a condition of the heart that says, "I want to be with God and I am willing to pause my work for a period of time to be with Him".



6. Will you allow God to “Redefine” the new you this year?

Resources: 24/6 by Dr. Matthew Sleeth