

FBC POWELL, 6-11-17 PM NOTES  
"Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath"  
Luke 6:1-11  
# 17 in Series, "The Gospel According to Luke"

Why do we gather for worship on the first day of the week and not the seventh day?

1. Because the Sabbath observance was for the nation Israel—**Exodus 31:12-17** "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'But as for you, speak to **the sons of Israel**, saying, 'You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is **a sign between Me and you** throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. 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. For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death. So **the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath**, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.' **It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever**; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed."
2. The resurrection of Christ was on the first day of the week—**Mark 16:9** "Now after He had risen early on **the first day of the week**, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons."
3. Jesus first post resurrection meeting with His disciples was on the first day of the week—**John 20:19** "So when it was evening on that day, **the first day of the week**, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"
4. The early church assembled together on the first day of the week—**Acts 20:7** "**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."
5. The early church took an offering on the first day of the week—**1 Corinthians 16:2** "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."
6. Sabbath breaking is not listed in any lists of sin in the New Testament (all of the other nine commandments are enforced in the New Testament).
7. The Sabbath was a shadow of a reality to come; Jesus is that reality. With the arrival of the reality, there is no longer a need for the shadow—**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— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

**Matthew 11:28** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

**Hebrews 4:1** "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it."

**Hebrews 4:3a** "For we who have believed enter that rest..."

**Matthew 11:28-30** “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.”

**Galatians 5:1b** being “...subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

I. A Clash Over Eating on the Sabbath (vv. 1-5)

II. A Clash Over Healing on the Sabbath (vv. 6-11)

A. The Occasion (vv. 6-7)

**Mark 2:27** “Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.’”

B. The Lesson (vv. 8-11)

“These two incidents bring out the stark contrast between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. It is the contrast between the representative of God’s truth and the representatives of false religion; between divine truth and human tradition; between profound knowledge and madness; between goodness and wickedness; between compassion and cruelty; between open honesty and hidden deception; between divine power and human impotence; between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.”  
—John MacArthur

## **First Baptist Church Powell 6 11 17 PM** **Sermon 17: Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath**

### **Luke 6:1-11**

In Luke 6:1-11, there is a serious controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning the Jewish Sabbath. Even today in Christianity there is considerable controversy concerning the Sabbath. Someone sent me a book a few years ago to set me straight on Sabbath observance and why the church is wrong to meet on Sunday instead of Saturday. One group says that Sunday worship is the mark of the beast! I’ve had a number of questions from members over the years as to why we don’t keep the Saturday Sabbath. Let me set up the text in Luke while dealing with this controversial subject. If we say that the Ten Commandments are still relevant for today, why do we treat the fourth commandment differently from the other nine? Why do we meet together and worship on the first day of the week instead of the last day of the week? Let me give you seven reasons.

1. Because the Sabbath observance was for the nation Israel – Exodus 31:12-17:

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. 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. For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death. So *the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath*, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.” *It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever*; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.

The Sabbath observance separated the children of Israel from the other nations. There are certainly principles that the church can pull from the establishment of the Sabbath (such as the need for physical rest and a day given over to worship), but it was an old covenant observance with God’s Old Covenant people.

2. The resurrection of Christ was on the first day of the week – Mark 16:9: “Now after He had risen early on *the first day of the week*, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.” In one sense, we celebrate Easter every Sunday. We meet on the first day of the week to celebrate the fact that the Savior is alive!
3. Jesus first post resurrection meeting with His disciples was on the first day of the week – John 20:19: “So when it was evening on that day, *the first day of the week*, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”
4. The early church assembled together on the first day of the week – Acts 20:7: “*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.”
5. The early church took an offering on the first day of the week –1 Corinthians 16:2: “*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.”
6. Sabbath breaking is not listed in any lists of sin in the New Testament (all of the other nine commandments are enforced in the New Testament).
7. The Sabbath was a shadow of a reality to come; Jesus is that reality. With the arrival of the reality, there is no longer a need for the shadow. 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— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.” Jesus is the substance behind the shadow. Jesus is our Sabbath rest. We rest in Him and thus no longer need a special day which means “rest.” In Matthew 11:28 Jesus invites us to come to Him for rest. Matthew 11:28: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” In Hebrews 4, coming to Jesus in salvation is pictured as entering a rest. Hebrews 4:1: “Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.” Hebrews 4:3a: “For we who have believed enter that rest...” Jesus is our Sabbath rest. The Old Testament Sabbath is simply a shadow of the true rest. Our rest is in a person, not a special day.

While there are valid principles in this fourth commandment for today, there is no call for us to observe the laws relating to Saturday any more than the laws related to clean and unclean food.

