

The Lord of the Sabbath

Mark 2:23-38

April 14, 2024, Pastor Jeremy Cagle

Well, good morning, everyone, if you would, before we dive into the Scriptures, let's go to the Lord in a word of prayer and then we'll open the Bible together.

Heavenly Father, we have sung a lot this morning about the topic of trust. And we've talked about trust in the other prayer time earlier. Father, we know that you are the God who reigns over the universe and so every moment of our lives is dictated by your sovereign hand, especially the moments when we sit under the preaching of Your word. And the topics that come up in the Scriptures, as we go through them week by week, are sovereignly ordained, and they don't just randomly fall into place, they fall into place by Your goodwill and purpose. And so we understand that this morning, as we come and talk about the topic of the Sabbath. It's one that's very near and dear to many people's hearts, as we understand and You have chosen for us to talk about this on this day, at this hour. And so we want to do it for Your glory. We want to do it for Your exultation and to understand how the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God looked at this topic. Help us to do that Father, give us discernment and sobriety and wisdom into this issue. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, if you would, please take your Bibles and open them to the Gospel of Mark. That's the book we're in today; we are looking at the gospel of Mark. And as you're doing that, I want to tell you that in preparation for this sermon, I read a book recently called the *Pharisee's Guide to Total Holiness*. I would recommend it to you if you haven't ever read it before. It's an interesting read, written by a man named William Coleman who talks about who the Pharisees were and, and what they were all about, and some of their kind of weird intricacies, I think we've all come across those in the Bible. And in the copy of the book I purchased at a used bookstore, I am a used bookstore junkie, by the way, I don't buy anything new, get something old. And in the copy that I had, someone had stuck a list of rules from a Christian college. That said, "Thank you for enrolling in our university. We hope you enjoy your time with us. And we want to inform you that while you're here, we expect you to hold to a strict code of conduct, because we will consider it a sin. If you do any of the following things." And then they had a long list. Clean your room. Follow the dress code, remain quiet during study hours, turn off your lights after 10pm, and don't chew gum anywhere on campus. And at the top of the page, someone had scribbled a note which said this is just like the Pharisees because they were notorious for making things like that. I don't think the person was saying it's wrong to have rules. Everybody has rules. I think what they're saying is it's wrong to make up a bunch of rules and call it sin. Even when the Bible doesn't say that and I think they were right in their analysis because that's what's going on in our text for today.

If you look in Mark chapter two, you're going to see a similar dynamic happening. It says in verse 23, of Mark chapter two,

And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way *along* while picking the heads *of grain*. The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

And we might add, lawful, according to us, even though the Bible never said that. That's the issue. The Pharisees want to know why the disciples are breaking their laws when it comes to the Sabbath, not God's law. And Jesus' answer, just to summarize this for our introduction is found in verse 28 when He says this, He says, "because I am Lord of the Sabbath." And I never told them not to do that. Jesus never said it's wrong for His disciples to pick heads of grain on a day like that. You did, the Pharisees did and where did you get the right to do that? Nowhere. And so His advice is cut it out. Because God doesn't care if people keep your rules or not. He just wants them to keep His, Amen? Did you know that? Has anyone ever told you God wants doesn't care if people keep your rules ultimately, doesn't matter to Him if someone cleans their room according to your preferences or follows a dress code according to your preferences, or keeps the Sabbath according to your preferences. What matters is that they obey what's found in Scripture, that's all.

This is a lesson that's going to come up over and over again in the Gospel of Mark. You're going to see it repeatedly. Because as you go through this book, you're going to find the Pharisees are constantly trying to take things like this and hold it over Jesus' head. They did it earlier with regard to fasting. They're doing it now with regards to the Sabbath. They'll do it in Mark chapter seven on the issue of washing hands. And every time they do this, Jesus' response is the same, He will rebuke them for it. He's not going to put up with this, or give into it or compromise in order to keep the peace in Israel. He's going to shut it down in order to send a message. There's only one thing His people need to submit to as they go through life and that's the Bible.

Now, there's a lot of people that wrestle with this today because they love to take their opinions and add it to Scripture. We talked about this last time, but they're constantly taking things like preferences over movies, or makeup or alcohol, and holding them over people's heads. But they do that because they don't understand that God hates it when you act that way. He can't stand it because you're putting your word on the same level as His word. And you shouldn't do that. That's dangerous. This story is going to help you remember that.

