

Good morning.

If you would like to, turn to John chapter 5.

Our scripture reading this morning is going to be verses 1 through 18.

After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic, called Bethesda.

which has five-roofed colonnades, and in these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, and paralyzed.

One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

When Jesus saw him laying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, Do you want to be healed?

The sick man answered him,

Sir, I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going, another steps down before me.

Jesus said to him, Get up, take up your bed, and walk.

And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath.

So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, It is the Sabbath.

And it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.

Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, See, you are well.

Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them, My father is working until now, and I am working.

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.

Thanks George.

I love the harvest dinner.

It's always really hard preaching on the Sunday that we have the harvest dinner because everybody smells the smells.

Everybody's excited for the food.

And if you start to go long, everybody starts to get really restless.

So first off, I want to invite you to the Harvest Dinner.

If you don't know what that is, just go out to the gym and there'll be some food out there.

We'd love to have you stay with us and enjoy the meal together.

Second, I just want to thank Stacy and the hospitality crew that put it on every year.

It's great to just share a meal together as a church family, immediately following the meal of God's word that we share together every week.

And so we got a lot to be thankful for.

I mean, it's great to have a dinner to kind of commemorate that or to just be reminded of all the things that we have to be thankful for.

We talked about a few of those things at the annual meeting last week, and I'm just really grateful for that annual meeting and all that we were able to accomplish and welcoming in some new members that we will extend the right hand of fellowship to after the service.

So don't let me forget, Pastor Drew, don't let me forget to do that.

Or if I don't, you do.

And so we'll present them to you so that you can all shake their hands and welcome them into membership.

But just also grateful that, and I've been saying this probably every week to at least somebody, that God has brought us Pastor Drew to help shepherd the flock here, but also minister to you all and myself as well.

Even just been really great getting to know Pastor Drew.

I just want to say, too, this is an extended intro, by the way, on Harvest Dinner Day, so just bear with me.

If you haven't had Pastor Drew over, invite him over.

I don't know if you know this, but he's staying in the Grace Homes for now, and I think we've got an apartment lined up for him later in the year.

But it might be a little difficult for him to have you over, and so I would just encourage you to invite him over, get to know him.

I'll personally attest that he's pretty cool, all right?

So...

He's pretty chill.

He's easy to talk to.

And, you know, he's not a bad hang.

You know, we've done some stuff together.

So invite him over.

It's not going to be, it won't be awkward, I promise.

So, yeah, just thankful for Pastor Drew.

You know, we celebrated Veterans Day this last week, too.

And I was talking to a few of my friends that are in the military, just grateful.

I know the sacrifice that just being in the military, you know, whether you've been deployed or not, and all of the difficulties that deployment can bring.

Just the sacrifices that families make to be in the armed services serving us for defending our country and just defending our ability to meet here freely is a massive sacrifice.

And it's not one that we ought to take lightly and one that we ought to remember and thank those folks for.

In particular, my friend, Pastor Dave, who I served under, just got back from Pakistan and when I was in Thailand, we met a lot of Pakistani refugees who were all Christians.

fleeing the country because they were being persecuted for who they were, what they believed as Christians, for meeting together pastors in particular who were trying to pastor local congregations in rural Pakistani towns, met guys who had battery acid poured on their feet, whose families were threatened, just a lot of really horrible things.

And I'm grateful to be able to serve

in a free country where we're able to meet together, where we don't face that kind of persecution, where the government doesn't look the other way, when we gather together and worship the Lord together.

And that came at a price, right?

It has come at a price.

It's maintained at a price.

And just really thankful for those of you who served today.

Yeah, a lot to be thankful for, and I'm glad to be able to give thanks with you all, both here as we open the Word again today, but also as we just gather together and share a meal together.

This passage, and one of maybe the reasons that I'm dragging my feet getting into it, is not the easiest of passages.

I think it's fairly simple conceptually.

It's really hard to see for yourself.

I think that the more I've studied John, I've been in John at other churches and preached out of John at other churches, but the more I preach out of John and study John, the more I'm convinced that we ought to see ourselves more in the Pharisees than we do.

You know, the Pharisees are kind of the bad guys throughout the Gospels.

And it's really, you know, every time we watch a movie or watch a show and there's good guys and bad guys, we always tend to want to identify with the good guys.

Very rarely do we self-identify with the bad guys.

And I think that there's a lot of, I know that we all have the tendencies of the Pharisees in these passages.

So today, I'm trying not to say more than the passage is saying, but I'm also trying to help us see these tendencies that are in all of us.

And if they're not, by God's grace, checked, can overtake us, right?

Even under the guise of

worship and under the guise of religion and being right with God.

So let's pray and ask for the Lord's help.

I'm going to ask for the Lord's help to communicate these things clearly and to stick close to his word.

And I'm going to pray for you all that you have the grace to hear and do the hard work of self-examination.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I do ask that you would guard my mouth this morning, that you would help me to say only what you have for us here in the scripture, that even as we apply the principles that we find here in the scripture, Lord, I pray that you would just guard me from going beyond you and what you would have for us to hear this morning.

