

“LORD OF THE SABBATH”:

LUKE 5:33-6:11

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Introduction

In our last two sermons fishermen (5:1-11), and three men, a leper, a lame man, and Levi (5:12-32) make a definite and definitive break with their past. In the Person and Work of Jesus Christ they find the grace of God and hope for the future.

Dr. Luke shows us in our passage today (5:33-6:11) that in Jesus Christ the old has passed away and the new has come for all in him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). The old has passed away not only for individual persons as in (5:1-32) but in the forms, types and ceremonies of the Old Covenant. The new or fuller, more expansive meaning of God’s purposes revealed in the Old Testament, have also dawned with the Coming of Jesus’ Kingdom in power and authority.

Our passage today begins with Jesus’ explanation of how the old ways of interpretation also must be left behind, and Jesus gives us the fuller interpretation of past religious forms and their application and how they must be accepted and understood now in light of his coming.

Jesus particularly reveals this correct interpretation in the way he teaches about the Sabbath, and how he shows himself as the Messianic King of the Kingdom as the very “Lord of the Sabbath”.

As Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus has come to rightly interpret God’s purposes and laws revealed from Sinai as well as in the ceremonies of the Old Testament: ***God is showing mercy and love to his people***. God gives his people his Law in order for them live lovingly, mercifully and compassionately before God and man, not in order to become self-righteous legalists who outwardly obey, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones (cf. Matthew 23).

I. A Parable of the Divine Messianic Kingdom (5:33-39)- A New Creation!

- a. Pharisees and scribes compare Jesus and his disciples’ behavior with the piety and behavior of John the Baptist and His disciples (v. 33).
- b. Fasting in Israel was an important part of their devotional life (Lev. 16:29, 31; Zech. 7:3-5; 8:19; Est. 4:16; Dan. 10:2-3). Fasting was regarded in Jesus’ day as a great virtue and an example of piety and godliness.

- c. The Pharisees are implicitly questioning Jesus' piety and outward manifestation of godliness.
- d. Jesus explains that a foreshadowing, or foretaste of the Last Day, Messianic Wedding Feast has begun in the coming of Jesus Christ: While the bridegroom of the bride is with the guests, they shall celebrate and experience the power and authority of the New Creation that is to come fully when Jesus returns (vv. 34-35) –they shall fast after he leaves.
- e. In verse 35, Jesus speaks already of his death when the bridegroom is taken from them- -then they will fast. That means that there will come a day for fasting as the people of God await Christ's return, but for now, the disciples will rejoice in the foretaste of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb (cf. Matthew 22) and the Coming of the Divine Messianic Kingdom!

f. Parable: Old Garments-New Garments/ Old Wine and New Wineskins

- i. Context: All three men (and the disciples at the beginning of chapter 5:1-11) have experienced a definitive break with the “old” the past, and are now part of the new creation in Christ. In chapter 6:1-11, Jesus will also explain further the correct interpretation of “old ways of doing things” with his declaration to the Pharisees that the Son of Man is “Lord of the Sabbath”.
- ii. The old way of living in a time of Old Testament types and anticipation, have been fulfilled in the coming of the New Testament in him. The Pharisees compare Jesus' disciples with John the Baptist's disciples; this is a false assumption. John's disciples (and the Pharisees) were disciples of anticipation and promise, rooted in the Old Covenant as the last of the teachers and prophets sent to Israel (cf. Acts 19:1-6); Jesus and his disciples represented the new era of the New Covenant.
- iii. **Illustration:** When we speak of a product as “new and improved” this does not mean the product is entirely new as if it is something new altogether. Rather when we use the term “new and improved” we mean what Jesus means here: the product or thing is new and improved in substance- -or it ***better!***
- iv. ***Jesus has not come to “patch up” Judaism***, but to declare something wholly new, yet something new that was prophesied by Isaiah concerning the Messianic Age (Isa. 65-66; regardless of how mistaken the interpretation of the Pharisees and scribes!). As I. Howard Marshall commented: “The point [Jesus is making] is simply that the gospel cannot be contained within Judaism without

destroying both. The new ways in which God is dealing with humanity through Jesus cannot be mixed with the old ways” (Marshall, pg. 227; Bock, pg. 521).