This is one of the first times in the Bible when Jesus is going to battle over the issue of Christian freedom, which says that in areas where the Scripture is silent, Christians have the freedom to act according to conscience. We don't have to follow the Pharisees. You don't have to follow the list that someone just made up and stuck in a book. You have to follow Christ. Now for the young people in the room, if you attend that Christian university, you need to follow the rules. But that's the biblical principle; you submit to authority. The biblical principle is not just clean your room according to what that person says. So let's talk about this issue.

This morning, we're going to look at a few observations from this altercation with the Pharisees. So if you're taking notes, this is what we're going to talk about in Mark 2:23-28. Here's a few observations from this altercation.

The first one is that Mark begins by giving you the setting of it. So the first observation I want to point out to you regarding this conflict between Christ and the Pharisees is that it begins with the setting, and the setting is the Sabbath. If you look down in verse 23, it says this, it says that, "And it happened, that Jesus was passing through the grain fields on the Sabbath." And you see the word there. Mark mentions it to tell you this is when all of these issues occurred.

And I want to stop and say a few words about that because you need to know the Lord did tell the Jews to keep a Sabbath. That's not a law the Pharisees made up. That was in Scripture for them. It was spelled out very clearly, if you want to write this verse down and Deuteronomy 5:12-13, the Lord told the Jews, "Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is to be a Sabbath." That word means a cessation from your labor. That means for six days of the week, the Jews were to work go about their business. On the seventh, they were they were to stop, just like the Lord did when He created the earth. Remember that? There was a connection there. If you recall, the Lord formed the earth and everything in it for six days, He stopped on the last day, and He told the Jews to function the same way with a six day on, one day off schedule. Interestingly enough from what I could find Adam and Eve, were never told to do that. Neither was Enoch or Noah, or any nation before Israel began. If you do a word search the first time the word Sabbath appears is in the book of Exodus because it was a Jewish thing. It starts with them.

Another passage, Exodus 31:13 told the Jews, "You shall observe the Sabbath, that you may know that I am the Lord your God who sanctifies you or sets you apart." That's what the Sabbath did; it set Israel apart from everybody around them. No one else did this but them. If you went into the ancient world, you would find they would work pretty much every day, they had a few pagan holidays, but when you came to the land of Israel, everything is at a standstill on Saturday. Even now, if you go to a Jewish community, and when I was in Los Angeles, we had several Jewish communities around us. And on Saturday you drive through there, you will see the Orthodox Jews with their kind of the black outfits and whatnot, going to the synagogue on the Sabbath. They're not driving cars, they're walking. And they all live near the synagogue, because they're resting on the day. You can't buy or sell on the Sabbath, can't plant crops or harvest them, work in your carpenter shop, work in the field, every form of life from the animals to the servants were resting so they could focus their attention on God. That was the purpose of the Sabbath. It was given to help the Jews take their eyes off their labor for a moment, and put them on Yahweh.

Which was a good thing. The Sabbath was a wonderful blessing for the people of Israel. The problem and this is the background for this passage here. This is why you need to know this. The problem is that over time, some of the Jews added extra laws to it that the Lord did not command, which made it a

burden, not a blessing. Because the Sabbath was supposed to be a day of rest so the thinking was, from the Pharisees, is that in order to make sure everyone's resting properly, here's some of the things they said. You can't walk any farther than half a mile, or 3,000 steps on the Sabbath. And that doesn't sound like a big deal to us in Canada, because most of us don't walk half a mile in a day. But they walked everywhere. And so the Pharisees told the people you had to go through the day going 1, 2 3, 4, 5, 6, can you imagine that? Twenty-four hours of that? It was miserable. I mean, people hated it. They also told the Jews, you'll like this one, not to eat anything larger than an all of on the Sabbath. So if you choose anything bigger than that, is considered work. So for Jewish housewives, on the day before the Sabbath, the Pharisees told them to cut everything up into tiny pieces, so their family can nibble on them one small bite at a time, which was just as bad. I mean, it just took forever. They also told them not to carry anything heavier than a dried fig, which weighed less than a pound. But if the object weighed half that amount, you could carry it twice. And if the object was edible, you could carry it three or four times because it was an extension of your house. And if it was used for temple worship, you could carry it up to six times. And they just had all kinds of rules like this that filled hundreds of pages. Someone was sharing with me in the men's Bible study, you could wear false teeth if they were wooden, but not if they were porcelain, I mean, something like that. It just went on and on.

