

## Luke 6:1-11 – Jesus is Lord of all

- How many of you look forward to Saturdays? Or your day off?
  - What do you do with it? Gardening, sport, reading, walking?
  - I sure do.
    - Since having kids, my Saturdays look different to how they used to, but I still look forward to them.
    - And more than that, I need them if I am going to be of any use the following week.
      - Why? Because without proper rest I run on 80% - maybe less!
        - And sure, we can cope one or two weeks without a good rest day but soon we run on empty, or maybe fumes!
      - Because we weren't made to work 7 days but 6.
        - The need for rest is built into our DNA
- When Luke was writing this, there was no electricity, no internet, no smartphone and no Twitter.
  - So, when the sun goes down, the day is over. It's just done.
  - But we live in a different world now.
    - Life has a way of endlessly piling up on itself until our very existence is just one giant obligation and we go from place to place to place doing one thing then the next, and we lose sight of what matters and the tender mercies that God has given to us.
  - I'll give examples.
    - During the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme, I was having lunch with Esther and the kids, and I saw another family out eating. Probably about fifteen minutes into the meal, I started keeping count, and in 25 minutes there, he checked his phone no fewer than 20 times.
      - In this world, where we are constantly wired in, we're never where we are.
      - I have found myself at a table with my wife and kids but I'm not there at all.
  - Or have you ever found yourself snapping at your kids when they interrupt you from doing something that, in the end, is probably stupid? "What do you want?!? I'm writing an email!" That kind of thing. "Can you give me a second?!? I'm scrolling through facebook!" Do you ever find yourself doing that?
    - Maybe all of you are far more holy than me and it's just me that does that?!
  - I am going to throw this out there. Have you ever had a day where you just turned your smart phone off and unplugged yourself from the world?
    - The world will keep running you know. People managed before them. We can manage now.
      - You do not need to be contactable 24/7/365.
      - Do you have that day, because that's the Sabbath, a day set aside, a holy day?
- We need rest but it is very hard to come by. But the end of this morning I hope we will see the essential God given need for rest as we look at this idea of Sabbath.

- Sabbath - A word not used in society anymore. This passage reveals to us what the Sabbath is (God's intended plan for humans to rest), how that got distorted and how we should rest.

### **What is the Sabbath?**

- So, as we begin what exactly is Sabbath? Both of the events we are looking at today happen on a Sabbath and Jesus declares himself as Lord of the Sabbath. But what is it?
  - As a basic definition, Sabbath literally means rest or to cease from working.
- The concept for Sabbath originates right back at the beginning of time at Creation, in Genesis 2.
  - God, at the end of creating all that we know and see, rests on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.
    - Why did God take 6 days to create?
    - He could have done it instantly, but he chose to take 6? Why?
      - To set a pattern for us.
      - God did not rest because he was tired. He doesn't get tired! But he 'rests' from his work in order to establish a pattern for humanity that results in the best way of life.
      - It was the plan since creation from a loving God for the best of humanity.
- But what starts as a creation ordinance becomes a command.
  - After the fall we see God continue to show humanity's need for rest.
  - The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment is to take a Sabbath day.
    - A day to set aside from work to spend with God.
    - The Sabbath is not just for a perfect world.
    - Deuteronomy 5v15 God reminds his people to remember the Sabbath.
- Luke doesn't include it here but in Mark we see Mark recall an extra line that Jesus said:
  - The Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath.
    - What this is saying is that God put in place a 'Sabbath' or rest day for all of humanity, for all of time, for their good.
    - It is what humans need.
      - You know it yourself if you have ever tried working endlessly without a break.
  - But the Pharisees had taken one of God's laws and made it so burdensome that people were being crushed by it.
    - As we look at these 2 events that is what we are about to see.

### **How the Sabbath was distorted**

- To correct the distortion in the first instance Jesus declares his authority over the Sabbath and in the second Jesus demonstrates that authority.

### **Picking corn**

- The Pharisees were big on fasting to show their holiness, the disciples were big on feasting. The Pharisees were sad looking characters; the disciples were glad characters.
  - Picture of disciples walking with Jesus looking happy and glad, chatting away maybe joking as they stroll through the cornfield. And as they go they grab a couple of heads of corn in their hand, rub the corn out and eat them. The Pharisees are ready to pounce and have a go!
- The disciples weren't breaking the law by picking the corn- Deut 23:24-25. It's ok to take a little bit from a neighbour's field.
  - If you are out for a walk you can pick the odd ear of corn and eat it but don't take your combine and clear the field.
- The issue is not with the fact that the disciples have taken someone else's corn but with the fact they have done it on a Sabbath.
  - The Pharisees aren't happy to just have the law of God but instead had created their own hyped-up version to which they kept on adding laws to.
  - In doing so they changed the law of God which was intended for the good of people into a burden no one could carry.
- So, the Pharisees accuse the disciples of working, saying picking is the same as reaping, threshing the same as rubbing it between your hands and the whole process food prep so it is unlawful.
  - God's Sabbath law is simply not to work but the Pharisees had added to and adapted God's law by their own invention and in doing so usurping God's authority. We need to be careful not to do the same thing to others.
- Jesus doesn't leave the disciples to answer but steps forward.
- He essentially says to them, 'Have you been reading your Bibles recently?'
  - Can you remember back to David in 1 Samuel 21? He tells them what happened in case they didn't know.
  - David as God's anointed king (as we heard earlier in the kids talk) didn't do wrong in meeting his and his companions human need of food by eating bread set apart for priests.
    - So, then neither are Jesus' disciples doing wrong by meeting their need, even on a Sabbath.
- Jesus makes this big claim.
  - I am Lord of the Sabbath
    - The Pharisees knew it was God who initiated the Sabbath so Jesus is saying I am God, the Sabbath was my idea and I can do with it what I like!

