

Luke 6:1-11

Last week we saw a conflict erupt between Jesus and the Pharisees because Jesus was not playing by their rules.

1. They were clinging to the old with all of their might
2. Jesus was bringing in the new and they could not stop him.
3. This conflict continues to escalate in our text today, but it centers on one particular part of the old covenant: The Sabbath Law.

Now, if there was a part of the law that was most coveted, most protected, and most important to the Pharisees is was the Sabbath law.

1. Numbers 15:32-36 *Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation; 34 and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

2. It seems pretty logical that they would take this law so seriously does it not?
3. Well Jesus doesn't wait long before he brings into question their deepest convictions.

We see 2 Sabbath encounters unfold back to back in our text today.

6:1 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

1. What was the Sabbath law?

2. 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 of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.*

3. How were they breaking it?
 - a. By Walking? Eating?? By picking grain???
 - b. They plucked enough grain to rub together in their hands.
 - c. But, they were not exactly out farming with large reapers.
4. They could have experienced a deeper rest by resting from their work of law keeping and just relaxing enough to enjoy some wheat.
 - a. Plucking those heads of grain wasn't work. It was rest from their fears of the Pharisees' overbearing rules and regulations.
 - b. Mark 2:27 *Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the*

Sabbath.

2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

The Pharisees had devised rules and lists for defining work on the Sabbath.

1. You could not walk far, you could not cook, you could not light a fire, and on it went.
2. Pretty soon, according to the Pharisees' rules, it became almost impossible to keep the Sabbath.
3. The scribes and Pharisees enslaved men to the Sabbath and their interpretation of the Sabbath as if the Sabbath were the greatest thing.

They want Jesus to submit to their rules. They want Jesus under their law.

3 And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even 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 consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?"

Summarize the story of David and his hungry men: 1 Samuel 21:1-6 *Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" 2 David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.' 3 Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." 4 The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." 5 David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?" 6 So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away.*

1. David and those with him were hungry. Notice that the disciples were hungry as well.
2. David and those with him, due to their hunger, broke the laws of the temple by eating the bread of the presence. The disciples, due to their hunger, broke the sabbath law by plucking grain and eating
3. Jesus isn't telling a David Sabbath story. He is telling a David hungry story. The disciples were hungry. Give them a break...you did David.

Keeping Sabbath rules was more important than the needs of people, in this case, hunger.

1. Because they elevate law over people, they become hard toward people and indifferent toward needs...like hunger.
2. Jesus, in essence, is asking, Is your law more important than human need?
3. Let's not miss this: The disciples were enjoying the presence of Jesus as they plucked that grain!
 - a. Now, they could have sat down, refused the grain, and waited until the Sabbath was over
 - b. Or they could get up, walk with Jesus, pluck the grain, eat and enjoy His presence.
 - c. What is better?

5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Do we have any idea the implications of these words?

1. The Sabbath had been their Lord for centuries. It was always lording over them.
2. Now this man is claiming the opposite. The Sabbath is subject to me!

6 On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him.

Notice....

1. The word Sabbath has been used in this text so far 6 times.
2. The word lawful is used in verses 2, 4, and 9.
3. Luke is really trying to make it clear that Jesus is clarifying for us the Sabbath and what is lawful

The scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus, not to find evidence that would lead them "to" Jesus but in an effort to find something to accuse him with or justify them walking away from Jesus.

1. They are groupies...they seem to always be where He is, but it isn't because they believe.
2. It is because they are looking for loopholes...they are looking for something to accuse Him with.
3. The skeptic who sits in our service and ignores all the evidence in search of the one thing that validates their skepticism.

8 But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. 9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"

What is lawful is more important to these folks than what is good.

1. Keeping Sabbath rules was more important than the needs of people, in this case, physical deformity.
2. Because they elevate law over people, they become hard toward people and indifferent toward needs.
3. They would rather this man leave with a withered hand than Jesus heal on the Sabbath.
4. What is it about your understanding of the Sabbath, a holy day, that prevents people from doing holy and good things to bless others.

It is always the right time to do good to others.

10 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 themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

Application:

1. True religion is of the Spirit, not the letter.

a. The author of Hebrews quotes and interprets Jeremiah 31:31-34 for us in Hebrews 8:7-10

b. Hebrews 8:7-10 *For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. 8 For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; 9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. 10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.*

c. The law moves from "written in stone" to "written on our hearts!" Our hearts move from hearts of stone, to hearts of flesh.

d. Jesus' followers walk according to the Spirit, not the letter.

1. Sermon on the mount was about the heart
2. The heart of the disciples as they were eating grain was the issue.
3. The heart of Jesus healing a withered hand was the issue.

2. The Old Covenant, the letter of the law is obsolete.

Parable from last week.

a. Hebrews 8:13 *When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.*

b. Hebrews 9

c. That is why he keeps pushing the Scribes and lawyers buttons.

3. We keep the Sabbath ultimately by resting in Jesus

First of all, if you are one who views Sunday as a Sabbath to the Lord and you want to restrict certain activity and encourage other activity on that day, that is perfectly fine!

a. We could probably spend a good hour talking about all of the benefits of setting serious limits on Sunday

b. We could probably spend another good hour talking about the desperate need to be more intentional about how we spend our Sundays and how that could benefit us all.

c. And if this is your conviction, you should be free to live according to your convictions.

If you are one who does not hold to that conviction about Sunday and the Sabbath, that is fine as well.

a. Colossians 2:16-17 *Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.*

b. Romans 14:5 *One person regards one day above another; another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.*

The most important thing to grasp is that the only real Sabbath rest we have is found in Christ.

a. Hebrews 4:9-11 *So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.*

b. All who truly believe in Jesus are free from feeling obligated to work their way to God...to be good enough, careful enough, and lawful enough to approach Him.

c. All who truly believe in Jesus turn from any hopes of law-righteousness, and instead enter into true rest, an unending Sabbath, based on faith.

How you keep the Sabbath or not, is not the issue. The issue is are you resting in Christ?

a. If not, you can keep the Sabbath law every single weekend of your life and you will die lost and without Christ.

b. Are you living your "Christian life" under the weight of rule keeping?

c. Jesus is saying to you this morning, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

Jesus is our rest and our righteousness. Come to Him! Gospel