The Sabbath was not always a burden to the people of Israel as it was in Jesus’ day. Let’s look at how the Jews viewed the Sabbath before it became so encumbered with the rules and regulations of the legalists. The Sabbath day was the happiest day of the week. When you think about it, the reason for this happiness is easy to understand. For six days, the people worked long and hard just to have their basic needs met. Most were subsistent farmers, carpenters, or fishermen. There was hard work from sunup until sundown. There were no pensions, no social security, and no Medicare. The women worked as hard as the men.

They nursed their infants, fed the older children, drew water from the community well, worked in the fields, and in addition took care of the washing and cooking. Childhood didn't last long as the children were put to work early in their lives. But even after sin came into the world and pleasant labor in the Garden of Eden had turned into arduous toil because of the curse of sin, God in His grace made an amazing provision for Israel. After six days of hard labor there was the Sabbath, the rest. Men, women, children, and even the animals looked forward to this rest. On the Sabbath, the godly parents would rehearse the blessings of God on their lives and the wonderful works of God all the way back to Abraham and Moses. There would be worship, thanksgiving and rest. Oh how precious the Sabbath was to the people of God.

How did the Israelites get from the Sabbath being the most anticipated and enjoyed day of the week to the burdensome weight it was in the time of Jesus? Allow me to give you a short history of the Sabbath. During the approximately 400 years of what historians call "the times between the testaments," and then under Roman rule, the Sabbath came on hard times. The Pharisees came to the forefront during these times and they really started out with a noble purpose. They became the self-appointed keepers of the Jewish identity for almost 200 years. Under Roman rule, they made the Sabbath *the* distinctive national characteristic of the Jews. Here was their logic: "We have lost our king, we are losing our language (Aramaic was spoken more than Hebrew), we've lost our prophets, and soon there will be nothing to distinguish us from the nations around us." The Pharisees zeroed in on the Sabbath and made it their focus. They came up with scores of added rules and regulations that were in addition to the relatively simple regulations God spelled out in the Law. Over time these added rules and regulations were considered of equal authority with the words of Scripture.

This abbreviated history brings us to the time of our text in Luke 6. Let me share a few examples of how horrible things had become and how the blessed Sabbath became a huge burden on the people. It had gotten to the point that the day of rest was more burdensome than the six days of work! The law said that one was not to travel on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:29). "What is traveling?" the Pharisees asked. They decided that it was more than a distance of 1,000 yards which was called "A Sabbath Day's Journey." Ah, but they made some "legal" ways that you could go farther. Before the Sabbath, a man could go a thousand yards and leave some food. On the Sabbath, he could travel the thousand yards to the food and eat it, thus establishing a new home and thus go another thousand yards. If one made enough preparations of leaving food in just the right places, he could travel half way across Palestine on the Sabbath!

Here is another example. The Old Testament law forbade the carrying of a load on the Sabbath (Jeremiah 17:21-27). "What is a load?" "Is clothing a load?" "Do we go naked on the Sabbath?" The Pharisees decided that clothing worn was not a load, but clothing carried was a load. Therefore, if you needed to move a garment from one room to another on the Sabbath, you had to put it on, walk to the other room, and take it off again.

Here is a final example. The Old Testament forbade work on the Sabbath. "What is work?" Here is one part of the interpretation they made. If a man spits on the Sabbath and it goes in the dirt, it makes a furrow or indentation; that is plowing on the Sabbath. However, if he spits on a rock, it makes no furrow and thus is not working. Therefore, being a law abiding Jew depended, in part, on where you spit on the Sabbath! I could go on and on with the ridiculous traditions the Pharisees had come up with and had elevated these traditions to the level of the law of God.

Do you see what a burden the people were under? That sheds new light on what Jesus meant in Matthew 11:28-30: "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." "Light" compared to what? It was light compared to the legalism of the Pharisees. The Sabbath, which was intended to be blessing from God to His people, had become an unbearable burden. This adding of rules in interpreting God's principles is what we call legalism. It didn't die out with the Pharisees. It is alive and well today. Paul called it in Galatians 5:1b being "...subject again to a yoke of slavery." I'm not talking about regulations in a dress code at a Christian School or practical things that are not presented as making one spiritual. Legalism is when rules are made that are in addition to the clear teaching of Scripture that are expected to be obeyed in order to be obedient to God.

Legalism is appealing to many professing Christians because we don't have to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in applying a biblical principle to a situation; we just follow seventy-five rules made by man.

In our text, Jesus was clearing the God given Sabbath from the rubbish of human traditions. There was a clash between Jesus and the Pharisees over two incidents that took place on the Sabbath.