And the longest set of rules had to do with the subject of farming, which is what you're looking at here in Mark chapter two because verse 23 says, "And it happened, that Jesus was passing through grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along picking heads of grain." Now, the reason they did that is because the Jews, the disciples lived in an agricultural area. And so wherever you went in Israel, if you're going down a path, it's going to go through a wheat or grain field, or some type of farmland. Our roads are built way off the farmland here in Chilliwack, the first church I pastored, it was in the middle of the cornfields of Illinois. The corn was right on top of the road, you could take your hand off the car and just hit it when you drove by. That's kind of what's happening here. And we would grow three feet off the ground. And it would be the easiest thing in the world to just do what Mark's describing here and pluck the top of a wheat plant, rub it in your hands, and eat it as you go. Just having a snack, having lunch, which was allowed in the Old Covenant. The Book of Deuteronomy permitted that sort of thing in a neighbor's field, as long as you didn't take too much, and try to maybe sell it as a profit or something. You could eat bits of grain in a neighbor's field, no problem. So the disciples are in their rights to do this.

The problem is that the Pharisees show up and in verse 24, they say, "look, and that could be translated, "Look Jesus. You see that? Why are your disciples doing what's unlawful on the Sabbath?" That's the attitude. And the key word is the word "unlawful." If you have a pen, you might want to take it out and circle it in your Bibles. Because the Pharisees are accusing them of breaking the law, not God's law, but their law. Their charging them essentially with sinning not against God's commands, but their commands they made up in their own head.

And again, you've got to understand the mindset here. I'm giving you a lot of background, but I'm doing it because I want to unfold what the text is telling you to explain why they're doing this, the Pharisees actually believed they were guardians of the law. And they thought it was their job to protect the law. So in order to do that, they formed a system that they refer to as the Ziot system, or the fence system to keep themselves from breaking a wall. And the way it worked is that the Pharisees would read in their Bibles that it said don't work on the Sabbath. And they deduced that obviously farming is work. So they asked the question, what constitutes farming? Alright, let's see. How about plucking heads of grain? Yes, so let's put a fence over that, a ziot and make it illegal. That will keep you from breaking the Sabbath. That's, that's the mindset. What else? Well, how about rubbing it with your hands? Yes, that one too. So let's put another fence over that and do the same thing there. That'll solve the problem. What else? How about eating it? Another fence. Picking it off the ground, another fence; blowing on it, another fence; touching it, well, they had debates on that. But the point is, that's what they're using to condemn the disciples here. The framework is not the word of God, the framework is their customs and ceremonies and traditions. What they went to Jesus and essentially said, "You need to make our fences, your fences, or else you're in sin."

Now, before we go on here in the passage, let me just say, you don't need to be too hard on Pharisees because they're not alone in this. How many of you know a church that says you need to make our fences, your fences or else you're in sin? And we all do. It's a very common thing. We've all heard pastors say, "Okay, the Bible says you should dress modestly." So they ask the question, what constitutes immodesty? Well, let's see. How about women wearing pants to church? Yes. So they put a fence over that. And they make it illegal. And they stop anyone at the door that tries to come in like that. Okay, what else? How about men having long hair? Yes. Let's put another fence up to guard that. That should fix the problem. But what about young people getting tattoos? Yes. Another fence. What about young men wearing beards? Another fence. What about young ladies with earrings? another fence, people wearing jeans, shorts to a picnic on Saturday? And just like the Pharisees, they start using all of that as a yardstick to measure your holiness by. And they say you're not godly because you don't do the same thing we do. As you hear that, I'm just trying to tie this into the modern world, but it makes you wonder what would Jesus say to that? What does He say here? He rebukes it. He would tell us that's not your job. No one made you the guardian of the law that way so you can add all this stuff to it. You've got to cut that out.