- v. There is a new way of doing things now that the Kingdom has dawned. For example, the old way of seeking forgiveness was through a sacrificial system (a type of things to come and forgiveness in the Old Covenant); but now in Jesus Christ, a new time has dawned in him: forgiveness of sins will be found in Jesus, and through the body and blood that he lays down once and for all for his people!
- vi. **Application: Replacement Theology or Fulfillment Theology?** Reformed folk following Jesus’ parabolic teaching here (5:33-39) do not engage (as some say unfairly) in what has come to be known popularly as ***Replacement Theology*** (a derogatory straw-man term that is supposed to show Reformed theology’s disregard for the well-being of Israel among other things). What we do engage in as Reformed folk, and what Jesus is expressly and explicitly teaching is ***Expansion-Fulfillment Theology***.
- vii. Any hope for Israel or Gentile will not be found in Judaism, but in the fulfillment of God’s mission to Israel in Jesus Christ and His Church. Jesus is saying that the old way of doing things (the old garment and old wine) has given way “in the fullness of the times” (Gal. 4:4; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17) to the new way in Christ (the new garment and new wine of the gospel). However, many still like the old wine better (5:39)!
- viii. **New Testament Scholar** Joel B. Green wrote: “...Jesus interprets his behaviors, which are questionable and innovative to some onlookers, ***as manifestations of God’s ancient purpose coming to fruition***, while the concerns of the Pharisees are rejected not only as innovative, but also as quite inconsistent with God’s program.” [My emphasis] (Luke, NICNT, pg. 250).

II. **“Harvesting” and Healing on the Sabbath (6:1-11)**- An Example of the Parable and a Challenge to the Pharisaical Interpretation

- a. “On a Sabbath” (6:1a, 6a)
 - i. As a logical extension and a parabolic example of the new wine, Jesus now corrects the legalistic assumptions of the Pharisees and the false interpretation or “old wine” of Judaism for keeping God’s commandments.

- ii. Jesus and disciples plucked some “heads of grain” [του . j sta, cua j yw, conte j] or “ears of corn” (v. 1). According to Deuteronomy 23:25, it was lawful to pluck ears of corn in others cornfield. There was nothing wrong with obtaining grain, but in the Pharisees’ interpretation of the Sabbath, ***it was work***, and in conflict with their Sabbath laws (the problem was not taking the grain, but that it was *on the Sabbath*).

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 23:25** If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

- iii. Pharisaical Interpretation of Sabbath “Work”

1. “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” (vv. 2, 7).
2. The Pharisees are trying to blame Jesus for harvesting and threshing the grain or corn, or “working” on the Sabbath.

According to theologian Leon Morris: “The Pharisees would find in the plucking of the ears a breach of the regulation which forbade **reaping** and in the rubbing in their hands that which prohibited **threshing**. Throwing away the husks probably represented **winnowing**, while eating showed that they had **prepared food**. ***Four distinct breaches of the Sabbath in one mouthful!***” (Luke, pgs. 134-35).

The *Mishnah* which was an ancient Jewish rule book contained instructions about Sabbath practice. In *Shabbath* 7:2, there is a list of thirty-nine prohibited activities known as the “forty less one.” (TDNT, 7:12-13).

3. In the practice of the Pharisees, implicit in their question is: “Why did you and your disciples not prepare a meal ahead of time to be ready for the Sabbath?”
4. The Pharisees and Scribes, and Teachers of the Law (“Doctors”) laid down thousands of laws for what was acceptable and what was forbidden on the Sabbath; so it is important to note that there was an interpretive tradition of the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law that was in place, not necessarily a scriptural teaching against what Jesus was doing.

5. The Sabbath was a very important observance for Israel, and it was the way one showed their devotion outwardly to God; to break **the Sabbath was a monumental outward sin to commit publicly.** The Pharisees are again charging Jesus with a great crime (as they did in 5:21-24, suggesting that Jesus was speaking blasphemously).
6. The Sabbath itself while outwardly kept had degenerated terribly into mere outward moralistic, formalistic, legalism in Judaism.

iv. Biblical-Theological Teaching on the Sabbath

1. Exodus 20:8-11
2. Isaiah 58:13-14- Sabbath as a “Delight”
3. Jeremiah 17:19-27

b. Jesus’ Teaching on the Sabbath

i. What was the purpose of the Sabbath?