### **I. A Clash over Eating on the Sabbath (vv. 1-5)**

The implication is that the Pharisees were watching Jesus and His disciples to find something about which they could accuse Him. What Jesus and His disciples did was not stealing; it was clearly allowed in the law. In Deuteronomy 23:24-25, a person was allowed to satisfy their hunger by eating grapes from a vineyard or grain from a field. They could not bring a container, but were allowed to satisfy their immediate hunger. However, the eating of grain on the Sabbath did violate the traditions that the Pharisees had established. They said that picking heads of grain on the Sabbath was reaping and separating the husk from the wheat berry was threshing. When they blew away the chaff, they were guilty of winnowing, and the whole process was preparing a meal on the Sabbath. They broke four of the Pharisee's traditions in one incident! Jesus and His disciples were not breaking the Old Testament law; they were breaking the Pharisees traditions which they had elevated to the same level of the law. I want you to pay special attention to how Jesus answered His opposition. He went to the Word of God.

He reminded them of an incident in the Old Testament when David had already been anointed as king, but Saul had not yet been removed by God. David and some of his men were being chased by Saul's men (1 Samuel 21). This was before the temple was built, but he went into the place of worship (the tabernacle), and the priest gave David and his men the consecrated bread (to be eaten only by the priests). The principle is that human need took precedence over ceremonial law. God gave no rebuke to the priest or to David. The Sabbath was given for God's glory and man's welfare. The Pharisees had perverted both purposes.

What did Jesus mean in verse 5? This statement must have stunned the Pharisees. This was nothing less than a claim to deity because it was God who established the Sabbath. If Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath, He was free to do on the Sabbath whatever He chose. If the Lord of the Sabbath was not offended over the disciples getting and preparing the grain to eat, neither should the Pharisees be upset.

Jesus was the reality which the Sabbath pictured. He was the true rest that the Sabbath rest pictured. Remember that the word Sabbath meant "rest." Under the New Covenant, Jesus is our rest (Sabbath). He set aside all the regulations relating to a certain day of the week. Every day is a Sabbath as we rest in the resurrected Christ for salvation and the strength to do all that God asks us to do.

### **II. A Clash over Healing on the Sabbath (vv. 6-11)**

In this passage, we see the lawfulness of doing works of mercy on the Sabbath.

#### **A. The Occasion (vv. 6-7)**

There is some real drama going on here. The Pharisees were there to ambush Jesus. It is even possible that this man with the withered hand (atrophied due to paralysis) was a plant by the Pharisees. Their cold calculating obsession with getting rid of Jesus shows the hardness of their stony hearts. These men knew that Jesus would heal this poor man who had lost the use of his hand. There was zero compassion, zero care about this hurting man. They were more concerned about their traditions than another human being. Legalism hardens people who buy into it. They had completely ignored the principle that Jesus reminds us of in Mark 2:27: "Jesus said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.'" I remind you that ministering to a hurting person was not a breaking of God's law; it was the violation of these ridiculous rules of man. According to the Pharisee's regulations, the only exceptions to ministering to the hurting was when a sick person might die before the end of the Sabbath and when a pregnant woman was giving birth on the Sabbath. Other than those two exceptions, no ministering to the hurting was allowed on the Sabbath.

## **B. The Lesson (vv. 8-11)**

How did Jesus know what they were thinking? It could be that the Father revealed it to Him, but I think it was simply that He knew the wicked hearts of these Pharisees. He knew what they would say, but He did the right thing anyway. Can you imagine the tension in the synagogue at this point? I imagine that you could have heard a pin drop. When the man with the withered hand came to Jesus, He posed a question to them in verse 9. "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" That question got to the heart of the matter and to use an old saying, "They were impaled on the horns of a dilemma." If they answered, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," they were authorizing Jesus to heal the man – who could have believed that healing a person was a bad thing? If they answered, "It is good to do harm, or to destroy a life," it would reveal their evil hearts. These legalists knew the answer to that. They knew the Old Testament Scriptures that affirmed over and over that God rejected religious rituals that were separated from compassion and mercy. You can read Isaiah 1:11-17 or Isaiah 58:6-14 to see a few of the examples. Jesus exposed these Pharisees who were using this gift of the Sabbath to dishonor God and reveal their compassionless hearts! Their legalism had destroyed their ability to even think clearly.

After what was likely a long pause with silence, Jesus then proceeded to heal the man. The Pharisee's reaction was predictable (verse 11). They were now motivated only by blind irrational rage. There was no joy over a man's crippled hand being healed. Their rules had been broken and Jesus would pay! Think for a moment why they hated Jesus so much. It was because He was holy and they were not; He was good and they were not. They were not willing to repent, so they had to get rid of Him.

John MacArthur gives a good summary.

These two incidents bring out the stark contrast between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. It is the contrast between the representative of God's truth and the representatives of false religion; between divine truth and human tradition; between profound knowledge and madness; between goodness and wickedness; between compassion and cruelty; between open honesty and hidden deception; between divine power and human impotence; between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Luke 6-10*, page 10]

## **Conclusion**

Mercy ministries in Jesus' name are always pleasing to God. Legalism blinds and hardens us. May God deliver us from legalism.