

Sabbath or Jesus

Mark 2:27

1

27 Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

There is a point that I want to try and make in this lesson. When you look at the world around us and see what is happening in the name of religion it is truly sad what so-called worship of God has become. The question then is; Do you see what Jesus is saying here?

A little background first. Mark doesn't go into any real detail concerning the birth of Christ or even the story of Joseph and Mary, or of them looking for Him at the age of twelve after coming to Jerusalem. He talks briefly about John, Tells of the Baptism of Jesus and of God saying...

2

"You are my beloved Son, in You I am well pleased."

Then he introduces the ministry of Jesus. By chapter 1 verse 14, Mark is telling of Jesus coming into Galilee and beginning to preach. In verse 16 Jesus begins to choose the twelve by calling the brothers Peter and Andrew, and then a little later, James and John. Jesus and these 4 disciples go into Capernaum where they enter a synagogue on the Sabbath and Jesus begins teaching. There is a man there who has an evil spirit that Jesus casts out. The people were amazed at the authority with which Jesus taught. From there they go to Peter's house where Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, and very quickly the word of the miracles that He is doing spreads and soon all sorts of people were coming to Him for healing. Jesus goes throughout the country entering into the synagogues and teaching. Have you ever wondered why so much of Jesus' teaching took place in the countryside? Mark tells us in...

Mark 1:45

3

45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

Jesus had become so popular because of His miracles that He couldn't even enter a city because of the throngs of people trying to get to Him to be healed. In verse 14, He calls Matthew to follow Him.

This brings us to verse 23, where Jesus and His disciples are walking near a grain field and the disciples pick some grain to eat. The Pharisees complained to Jesus that they were breaking the Law by picking the grain on a Sabbath. Jesus answers them in...

Mark 2:25-26

4

25 And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; 26 how he entered the house of God 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 also gave it to those who were with him?"

Jesus reminds them that even David entered the tabernacle and took the shew bread to eat and to give to those with him. This is when He makes the point we began with in...

Mark 2:27

5

27 Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Our lesson is the contrast or comparison that is seen in... **6**

Sabbaton (NT:4521) or sabbata: **7**

The latter, the plural form, was transliterated from the Aramaic word, which was mistaken for a plural; hence the singular, sabbaton, was formed from it. The root means "to cease, desist" (Heb., shabath; cf. Arab., sabata, "to intercept, interrupt"); the doubled b has an intensive force, implying a complete cessation or a making to cease, probably the former. The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation from activity.

That is an important point. The following is an excerpt from Vine's...

The observation of the seventh day of the week, given to Israel, was a sign between God and His earthly people, based upon the fact that after the six days of creative operations He rested as seen in Ex 31 and 20, as well as other passages. The stringent regulations that are seen being imposed on the people were the traditions and other regulations and traditions that were developed and implemented as Law to such an extent that they became a burden upon the people. Two parts of the Mishna, this is the oral traditions believed to be the parts of the Law that were not written down by Moses but revealed orally, the Shabbath and the Erubin, are entirely occupied with regulations for the observance of the Sabbath. It is these oral traditions that caused the antagonism from the Pharisees, the strictest sect of the Jews, when the Lord healed on the "Sabbath,"...

Matt 12:12-14

8

12 How much more valuable then, is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

This explains the fact that on a "Sabbath" the sick were brought to be healed after sunset, as we see in Mark 1:32, for example. According to explanations from the Mishnah, by plucking ears of corn, or grain, Matt 12:1, Mark 2:23, and rubbing them, Luke 6:1, the Law of the "Sabbath" was broken in two respects; to pluck was to reap, and to rub was to thresh. The traditions had become more important than the purpose. The Lord's attitude towards the "Sabbath" was that it should be freed from these traditional restrictions by which it was made an end unto itself, instead of a means to an end, which is what is seen in our text from Mark 2:27.

God didn't give the Jews the Sabbath to be a burden; He gave it to them...

9

- 1) As a sign of His power in creation
- 2) For them to remember what He had done

In...

Ex 20:8

10

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

This idea of “Holy” refers to setting it apart for a specific purpose and in this context that purpose is spiritual in nature. For the Israelites, the Sabbath day was as much a part of their religious Law as was the offering of sacrifices. Notice what God commands in...

Ex 31:14

11

14 ‘Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

The penalty for not keeping the Sabbath Holy was to be put to death. When God commanded that the Sabbath was to be kept Holy, it wasn't just a suggestion. The Sabbath was to be observed per the proscriptions that God had given them. Not only were there the restrictions of no work, or travel distance, the restrictions on cooking, the Sabbath was also the traditional day of attending the synagogue for worship. That said, the Sabbath was not the only day that many Jews would gather at the synagogue for prayers and discussions on the Law. We see this when we get to Acts and follow the spread of the Gospel by those that were going from city to city to preach. Invariably they would enter the city and go to the synagogue. Today, that might seem odd. If someone were to come into our worship service and seek to address the congregation, the chances of that happening are pretty slim. But it was common in the Jewish tradition to give that kind of an opportunity to visiting teachers. So, it was not uncommon for there to be someone at the synagogue just about daily, but the Sabbath was typically the day of gathering at the synagogue. Remember also that the Sabbath began on what we today would call Friday evening at 6:00 pm. So, typically the gathering at the synagogue would occur on what we today would call Friday night or Saturday morning.

