

February 2, 2019

Fulfiller of The Sabbath

Several weeks ago, we began a sermon series that is called The Big Old Tangent sermon series. It's called a big old tangent series because it came out of a tangent off of something the Elders had asked me to do and that was to start doing seminars again. One of those seminars was on the end times or Eschatology. I bought a book called "Kingdom Come" by Sam Storms. In it tells us that to understand the end times, we must be able to interpret scripture correctly. To understand how to interpret scripture correctly, we must understand that the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Christ and His Church. Over the last two weeks, we have seen how Jesus is the fulfiller of the 7 great Jewish feasts. Last week we saw that He is the fulfiller of the Temple. Literally He is the Temple. In the Old Testament the people went to the temple to make atoning sacrifice and receive forgiveness. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice and we no longer go to a temple, but we go to Him for forgiveness.

Today we continue in seeing how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. We begin with the three truths found in our Gospel this morning in Matthew chapter 10. That section begins; 'At that time.' This begs the question, what time was that? If we look to the preceding two chapters, we see that Jesus had just finished teaching His disciples on the Sabbath. It was at that time that John the Baptist's disciples came to Him and asked Him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look to another?" Jesus' response was, 'You have seen the miracles.' He lists them out. 'You have seen and heard that the good news is preached. Go and tell these things to John.' He then looks at His disciples and tells them; "Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me." That is a loaded statement! Just last week, we heard in Bible study how people are told, sometimes by people in church. 'Don't use God's Word when talking to other people, because people find it offensive.' Yet, it is Jesus Himself who says, 'blessed is the one who is not offended by Me.' Please remember that Jesus is referred to as "the Word." He is the living Word and through Him we have the written Word. A huge lesson already there for us, that we should not be offended by Jesus, nor should we be offended by His Word. We should embrace it and love it just as John the Baptist did. What did Jesus say about John? "No one is greater than he." That's a pretty big statement from Jesus.

It was after this on the Sabbath, when Jesus had answered John's disciples that Jesus began to teach. He first began with a tale of woe. Woe to the unrepentant cities. To cities in which He had gone, shared good news, shared the Law and they did not repent. Right after that, we read, at that time... It's that time continuing on; on that sabbath, Jesus said, 'Come to Me and I will give you rest.' Right after that, we read: "At that time." At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. What is meant by that? Very simply, Jesus was walking on the sabbath; probably back from the synagogue, or the temple and He was walking on a road that went through grain fields. It would be similar to driving down Harney Lane where you have vineyards on both sides of the road. In the first century Jerusalem in Israel, harvesting occurred in the middle of the field, but not on the boarder. This was because of Levitical Law. Leviticus 19:9 and 20:22 tells the farmers, harvest everything in the middle of your field. Along the edges, leave it. Leave the edges and that which falls for the poor, the hungry, the foreigners, the widows, the orphans, etc. Deuteronomy 23:25 says, It is ok for someone who is traveling or walking, if they are hungry to pick from the edges of the field. You can't go out to the middle of the field which is the farmers. It's ok to pick from the edge.

Here you have then the Pharisees, teachers, experts of the Law, evidently following Jesus, looking to see if they could find something wrong with Him. His disciples began to pick some grain. They are hungry. They have been at the synagogue or temple all day. Jesus had been teaching. Then He dealt with John's disciples; then He went into the story of the unrepentant cities; then He went into the come to Me and I will give you rest; and then they are walking back. The Pharisees said to Him; look your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. Jesus' response is to take them back to God's Word. Because the Pharisees at least, still have respect for God's Word. He took them to 1 Samuel 21; our Old Testament reading for today, where we see David going to the Tabernacle and lying. He told the priest; the king has charged me. In other words, I am sent on a mission from the king. The reality is if we look at 1 Samuel 20, that is far from the truth. In 1 Samuel 20; we read of Jonathan warning David that his father King Saul wanted to kill David. David was on the run. He had to leave quickly. He had some men with him, we don't know how many. He said to the priest, give me five loaves of bread for whatever is here. Five loaves of bread indicates to us that it was a small group, probably 5-10 men total. The priest comes back and tells him that there was no common bread, only holy bread. In Mark chapter 2, Mark records

that it was the Bread of Presence. What is this holy bread, or Bread of Presence? If you go back to Leviticus 24:5-9, these are the 12 large loaves that were put in the Holy Place. They represented the twelve tribes. 12 Large loaves, about the size of two, 2-liter bottles. They were made with the grain of approximately 4 liters of grain. They were quite large loaves of bread. Every Sabbath they were to be replaced. By that Levitical Law they were for Aaron and his sons, the priests, holy priests. This is all that the priests had.