Now you may say, well, some of those things do lead to immodesty. Pastor Jeremy. Okay, that's fine. Talk to them about modesty. That's a biblical principle, you have the right to do that. Let's say some of them are irreverent. Okay, talk to them about reverence. That's another thing in the Word of God. But you don't have the authority to go around calling things sinful that God did not call sinful. Nobody has the right to do that in church. You don't have any idea why they have long hair. They may have long hair because where they come from everybody has long hair. And there's no sense tearing them down over that. It's important for us to kind of wrestle with this sort of thing because the area of Chilliwack is changing. And this town used to be a place where from my understanding everyone kind of wore the

same thing in church on Sunday. And everybody looks alike. It's not that way anymore. We've had people come to our church, they've never been to a church, but they don't know what to wear. They have no idea. And we want to be gracious toward that, as Jesus did here over this issue.

And it brings it to another observation from this altercation between Christ and the Pharisees, and that is that He responds to their attack with Scripture. So the first observation is that Mark begins by giving you the setting of it, and the setting is the Sabbath. The Pharisees attack Him over that issue, they're going to attack Him a lot over that issue. The Sabbath is going to come up repeatedly. But a second observation here is that He responds with Scripture. He takes them back to the Word of God when He says this in verse 25, He says, "Have you never read?"

And I want to point out, Jesus almost says that kind of tongue in cheek, because He knew that these men read their Bibles. The Pharisees were very versed in Scripture, a lot of them had major portions of the Word of God memorized. They've been studying it since they were a kid. But unfortunately, this part of it slipped their mind. So the Lord brings it up again, to say this, as the verse goes on, it says,

"Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar *the* high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for *anyone* to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"

Now, as you hear that, it probably occurs to you that that's not the most familiar story in the Old Testament. But it's a reference to something that took place in the book of 1 Samuel 21, where David is fleeing for his life from King Saul, and he comes to the tabernacle in order to get help because he's hungry. So verse 26, here says the priest helps him by giving him consecrated bread. That refers to the twelve loaves of bread that were baked every week, and set out in the tabernacle on the Sabbath, to replace the previous ones, which were removed and given to the priests to eat. And this is the whole key of it, those loaves of bread were handed out to men like Abiathar to consume on the Sabbath day. And Jesus point is that if the priest allowed David and his companions to eat bread on that day, why can't my disciples do it? This is a common rabbinical form of argument known as the lesser to the greater and it goes like this, if David the lesser man can set aside this law on the Sabbath, and God not strike him dead for it in the tabernacle by the way, why can't Jesus the greater man do the same thing with the laws of the Pharisees? He can. So the Pharisees need to back off.

Just to drive this home further, He gives another biblical principle in verse 27. When it says, "Jesus said to them, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." And that means the Sabbath was made to be a blessing to people, it was made to help man, to benefit man, to encourage him. Exodus 23:12 says the Sabbath was given for Israel's refreshing and comfort, not their condemnation. So if someone's hungry, feed them for crying out loud. And if they want something to eat on the Sabbath, let them eat. Don't judge them for it. There's a greater principle going on. And that is that the disciples,

they're enjoying God's creation. They're appreciating all the good things that His hands have made on the Sabbath day. And that takes precedence over the nitpicky rules of the Pharisees. I mean, in this story, it's not like the disciples are saying, "The Sabbath, who cares about that? It's just a stupid rule." They're not doing that at all. They're just seeing the bigger picture behind the Sabbath, which is why the Lord is defending them.

And unfortunately, the principle here is that the Pharisees don't get that. All they can see is their rules. And that's why Jesus confronts them. And this is something legalists often do, but they often have a hard time seeing the bigger picture. They're so stuck on this. You know, for a modern-day example of this. We're meeting in a Seventh Day Adventist building right now. And I haven't said too much about this in the seven years I've been here as pastor, but the SDA believe the Sabbath should be held on Saturday by the church, that's where the name comes from. They don't worship God on the first day of the week, Sunday, like we do, they do it on the seventh, Seventh Day Adventist. And some of them are so serious about it that they tell their people you can't work on Saturday, even if you need to feed your family. Now, they're not all that extreme. There's different versions of that kind of flavor. But there are parts of the group that say you can't go into the office on that day even if it helps you provide. Now that makes you say, "what's more important?" I mean, keeping the Sabbath or that, who, which one honors God, feeding your family or following that particular rule like that. But they act that way because they can't see past this.

