

**2:23** Once on a Sabbath day, Jesus was passing through the grain fields, and his disciples began to pick heads of grain as they walked along. **24** The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath day?”

**25** He replied to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry (he and his companions)? **26** He entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the Bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for anyone to eat, except for the priests. He also gave some to his companions.”

**27** Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. **28** So the Son of Man is the Lord even of the Sabbath.”

**3:1** Jesus entered the synagogue again, and a man was there with a withered hand. **2** They were watching Jesus closely to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath day, so that they could accuse him. **3** He said to the man with the withered hand, “Step forward!” **4** Then he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. **5** Then he looked around at them with anger, deeply grieved at the hardness of their hearts. He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The man stretched it out, and his hand was restored. **6** The Pharisees left and immediately began to conspire against Jesus with the Herodians, plotting how they might kill him.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,



Are you looking forward to rest from school with a break? Are you looking forward to rest from work with a vacation? We enjoy resting from our regular tasks and chores.



Not every student enjoys vacation. If you trapped at home because of summer heat and mom and dad are working long hours, it may not be so wonderful.

Parents might not mind a break from school driving and special events related to school, but after having your students home all summer, parents may wish they had a little more freedom to get things done while school is in session.

Not every worker enjoys vacation as either the vacation may not be the paradise we hoped OR we see emails from work that our team or department is struggling and we wish we could get back and help fix things.

Not every senior enjoys retirement. It isn't the "rest" that we thought it would be. Senior years can be filled with the work of helping kids and grand-kids, dealing with health issues and even the death of long time acquaintances.

God does bless our attempts to take a break and get rest, however he also wants us to remember where real rest is found.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day thought they knew. It was by keeping the laws of God and the church. <sup>23</sup> **Once on a Sabbath day, Jesus was passing through the grain fields, and his disciples began to pick heads of grain as they walked along.** <sup>24</sup> **The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath day?"** They taught you had to slavishly follow the Sabbath law in hopes of finding rest.

Jesus knew different. The church leaders should have known better but they lost sight of the truth. Jesus reminds them and us, **Real Sabbath Rest Comes from Above.** Real rest is connected to God's mercy!

### **1. Jesus comes with words that set our soul at rest.**

During the summer months I try to read a book or two. Some I read for fun, but in others I want something interesting or informative. Maybe you read too during the long hot summer months. Some books are good but others are not as satisfying. There is one book that will always satisfy and that is the Bible. That is because in the Bible we have the Gospel about Jesus. In the Bible Jesus gives words that set our soul at rest. This is what we learn in Mark 2 (23-28).



A. The Holy Spirit gives us a contrast. The church leaders, the Pharisees had their own books and words, the Torah. They prescribed rest through a

through a slavish following of rules. Some of the rules were taken from Moses, but rules they added were their own.

Jesus uses an Old Testament Bible story to show that they were overlooking something. God wanted them to keep mercy in the picture while they were following his laws.

1. King David and his men were on the run in 1 Samuel 21. They came to Abiathar the priest looking for help. Abiathar provided them with the show bread. After sitting in the tabernacle for a week the show bread could be eaten by the priests, but no one else. Since David and his men were in dire need, Abiathar showed mercy and gave them the bread. Abiathar broke the rules, but for good reason. Jesus indicates that God was pleased with Abiathar and David's actions. (Mark 2:25-26)

2. This story of mercy sheds light on Jesus' next words in verse 27. **Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."** The pharisees were offended that the disciples were picking grain on the Sabbath. In their mind it was work and therefore law breaking. They believed men and women were to serve the Sabbath. Jesus points out it just the opposite. The Sabbath was to serve people. The Sabbath Day was made so people would take time out from their regular lives and hear God's word.

This is good for us. We may feel like coming to church and putting in an hour is a real chore. God has created church days so you can come and hear his word. He has wonderful things to tell you. It goes beyond keeping the commandments. God has stories of mercy that apply to you. As repentant people then we come to church, eager to hear God's word that will give rest.

B. In church you hear a lot of words. The Bible has a lot in it. However, all the words are really about one person. In Jesus' day people were excited to go to worship to hear about the Messiah. Today we go to church and the Bible to hear about Jesus. <sup>28</sup>**So the Son of Man is the Lord even of the Sabbath.**" The Son of Man is the source of mercy and rest.

1. Jesus does not dispute that his disciples were technically breaking the law. He only establishes that this was permissible in a moment of dire need. This is important for another reason.

On this occasion the disciples may not have needed to repent. Most of the time when they AND we break God's commandments we need to turn to God

in repentance. What kind of God will we find? Jesus establishes, as does the Old Testament, that our God is a God of mercy. He wants to forgive and restore us when this is necessary.

2. This sheds light on the Jesus proclamation that **“the Son of Man is the Lord even of the Sabbath.”** We need to find rest in Jesus. On a rare or occasion we may lie for someone’s good, however most of the time when we lie and break God’s other laws, it is not for a good purpose. We need the rest from knowing that God is merciful. When you go to church, you are looking for Jesus and his forgiveness. When we hear about him we have the Sabbath rest for our souls.

## **2. Jesus comes with works that are the source of real rest.**

We may be tempted to roll our eyes at the Pharisees because they were often Jesus’ enemies. Please don’t mistake that for laziness. There were plenty of sincere pharisees, like St. Paul in his early days (Acts 22:3). They worked hard to keep the law. They benefited from living outwardly good lives.

The difficulty is that the law condemns even the most perfect people. The apostle writes in Romans 8:3, **“Indeed, what the law was unable to do, because it was weakened by the flesh, God did, when he sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to deal with sin. God condemned sin in his [Jesus] flesh.”** The Law does not have the power to save. It cannot give rest for our souls. On the other hand Jesus can. We see in Mark 3 that Jesus comes with works that are the source of real rest.

A. Jesus shows the perfect heart. He went into the synagogue to bring real Sabbath rest.

1. The leader’s response was to go after him. They rejected his message of rest. They believe they will have rest when they get rid of Jesus. God forbid we ever think our lives will be better if we get rid of Jesus!

2. Look at Jesus’ attitude! Jesus was “angry” and “grieved.” He cared about them. They were rejecting God’s mercy and real rest. They would never have that. Pray for yourself and others that we do not do what these Pharisees did. Jesus cares! Jesus can help as he shows.

B. Jesus demonstrates his power to give rest.

1. Jesus healed the man. He had relief from his physical distress. Jesus had the power to give him spiritual healing. He had forgiveness for him not only in words, but in actions.

2. How does Jesus forgive sins that need to be paid for? He would do it through the pharisees' conspiracy to kill him. His innocent death is the payment. Jesus' paid for our sins at the cross. This makes forgiveness available which Jesus freely gives. So he has the power to put our souls at rest.



Conclusion: My prayers as your pastor during the summertime include prayers for a happy and productive summer. When I hear you are going on vacation, I pray for your safety and wellbeing. The Lord will bless our efforts to find rest and relaxation. He also has planned for your spiritual rest. Jesus gives us time on Saturdays, Sundays



and other days to come and receive rest from him. He is the source of our real rest. We find it in his perfect life and death. Make sure that you receive that rest that is better than all others. It sets us up for life's long journey and for our eternal rest. Amen.