He looked at David, who has a reputation. This is the guy who killed Goliath. He has served in King Saul's court and he wants to help. He kind of finds a little loophole. He asks David, are the men set apart, are they abstaining from all the stuff they should be abstaining from? Are they holy? To which David says, 'yes, they have set themselves apart to serve. They are abstaining from everything they should be abstaining from.' So, the priest gave them the bread he asked for. What was the result? For the priest, he along with 84 other priests or members of the priestly family were murdered by the king. David, who became the great king, and who the Pharisees would call the great king is the one who did this. He ate bread that he got by lying and that he was not really entitled to.

In essence, Jesus is looking at the pharisees and saying, you call him great? What, there is no condemnation for David eating bread that he shouldn't eat? Then He makes the point, the Priests profane the sabbath every single week because they bake those 12 large loaves, and then they go into the Temple, and they arrange those loaves and then they carry those old loaves out. That's work. The Pharisees had said that the disciples were doing what was not lawful. It was totally lawful for them to pick the grain if they were hungry, which leaves us with the only thing that they could be doing is saying that's working on the sabbath, to pick grain and eat it. In other words, you can't cook on the Sabbath or get something to eat. Jesus makes the point, first of all; King David, he ate what he needed and secondly, the priests provided it and it's the priests themselves who work on the sabbath to make bread and then go into the temple and organize the bread and carry the old bread out.

This leads us to the three truths. Truth number one: Jesus tells them the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. God looked at us, created in His image. He rested on the seventh day of creation. Since we are made in His image, we should rest on the seventh. He made the Sabbath

because He knows that we need rest. He did not at the beginning of time say: I'm going to create man so that he can obey the sabbath. Truth 1, the Sabbath was made for man not man for the sabbath.

The second great truth, Jesus quotes scripture: "I desire mercy not sacrifice." The Pharisees were all about sacrifice. Sacrificing food as they fasted twice a week and following exact sacrificial laws that they had made up. The sacrifices were there to remind us that we are sinners and we need a savior. What would the savior come and do? He would show mercy. We would get what we don't deserve; and we would not get what we do deserve. This is what Jesus is pointing out that God desires mercy, not the sacrifice.

The third great truth, and I put it in bold: Jesus said, **the Son of Man is Lord of the sacrifice**. When you think about it, its very logical. If the Sabbath was made for man and the Son of Man is the Lord of men, the savior of men; then the Son of Man must be the Lord of the Sabbath. He is more than the Lord of the Sabbath; He is the fulfiller of the Sabbath. Pay close attention, because this is big!

In Colossians 2:16-17, it says: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Our account this morning in the Gospel, Jesus dealing with the Pharisees, is not an account about the loopholes. David got away with this, or the disciples are getting away with this. It's an account of who Jesus is. It began with John's disciples asking about it; Jesus is healing, Jesus is preaching, Jesus is the fulfiller of the Sabbath and the provider of rest. This is why He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary, and I will give you rest." The Sabbath, as Paul says, is a shadow. It's not the real thing. It's physical rest on a weekly basis. It's the substance that creates the shadow. That's Christ and Christ provides spiritual rest eternally.

How do we experience this rest, this Sabbath rest? We rest from our works, we cease from works of righteousness with the hopes of salvation, because we can't ever earn our way. We also rest in faith, trusting Christ for our salvation. Resting by faith in Jesus, makes every day and all eternity a sabbath rest for us. Whenever we think of that, we should be thinking of Jesus' words on the cross. It is finished. What joy those words bring! What is

finished? Our salvation is finished. What is finished? He has fulfilled the feasts. He has fulfilled the role of the temple. He has fulfilled the Sabbath and become our Sabbath. When we see Jesus, we can sit back and rest from our worries about, have we done enough? Because we know that He has done it all. We can rest, really rest and have that peace, that joy that comes in knowing everything for our salvation has been done.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, last week I ended the sermon by saying, 'live as the temple of God in this world.' While you live, live in rest. Put any anxiety you have about salvation away and look to the cross of Jesus. There we see our salvation has been won for us and we can rest for those labors of trying to earn our way, trying to make things right; and live a life of love where we express our love for Christ through our works, through what we say to others. Rest in the knowledge that we are saved. Rest in the knowledge of knowing that that same Jesus comes to us today as we celebrate communion.

In our Savior's Name, Amen