If you want another example, this, I mentioned some of those Christian colleges that are out there that give you a list of rules to follow when you enroll. But I didn't get a chance to tell you some of them are Sabbatarian to the point, they'll not allow a student to attend the school if he continues to work on the Sabbath. But a few of them will let you go to the school if you're lost, they accept non-Christians into the program. And it raises the same question. Which one really matters to God? And I mention that because this is what's happening here. The Pharisees are showing an absolute lack of priority with biblical things. They don't care if the disciples are saved or not. They don't care if they're worshiping God on the Sabbath. They just want them to keep their preferences. And we need to see that and learn a lesson from it. You don't ever want to get this way as a church and care more about whether someone keeps little bitty nitpicky stuff than if they get the bigger picture.

And brings you to another observation here from this altercation and that is that not only does Jesus respond to their attack with Scripture, let me show you how else He responds. He responds with theology or with a statement of His divinity, which is really going to drive the point home here. Because if you look in verse 28, the Lord says, "so." And Jesus uses that word because He's telling the Pharisees, this is why I have the authority to correct you on your misunderstanding of the Sabbath. And that is "so" or "because the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath." That means the Sabbath was created by Me. It's Mine. I'm God. I'm Lord. I own it, and therefore I have the power to interpret it however I see fit, not you.

Let me just pause for a moment and ask you I mean, what does that phrase, Lord of the Sabbath mean? That's a deep phrase, isn't it? And as you can tell by looking at it, there's a lot of rich truth in there. And to sum it up, it tells you Jesus has the fundamental right to dictate what can be done on the Sabbath day. That's what it means. Now, not just with that law, but any law in the Bible. Because the Pharisees thought there's no greater law than the Sabbath. It superseded everything in the Old Covenant to them, so for Jesus to make this claim, is to imply that He supersedes everything. So if you want to switch the law here to a different law, if they were arguing about ceremonial laws, Jesus would say, "I'm Lord over the ceremonial laws." If they're arguing about civil laws under the Old Covenant, or the food laws, Jesus would say, "I'm God over that, to have the right to tell you what you can and cannot eat."

Which fits into the context because this is what they're fighting over. And that is, the Pharisees and Jesus are fighting over who has the authority to speak for God. And who has the right to interpret the law for the people of Israel to follow Christ or the Pharisees? Jesus says, "I do" because of this. It really puts the Pharisees in their place because what are they going to say to this? I mean, nothing. And that's the point. Jesus wants to let these men know, "You need to put your hand over your mouth whenever you're talking to Me and be silent." This is not a conversation taking place between equals. This is not a debate that's going on between peers. You're not My peer.

I don't know about you, but when I read a story like this one, you know, I'm always struck by how blunt Jesus is with the Pharisees. He almost comes off as rude. If Jesus was in Canada, and He talked to people like this, I think you would think He was rude. He doesn't beat around the bush. There's no hours of discussion. He just puts them in their place and moves on. But you need to understand why He does that and that is because He is the Son of God, the Lord in human flesh, the second member of the Trinity, and they're not so in His mind, there's nothing to argue about. The conversation is already over. When you argue with God, it's a very short argument. This one lasts five verses. It starts in verse 23 and ends in verse 28.

But Jesus shows you this is how you deal with people that twist the law. You just keep it short. You don't talk to them for hours, go back and forth. No need to. You can tell them Jesus is Lord, this is what He says in the Bible. And that's it. I'm afraid some people get this backwards in the church, they want to argue over hours for stuff like this. I've seen them go online and debate the Sabbath for days. And there is a time to talk about these things and come to an understanding, but this story is a good reminder that if they're twisting the law, just keep it brief.

Listen to what one commentator said about this. He said, "Scripture clearly affirms that God is truth. But it also affirms that Satan is a liar and a deceiver. And the single greatest form of his deception is false teachers who try to add to the Word of God, so they can put you under their yoke. Which is why you have to drive them out. You don't put up with them or give in to them or compromise by meeting them in the middle. You just do what Jesus did here and send them away. And the sooner the better."