### **Man with the withered hand**

- The doctor Luke shows his meticulous nature again by not being happy with saying hand but that is was his right hand. In Jewish culture it is the right hand that is most essential to a person's well-being.
  - A withered hand would have meant that he was viewed by his culture as having sinned or his parents having sinned. He would have been viewed as a social outcast. This man would have been unable to work so he's begging. In order for

him to eat, somebody is going to have to be generous and give him food. He's viewed as unclean.

- The Pharisees, motivated by a desire to accuse Jesus, pop up again.
  - They have no compassion for this man, no grace for this man, no hope for this man and no mercy for this man. They're simply watching Jesus and hoping Jesus heals him, not for his good, but so that they might attack Jesus.
  - People still come to church for all sorts of reasons.
    - They weren't there to learn from Jesus but to accuse him.
  - But Jesus knows their plans and what they were thinking.
    - Luke 2v35 - part of Simeon's prophesy - the thoughts of many hearts revealed.
    - That is still true now, Jesus who is Lord of all knows the thoughts of the hearts of all, we cannot hide from God.
- Jesus takes the offensive position and brings the man with the shrivelled hand into the centre of attention, probably a place the man didn't want to be. But Jesus tells him to get up, so he gets up.
  - Jesus asks a question. 'Is it right on the Sabbath to do good and save a life like I am about to or is it right on the Sabbath to harm and destroy life as you are so clearly intent on doing?'.
    - Any child can answer that question!
    - But according to the Pharisees' law you could only heal if it was a life-threatening condition, so what Jesus was about to do violated the letter of the law.
    - But Jesus is not legalistic but compassionate and sees it as sinful to leave this man in his pitiful situation.
- Jesus looks around at them all, giving them time to reflect, acknowledge Him and repent of their wrong
  - But instead they remain silent in their hatred for him and love of their own laws
  - So he says something that from the lips of any other individual would have been the cruellest of jokes - 'Stretch out your hand.'
  - But what the man had previously been unable to do, he did.
    - It wasn't just a life-changing word but a life-giving work.
    - In the same way, Jesus asks sinners to repent, something they are unable to do, and they do it!
      - The shrivelled hand is a symbol of the shrivelled heart of so many towards Jesus.
  - The man experienced a life changing event and the Pharisees are furious.

The Pharisees' kind of Sabbath left people hungry and their hands remained shrivelled but Jesus' kind of Sabbath is where they enjoy the corn and their hands are made to work again. The Pharisees hated him for it. They had a problem with liberty.

- Jesus, through these events, lays down this principle – that no ceremonial provision or religious law must stand in the way of the well-being of a person and essential needs of life – either in the eating of corn or healing a hand.
  - Jesus is guarding the law of God from the distortions and perversions that the Pharisees had brought in.
  - Jesus in these events isn't dealing with the use of the Sabbath but the abuse of the Sabbath. He is not abolishing the Sabbath law but removing the Pharisees' distortions.
  - Jesus is bringing back the freedom of the Sabbath to how God planned it and removing the burdens placed on it by the Pharisees.

### **How we should Sabbath (rest)?**

Are we Pharisees who have made our own laws? The Pharisees clearly had added to the law of God their own extensive list of laws. Here are a few examples:

- You could walk five steps on the Sabbath but you had to have a rest before you took the six step
- women were not allowed to wear ribbons in their hair on the Sabbath because that would have been to carry a burden
- you could not drag a stick on the ground on the Sabbath because that would be akin to ploughing

Some of you may be familiar with this side of Sabbath but probably for most of us we are more likely to fall on the other side of the fence, where the Sabbath no longer means a whole lot to us. We live in a culture where there are constant demands upon us and we never switch off. We don't know what it is to rest, and we don't keep the fourth commandment. We make no real effort to keep the Sabbath and see anyone who tells us to as legalistic and limiting. But remember Jesus here was dealing with the abuse of the Sabbath law. He was not abolishing it.

The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment still stands as a divine command of God so adherence to the Sabbath command is not legalism. If all the other 9 still stand and we don't call them legalistic but instead we obey them, then the same applies to the 4<sup>th</sup>.

So, what does it mean for us to Sabbath today? When everything else around us is still going on how do you switch off? We live in an internet, smart phone age where we are always plugged in. You need to get unplugged to rest. God says one day a week you need to rest, so how do you do that? For each of us it will be different and at this point there may be some who need to be reminded - it's work 6 rest 1. Don't use the Sabbath as an excuse to be lazy.

### **Spiritual rest.**

But the physical rest of the Sabbath points to something much greater - spiritual rest.

The amazing news of the gospel is that through the death of Jesus upon the cross your salvation is earned and paid for in full.

You do not have to work to earn God's approval, to pay back for the wrong you have done or pay Jesus back for the debt he paid for you.

Every other religion says you have to earn God's forgiveness, but Christianity says its done for you. Amazing!

So, will you rest in the forgiveness and freedom won for you by Jesus or will you try to please God your own way and get nowhere? There is eternal rest to be found in Christ. Will you take it?