“I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” (v. 9).

- a. We know that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17-20). Jesus did not come to abolish the Sabbath either.
- b. In fact, we already know from Dr. Luke that Jesus worshipped and served God as he should have one day in seven as he attends regularly the synagogue:

^{ESV} **Luke 4:16** And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

^{ESV} **Luke 4:31** And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath,

- c. In order to teach them, and to defend himself (and perhaps more important for Jesus, the defending of his innocent disciples for eating), Jesus reminds the Pharisees of the story of David and his men eating the Bread of the Presence at the Sanctuary at Nob when fleeing for his life from Saul:

^{ESV} **1 Samuel 21:1-6:** Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David trembling and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?"² And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place."³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here."⁴ And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread- if the young men have kept themselves from women."⁵ And David answered the priest, "Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?"⁶ *So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.*

- d. Jesus is getting at through this the right interpretation of the Sabbath according to the spirit of the law: the Sabbath was for life ("new wine in new wineskins"). The spirit of the Sabbath observance must not lead to outward formalism and legalism that robs it of its God-given meaning altogether. As God teaches in Hosea and Micah the Old Covenant prophets:

^{ESV} **Hosea 6:6** For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

^{ESV} **Micah 6:8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but *to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Matthew 12:7-8: And if you [the Pharisees] had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

- e. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for ritualistically "going through the motions" in their "sacrificial Sabbath keeping" but they are not showing love, kindness, mercy, humility and compassion to others! *The Pharisees have overlooked the important spirit of the Law.*

- f. As David, Jesus and his disciples are eating the heads of grain or corn to preserve their life and to eat because they are hungry; they are not doing this in order to break God's law. If Jesus is guilty, then so is David, and the Pharisees would balk at having to say such a thing as this!
- g. Another point that is important here: If David can do this and it is not wrong when life and well-being is at stake, *how much more* can David's Greater Son, the very Son of Man do this?!
- h. It is important to note that Jesus is not breaking the Sabbath, nor is he lessening the importance of it as one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). **Rather, Jesus is implicitly rebuking the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law, who have interpreted this important day by making it a yoke of slavery, and a day of mere legalistic bondage.**
- i. Jesus has come to make all things new! This includes a greater and fuller understanding of God's Sabbath Law *in Christ!*
- ii. Contrary to the Pharisaical interpretation and sinful charge against Jesus, Jesus was "doing good" and not breaking the Sabbath according to the Law of Moses. (6:3, 9).
 - 1. Dr. Luke gives us a picture of Jesus' doing good not only in feeding his disciples from the heads of grain or corn, but from the healing of the man with the withered hand (perhaps muscular atrophy) (6:6-11).
 - 2. Jesus is doing good, healing; he is giving life to a man who could not work any day of the week. ***He is also showing himself to have the right to claim the title: Son of Man and the Lord of the Sabbath.***
 - 3. In contrast to this, the Pharisees who have been "watching" [**parathre,w** (used in act. and midd.) watch, watch closely; observe, keep (Ga 4.10)] him (v. 7; cf. 14:1; 20:20) like a lot of spies (for emphasis, Dr. Luke places the verb "watching" at the beginning of the sentence in Greek).

According to the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law, they interpreted that the only time one should ever think about healing on the Sabbath was when someone was close to dying; otherwise, if you give any medical help to anyone, you have broken the Sabbath.

“Whenever there is doubt whether life is in danger this overrides the Sabbath” (Rabbinical Writing: *Yoma* 8:6).

4. “The man “only” had a “mere” withered hand, he was not in the perils of death,” the Pharisees would have said!
5. What is implicit in Jesus’ teaching here about the Sabbath is that ***the Sabbath is about life and wholeness in Christ***. Jesus wants to show a picture that the spirit and purpose of God’s Sabbath has never been to make “goody-goody” legalists, although there have been a few! Rather, ***the Sabbath was to restore the people of God through worship and service of God!***
6. ***Sabbath Fulfillment in Christ:*** Jesus is showing that in him, in his Person and Work, what the Sabbath signified is being fulfilled! In the Person and Work of Christ, the love, mercy, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and restoration rest before him is being accomplished in his Divine Messianic Mission. Recall the writer of the Hebrews, observing through proper interpretation the fact that the Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

^{ESV} **Hebrews 4:9-11:** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. with your God?