Because just to go back over these verses, I mean, Jesus cast the Pharisees away because they say it's unlawful to pick heads of grain when it's not. The Bible never said that. And He cast them away or rebukes them because they say the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. And He does this because He's Lord. And as such, He has the authority to tell the Pharisees what the ceremony is about. That's how this story wraps up in the Gospel of Mark.

The next time we're in this book, next week, Tim Challies will be with us preaching on Sunday morning. But the time after that we're in the Gospel of Mark, the Lord is going to talk to the Pharisees again about the Sabbath. So this battle is not over yet. It's gonna last from Mark 2 all the way down to the first part of Mark 3.

But for now, what I want to do is I don't want to leave you without going into a few more thoughts on this subject because anytime you talk about the Sabbath, the question always comes up. "Well, what do we do with this ceremony?" And this is the first time that I can recall we've talked about this as a church. And what I mean is people want to know, you know, is this a command we follow today? And I would say that it's not a command that we have to follow. It's an area of Christian liberty. Which means if you keep the Sabbath, that's fine. If you don't, that's fine. Either way, the choice is up to you.

And let me tell you why. I'll give you a few reasons here in conclusion.

One is because the Sabbath is intended to be a sign of the Old Covenant and you're not part of that anymore. You're part of a new covenant as a Christian and therefore this ceremony is not binding on you. It's an area where you have the liberty to choose. To show you what I mean, if you want to write this verse down Exodus 31:16-17 says, "So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to celebrate it throughout their generation as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever." And that means it's assigned between Me, and the Jews assigned between Me and the Hebrew people, not necessarily between Me and the church. That's how the early church understood it. There were Jews in the early church, and they came from the people of Israel. But when you turn to the pages of the New Testament, you don't find the apostles forcing the Sabbath on Gentiles. And they saw a distinction there. Once the church began, they felt that command was not transferable to us. From what I could find, even in church history, there's no evidence that the church universally began to keep the Sabbath until about the time of the fourth century under Constantine. And when Constantine came around, he enforced that over the church because he believed the church was the new Israel. And we've replaced the Jews. But that's not a view that we would hold to here at Grace.

Some people have asked me if I keep the Sabbath as a pastor, the answer is that I don't. I believe in the Lord's Day where we set a day aside to celebrate the Lord, worship Him honour Him. But I don't put those two things together. I've even had some want to know, "You know, Pastor Jeremy, do you think the Sabbath has changed?" And the answer is I don't think it's changed. I think it's a perpetual covenant

that will never change, but I have changed. And as a new creature in Christ, I'm not under the old law. And that's why there's freedom in what I do with this.

It brings me to another reason why we don't have to keep the Sabbath today area of freedom is because the early church worshiped on Sunday. Even though the first disciples were Jews, who went to the synagogue on Saturday, when it came time for church, they picked another day. Acts 20:7 says, on the first day of the week, or on Sunday, the disciples gathered together for worship. And you need to understand the significance of that because that was a total radical thing to do at the time. Before the church began, Sunday for the ancient people was another day of the week. You worked on Sunday, you planted your field on Sunday, you harvested grain on Sunday, you went to the market on Sunday, all that type of stuff. But when the Christian movement became was underway, it turned all of that on its head and said, "No, we want to set Sunday aside to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. We know what the Sabbath is. We know the Sabbath is held on Saturday. But we want to make it clear that this is not that. It's different." In fact, in the book of Acts, what you'll see is that a lot of the apostles, they went to the synagogue on Saturday, and they would have church on Sunday. They saw the two as being distinct. The implication is that they did that because Sunday was when Jesus resurrected, He died on Friday, was in the tomb on Saturday, rose on Sunday and out of respect for that, the church met together to commemorate that event.

It brings you to another reason why we have freedom in this and this one is probably if there's any one you want to take home. And remember, this might be the most important one. The Sabbath is the only one of the 10 commandments that's not repeated in the New Testament for us to follow. All the other ones are mentioned but this one, and what I mean is that when you read the New Testament, you find that it says you cannot have any other gods before Me; it makes it perfectly clear. And it tells us you cannot commit idolatry, it spells that out as well, or blaspheme or you cannot dishonour your parents or murderer or committed adultery, and on and on and on. But it never says the same thing for the day of rest. Which indicates that the mandatory nature of that has come to an end. I think we understand that if the Sabbath was commanded in the New Testament, you would have to follow it. There'd be no choice. But if not, there is a choice, and there's liberty there.