As time went on, however, the Sabbath celebration degenerated into what can only be understood as mere legalistic restrictions for the sake of tradition that did nothing more than diminish God's original intent. That is why Christ made the statement seen in...

Mark 2:27

12

27 Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Our Lord explicitly refuted the rigid restrictions that had been imposed by tradition. The point is that the Sabbath was not to be seen as an end unto itself but as a means to an end. Remember when I said earlier that there was a point I wanted to make in this lesson? That is the point. They lost the import of the Sabbath when they began to make the traditions of it more important than the purpose that God had given it for. That is what is seen in the world of religion today. The observance of doing something, not because of the worship involved, but merely for the sake of doing something. Look around you, you see people attending a service to be entertained, to get some sort of worldly fulfillment, even though God's Word and a faithful obedience to it is the farthest thing from anyone's intention. If we learn anything from God's commandments concerning the Sabbath we need to learn that God takes very seriously how he is to be worshipped by man. He did not allow the Israelites of old to deviate from His plan and He will not accept our worship today if we deviate from His plan.

We need to be careful that we don't allow ourselves to get so wrapped up in so-called Church traditions that we lose sight of the purpose that Christ gave us His church for. We cannot make traditions doctrine. What is the scriptural time to meet? Do we partake of the Lord's Supper before the sermon or after? How many songs do we sing before the Lord's Supper and how many after? I hope that these questions sound as foolish as they are, but the truly sad part is that just in my own personal experience I have seen these issues cause problems in the Lord's Church. People sometimes become so passionate about their preferences that they make traditions of them and then bind those traditions as doctrine. Now, please understand the point I am trying to make. Just because something is a tradition doesn't make it bad. But just because a tradition may be a good one, doesn't make it doctrine. The Church today does not have its own version of the Mishnah, nor is it ever to be bound by...

13

“Oral Tradition”

The Jews should have known this. Note what they are told in...

Deut 8:3

14

3 “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

This is the passage that Christ quoted in Matt. 4 when Satan tempted Him and tried to get Him to turn stone into bread. Life, eternal life can only be found in the Words of God. Eternal Life is only in Christ.

Heb 2:2-4

15

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

This brings us to the discussion of Christ vs. the Sabbath. We have seen how the Sabbath was given so that the Israelites would remember the power of God seen in His creation and that seeing that power they would remember what He had done for them as His children. We have also seen that they moved away from the purpose of the Sabbath being to help bring them closer to God and making it something it was not given to be.

Do you see in that example what the world does with Christ today? Christ was sent so that the world, all men, would have an opportunity to be saved. Salvation is for all who will not neglect it, all who will not ignore it, all who will come to God through Christ to receive it. But the world chooses to diminish the sacrifice of Christ in favor of its own agendas. It has established its own traditions as doctrine and chosen to ignore the Word of God that can save.

After the resurrection of Christ, the Day of Worship began to be observed on the First Day of the Week...

Acts 20:7

16

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

1 Cor 16:2

17

2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

During His earthly life and ministry the Jesus honored the seventh day, the Sabbath Day, as a day of worship and took care to demonstrate its original purpose. The first day of the week was instituted by the Lord not as a substitution for the Jewish Sabbath, but as a way of commemorating the Lord's resurrection. Jesus didn't rise on the Sabbath, He rose instead on the first day of the week. In the Greek, according to Strong's, that first day came to be called...

Kuriakos (koo-ree-ak-os'); (NT:2960)

18

from NT:2962; belonging to the Lord (Jehovah or Jesus):

In the first century Church there was a careful distinction made between the Sabbath and the "Kuriakos," the First day of the week. Unlike the Sabbath, we see nowhere where the first day of the week was to be consecrated or set apart as Holy. There are no proscriptions concerning how it is to be observed or that it even is to be observed. Rather, what we see is that the acts of our worship to God are to occur on it.

19

- 1) Observance of the Lord's Supper
- 2) Laying by in store
- 3) Preaching
- 4) Singing
- 5) Praying

The things we engage in in our worship should never become the purpose unto themselves like the Sabbath had. We are to partake of the Lord's Supper, but not for the purpose of eating some cracker and having a drink of juice. We are to partake of it to remember what Jesus did by offering Himself for our sin. We are to give of our means, but not just to put money in the tray, but to remember what God has given us by returning to Him a portion of His blessing. We are to sing, not just to make noise or to sound pretty, and brethren our singing is beautiful, or to be entertained, but it is to give praise to God and to encourage each other. We are to pray together, not to be seen by others praying, but to offer for each other our heartfelt supplication to our creator and savior for the good of all. We preach so that the Word of God, which saves, might be spread throughout the world. We don't do these things because of tradition or because some man or men think we should, we do these things because God has given them to us for a purpose.

We don't respond to God because that is what is expected of us from our families or friends or whatever, we should respond to God's calling out of the conviction that the Gospel is true, that Jesus is the Son of the living God, and that there is no other way by which we might be saved.