True Sabbath rest and restoration from sin is found in Christ alone; if the Pharisees and anyone else are to find the true meaning of the Sabbath, they must find it through belief in, and union with Christ!

To put this another way, Jesus is saying now that he has come to show life in the gospel, a person cannot truly observe the Sabbath without being united to him by faith! Since the coming of Christ, Christ-less Sabbath keeping is a useless observance because they do not have life in him.

- iii. How was Jesus fulfilling rather than abolishing the Law of Moses as given in the fourth commandment?
 1. Keeping the Sabbath was for a man’s life and wholeness, both physically and spiritually. It was, and still is each

Lord's Day, what God uses by His Spirit and the Means of Grace to continue to make his people whole in Jesus Christ.

^{ESV} **Luke 6:9-11:** And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" ¹⁰ And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

2. **“Save life”** (v. 9) [**yuch**, , h/ j f self, inner life, one's inmost being; (physical) life; that which has life, living creature, person, human being]: Jesus is saying not merely restoring or saving physical life, but **the whole man—physical and spiritual restoration.**

This reminds us that we are not Gnostics who think that we merely need spiritual renewal every Sunday. We need a whole body-spirit-soul renewal, and this is found NOW in Christ, but we await for the full restoration of our humanity and wholeness in the New Heavens and New Earth (Rom. 8:18-25)

Application: If we fail to understand this wholeness, we might be tempted to worship on the Christian Sabbath, and get our fill of the Word, then engage in physical activity that is neither works of necessity or mercy. When we do this, we also fail to understand the whole renewal of man in Jesus Christ.

Do you find rest both physically and spiritually on the Sabbath? The reason you should not work (unless it is works of necessity or mercy) is that you have been freed in Christ not to work one day out of seven. Keeping the Christian Sabbath is not legalism, but for your good! If you are doing work on the Christian Sabbath, I would encourage you to seek to know if you are doing works of necessity or mercy by asking as Jesus did (Luke 13:15; 14:5):

"Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?"

"Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?"

The principle here is to ask: Am I doing something that is necessary for my well-being and life, and compassionately caring for others?

3. Jesus is showing that God's Law is intended to make one's life fuller, and Sabbath Law was to free mankind up to rest and enjoy God, while serving and loving our neighbor.
4. Jesus is showing that the law seeks to encourage righteousness and service of other people through mercy and compassion not merely the writing of a list of rules to follow- -that anyone could do outwardly with no love inwardly.
5. As the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches, keeping the Sabbath in Christ is worshipping God corporately as well as engaging in works of necessity and mercy:

WCF 21.7 As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and ***perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him***:(1) which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week,(2) which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day,(3) and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.(4) (1)Exod. 20:8,10,11; Isa. 56:2,4,6,7. (2)Gen. 2:2,3; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; Acts 20:7. (3)Rev. 1:10. (4)Exod. 20:8,10; Matt. 5:17,18.

WCF 21.8 This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, ***do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations;(1) but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy***.(2) (1)Exod. 20:8; Exod. 16:23,25,26,29,30; Exod. 31:15; Neh. 13:15-19,21,22. (2)Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:1-13.

c. Jesus as Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath

- i. What does Jesus mean by “the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath”? (v. 5)
 1. Jesus means that he is the Master Interpreter of what God’s purpose for the Sabbath Day meant for the people (in contrast to the Pharisaical-Judaistic Interpretation).
 2. Jesus is making himself equal with God the Father. Only God can forgive sins (as we learned in Luke 5:21-24), and only God is Lord of the Sabbath as well as Master Interpreter of His Commandments.

This teaches us that Jesus is not only equal with God the Father, but greater than Moses (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2)!

3. **Implication: As the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus interprets the meaning of the Sabbath, but can also change the day of the week on which it is celebrated-**
The last day of the week is changed to the first day of the week as we know. This too, is a fuller understanding of the Sabbath day and the disciples were following the Spirit of Jesus who is the Lord of the Sabbath. In the Old Covenant the Sabbath was on the last day (as anticipating the Messianic Last Days); in the New Covenant the Sabbath or Lord’s Day is on the first day because this was the day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and the full dawn of the Messianic Last Days.
- ii. “Son of Man”- The “Son of Man” title is used often by Luke (cf. 3:22-38)- it means that Jesus is a true man, descendant from Adam, of Abraham, of David, and he has authority as Messiah to interpret rightly how to live on the Sabbath.
- iii. **Application to the People of God:** “Lord of the Sabbath” and its implications for the Lord’s Day

“I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” (v. 9).