And just to flesh that out a little bit here, Leviticus 11:7 tells you not to eat pork, but that law is not repeated in the New Testament. So what does that mean? It means you can eat pork. And you can have a plate full of bacon and it's okay. Leviticus 19:19 says you cannot wear a garment made out of two types of material. That's not repeated. What does that mean? It means you can come to church this morning in a shirt made out of polyester and cotton, and it's not a sin. Numbers 19:11 says whoever touches a dead body must go outside the camp for seven days. That's not repeated. And it's the same way with this law here. Again, that does not take away from the role the Sabbath has played in history, or the essential nature of it in the Old Covenant. It's just showing you that a lot of that's been transformed in the story of redemption.

It'll bring you to one more reason why we don't have to uphold the Sabbath, and that is because the New Testament tells us bluntly not to let anyone judge us concerning the Sabbath. That's a good way to wrap this up. Because I don't want you to hear this and walk away with the impression that the New Testament does not talk about the Sabbath. It does talk about the Sabbath but listen to what it says Colossians 2:16. I just want to turn there in my Bible. You're welcome to do the same. But Colossians 2:16 says "Therefore, no one has to act as your judge in regard to" and there's a list of things here. But the last phrase in the verse is "a Sabbath day." That means no one, no one, no one is to judge you for this. Remember, Colossians is being written by a former Pharisee. The apostle Paul was one of those who loved to take extra biblical roles and put them on the Sabbath and say you have to keep them. You have to walk so many steps, you have to only eat something the size of an olive, Paul was into all of that. And now what he says is all of that has to stop because the judgment is over. Because verse 17 says those things are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Which means those aspects of the law like the Sabbath, were symbols pointing to Christ, leading us to Christ, guiding us to Christ. But now that Christ has come, Paul, the Pharisee says, "The symbols are over." That's why you can eat pork, or you can choose not to. That's why you can wear clothing made of two types of fabric, and you can choose not to. And that's why you can choose what to do with this important day of rest. You can keep the Sabbath. It's a wonderful thing to set a whole day aside not to work, focus on God, praise the Lord to do that. But if you find yourself in a situation where you have to work on Sunday for whatever reason, you can do that. I would encourage you don't do it, if it takes you away from church life. But some of you have jobs, there's just no way to avoid working on a Sunday afternoon, Sunday morning. That's not a sin. Bible didn't say that. The one thing Paul tells you here in this verse is you can't let someone look down on you. Whatever the case, our number one priority is the Lord Jesus Christ over all the things from the Old Covenant. He must have preeminence, He must have the glory. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we have gone into many things this morning so we may understand the role of the Sabbath because we are going to be talking about it more and more in the weeks to come. And this is an area of life that takes so much discernment, Lord, to understand to get our minds around. For some of us what I've said this morning may be different from where they grew up. I understand that, Lord. For others in our church congregation, they may have never thought about the Sabbath very much a day in their life. And so Lord, I just pray that the things we've talked about would help us to understand this ceremony the way you do.

Lord, thank You for what You did in the life of Israel. Thank You for how You took these people who were nothing, nobody and You made them into Your people, Your nation, to bring You glory throughout all the earth. You gave them the law; You had them keep a day of rest to remember creation. What a wonderful thing.

Father, as Christians we're living on the other side of that in the New Covenant now, and we have to wrestle with these things. And Lord, we live in a world where we have to wrestle with those who want

to come in and put their fences over us. We need wisdom. We need to know where the line is to be drawn in these things. So help us with that Father, and as we go to our care groups, I'm sure we need to discuss these things and get insight into more of Your Word. I pray that You would help us to do that.

And as a church, Lord, I pray that we would be unified around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help us Father not to let anyone hold extra biblical things over our head. May we be bold and be brave at the same time as we submit to Your law as it's clearly revealed in Scripture. And to know the distinction between all these things. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.