1. First of all, we must be careful to avoid all forms of mere outward, formalistic, moralistic, legalism with regard to the Christian Sabbath.

2. We should understand that there is a greater, more expansive opportunity to worship and serve God on the Christian Sabbath than on the Old Covenant Sabbath, since Christ has accomplished his Divine Messianic Mission on our behalf and has sat down at God's right hand as our Mediator, ever interceding for us (cf. Hebrews 12:18-25).
3. The principles of the Old Covenant Sabbath are still in place: one day in seven specifically for worship of God and to give the proper rest for man, creatures, and land that is necessary and wise.
4. The Christian Sabbath is for the strengthening of our faith, and the nourishment of our lives.
5. But we are not to worship and serve God merely according to rules without love. How many times do you find yourself worshipping God, obeying God, or serving others with the wrong attitude? This is a form of legalism. You are doing it merely out of duty, but there is no love.
6. Jesus' teaching and example here in this passage from Luke 6:1-11 teaches us that mercy and compassion are acts of service to God. When we serve one another through worship and service, **we serve God**. We must be motivated by the love of God that only God can give to us; otherwise, our service will merely be outward, and our hearts will still be far from him as we grumble and complain!

d. The Pharisees' Response

- i.* They were "filled with fury" (or "filled with madness"- -they were out of their minds with rage! -v. 11). [UBS] **a;noia, aj f stupidity, foolishness; rage, fury- the word in Greek means that they were filled with folly, rage, fury** (Important to notice the mixture of the emotion of anger being an action of folly).
- ii.* Dr. Luke shows how the Pharisees are breaking the spirit and purpose of God's Sabbath (fourth commandment), but they are also breaking the commandment to murder (sixth commandment).

^{ESV} **Mark 3:1-5:** Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. ² And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴ And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to

do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent.
⁵ **And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart**, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

- iii. The Pharisees while keeping the Sabbath according to their own sinful interpretations, and fencing the Law, are breaking it at the same time in their sinful anger, and in their seeking to harm Jesus (because of his correct interpretation!):

ESV Luke 6:11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

- iv. Legalism is like this! Making you think more highly of yourself because you are able to keep God's law merely outwardly, say like faithful attendance to church and worship. But legalism is that there is no love for God in the heart that is motivating that mere outward obedience.
- v. Legalism is dangerous because it wants others to do like you do (even if it may not be necessarily commanded, and someone might not be called to do it), while you go on breaking the Law of God in other ways.
- vi. The answer to legalism in all its forms is life in Christ. Forgiveness because we know we break God's law, and a love placed in our hearts by the Spirit that gives us the ability and desire to want to live God's commandments and laws out of love.
- vii. We need repentance for our legalism too! We need to understand that we seek God's love and purpose in Christ in anything he commands us to do, knowing that it is about ***restoration and life for us in Him!***

Thus Jesus shows us that the new has come in him (5:33-39) and that the spirit of the Sabbath Law of the Law of Moses was for life and restoration in Christ (6:1-11).

We must be careful not to fall into the same formalistic, legalistic error of the Pharisees by seeking the spirit of God's law and its meaning in Jesus Christ. We will be tempted to be merely outwardly obedient to God's law, but we must seek God for love so that we will live forgiving, merciful, and compassionate as our God in Christ has been to sinners like us!

We must understand the Christian Sabbath as fulfilled in Christ. We must understand that Christ has not come to abolish the commandments, including the fourth one. As Jesus teaches to us "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

In other words, the Sabbath is for our wholeness, both physically and spiritually, in Christ. We all need it very much as part of our sanctification. We dare not abolish what Jesus has given to us as a great gift of God where we worship and serve God together doing works of necessity and mercy.

The Christian Sabbath is about life. For sinners who are dead in their trespasses and sins, it is a picture of wholeness in Jesus Christ, a foretaste of the New Heavens and the New Earth. It is an appropriate day especially for calling all sinners to fresh and new repentance – and finding their life in Jesus.

Jesus says to us: “I have come so that you may have life and have it more abundantly.”

CRB

Exegetical Notes

^{ESV} **Luke 6:1** On a Sabbath, [Emphasis: "On a Sabbath". Very important in the context from 5:33-39 that this was the Sabbath day and in the context of Jesus' ongoing encounters with the opposing Pharisees and Teachers of the Law; The Pharisees and Teachers of the Law represent the typological, anticipatory, promise ministry of the Old Covenant, while Jesus and his Kingdom teaching is the realization, expansion-fulfillment and fruition of God's promises; this means that we must understand the Sabbath in the Old Covenant in order to understand Jesus' keeping the Sabbath in the new.]

while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. [The disciples are hungry and Jesus' is feeding them on the Sabbath].

² But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" [Jesus broke the Sabbath in the interpretation of the Pharisees and their view of the Sabbath; Jesus did not break the Sabbath that is forbidden in God's law; implication is that Jesus the rightful interpreter of God's Law (and the One who does not abolish the Law, but fulfills it (Matt. 5:17-20).]

³ And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" [Jesus reminds the Pharisees of the story of David when he was fleeing from Saul for his life in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. The Bread of the Presence was only for the priests, and those in the Priesthood, but under certain extreme and dire circumstances, God could use the bread as normal bread to feed; the spirit of the Law is that usually and normally the Bread of the Presence is only for the Priesthood, but when a man's life is in danger, he may eat of it. Think about: the Law as the Law, and the spirit and interpretation of the Law, or what the Law's purpose was meant to accomplish.]

⁵ And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." [The "Son of Man" title is used often by Luke (cf. 3:22-38)- -it means that Jesus is a true man, descendant from Adam, of Abraham, of David, and he has authority as Messiah to interpret rightly how to live on the Sabbath.]

⁶ On another Sabbath [Emphasis: "On a Sabbath"], he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. [Teaching Jesus could do on the Sabbath (cf. 4:17-22) according to the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law, but healing was a work that profaned and broke the Sabbath according to their interpretation and traditions of man.]

⁷ And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. [Diabolical: the Pharisees are seeking to find fault with Jesus so that they can accuse him (notice how the "watch" him, see also 14:1: 20:20); the tension is building as the Pharisees are growing angry, bitter, jealous and weary at Jesus challenging their teaching implicitly and explicitly.]

⁸ But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." ["He knew their thoughts": Jesus knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, cf. Hebrews 4:12-13).]

And he rose and stood there. ⁹ And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" [As before in 5:17ff, Jesus challenges the Pharisees interpretation of Law and their assumptions with a thoughtful and provocative question; my translation or paraphrase: "What is the purpose of the Sabbath? Is it not to do good and save life? Why would you interpret the Law and the "spirit of the Law" in such a way as to do harm and destroy life? God's purpose of the Sabbath is to do good, to save life, to renew; it is a foretaste of the New Heavens and the New Earth- -NOW.]

¹⁰ And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. [And the plot thickens...now they discuss how they might do something to Jesus to silence him. All because Jesus shows forth the power and authority of the Kingdom for all to see in the healing of a man with a withered hand; and he had the audacity to do this on the Sabbath!]

Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **Exodus 20:8-11**: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

^{ESV} **Isaiah 58:13-14**: "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; ¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Jeremiah 17:21-25: ²¹ Thus says the LORD: Take care for the sake of your lives, and do not bear a burden on the Sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. ²² *And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath or do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers.* ²³ *Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck, that they might not hear and receive instruction.* ²⁴ *"But if you listen to me, declares the LORD, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy and do no work on it,* ²⁵ *then there shall enter by the gates of this city kings and princes who sit on the throne*

of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And this city shall be inhabited forever.

^{ESV} **1 Samuel 21:1-6:** Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David trembling and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?" ² And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place." ³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." ⁴ And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread- if the young men have kept themselves from women." ⁵ And David answered the priest, "Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?" ⁶ So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.

^{ESV} **Mark 3:1-5:** Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. ² And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴ And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵ **And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart**, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

^{ESV} **Matthew 12:8-14:** ⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." ⁹ He went on from there and entered their synagogue. ¹⁰ And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"- so that they might accuse him. ¹¹ He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³ Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

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