Lord, I pray for those who are listening today, too,

First and foremost, that they would see you in all of your glory as you've revealed yourself in your word.

And, Lord, that you would give them the grace to see themselves rightly.

Lord, we all struggle with selfishness and pride that blinds us willfully to our own flaws and our own shortcomings.

So, Lord, I pray that you would just, even for a moment, give us insight into our own heart, Lord, and that you would transform us from the inside out.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

You can often recognize unsound and sound theology or good and bad theology by the fruit it's producing in your life.

Jesus talks about this principle in Matthew 7.

He says, he's particularly talking about people that teach false doctrine.

He says, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will recognize them by their fruits, are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles.

So if you have bad fruit in your life, it's a good idea to trace it back to the bad theology that also must be in your life.

Or the wrong ideas about God that you have that's producing this bad fruit.

You know, if you're angry all the time, say I'm kind of angry all the time, I don't like that.

Or, you know, I've been a lot more anxious lately than I have in the past.

Where is this coming from?

Trace it back to the bad theology or the unsound theology that's producing that.

Yes, our bodies contribute.

There's chemical imbalances that affect the way we feel and have an influence on how we act.

But even a factor that's even larger than that is how we view God, how we walk with God, and how we live with God on a daily basis.

And that's exactly what's going on in our passage.

The bad fruit is obvious.

We looked at the paralytic last week.

That was kind of the positive side.

This week, we're looking at the Pharisees, and the bad fruit that's coming out of the Pharisees is pretty obvious.

They find no amazement, no joy, not even an ounce of joy in the healing of the man who's been paralyzed for 38 years.

I don't know if you've ever seen someone who has not been able to move for a very long time, but the visuals are shocking.

I mean, the legs, arms atrophy, sometimes get twisted and contorted.

It's a very shocking thing to see someone who's been laid up and unable to move for a long time.

Now imagine that person being restored in an instant and walking, I'm sure leaping.

I mean, you'd have to at least smile, right?

As he's running around carrying his bed after being healed, but not the Pharisees.

which begs the question, what kind of theology produces that kind of hardness towards something so beautiful?

How do you have to be viewing God and walking with God, quote unquote, walking with God on a daily basis to produce that kind of hardness of heart?

And I think if we take a closer look this morning, we're gonna see that we miss God and his rest when our own rules are more important than his.

This is a gross oversimplification, but we got to start simple and we'll build it out as we look at the passage, right?

We miss God and his rest when our own rules are more important than his.

That doesn't sound too complicated, but trust me, we all do this way more than I think we realize.

We're going to stick to the same formula that we stuck to last week.

Last week we looked at the paralytic, then we looked at what Jesus did, and then we looked at who Jesus was.

Today we're going to look at the Pharisees, and then we're going to look at what Jesus did again, and who Jesus was, or who they should have seen Jesus to be.

First, who were the Pharisees?

We've got to do a little bit of background, and it's implied in verses 9 and 10.

Our link to the background of the Pharisees is in verses 9 and 10.

And at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath.

So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, it is the Sabbath and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.

All right, we'll get a running start at the Sabbath thing.

First, the word Jews here is referring specifically to the Jewish leaders and those who followed them.

All throughout John, every time we see John refer to the Jews, he's thinking specifically about of the Jewish religious leaders and those who are tightly following them.

What made the Jews distinct is that they were God's chosen nation.

They had received their laws as a nation, right?

It's like our constitution.

They received their constitution, their laws directly from God through Moses at the mountain, right?

Where God gave him the 10 commandments, but then he also spoke to him the extended law.

And this law didn't just cover national life, but it also covered religious life or how they worshiped God, and it also covered how they lived personally.

So in particular, our passage talks about the Sabbath, which was a weekly day, Saturday, that was set aside by Jewish law for rest and worship.

So it covered both the ceremonial or the religious side of the law, but it also covered a lot of personal, moral decisions that they had to make.

on the Sabbath as well.

Paul, who was a Jewish leader, converted to Christianity, but who was a Jewish leader himself, high-ranking Jewish leader, talks about how the fact that the Jews had been given this law directly by God affected their self-image or affected how they thought about themselves.

Paul gives...

he gives like a big long extension.

Like, I know you guys think about yourself this way.

And then he goes into an argument.

We're not gonna read the argument.

We're just gonna look at how Paul reminds the Jews of how they view themselves.

He says, but if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent because you are instructed from the law, and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind,

a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth.

He's not saying that actually everybody's living this way.

He's just saying this is how you view yourself, right?

You view yourself as like the world's instructor.

You teach the kids about God.

You walk in the light while everybody else walks in the darkness because you have the law.

You have God's revelation to the world.

So the Jewish leaders at this time, they saw themselves as these instructors, as these guides to the blind, as these guides to the foolish, or in other words, the foolish, those people who don't have the law.

The problem wasn't so much that they loved the law.

God encourages and even commands a love for his law all throughout the scriptures, both Old Testament and the New Testament.

Love for the law wasn't the problem.

The problem was that they thought that they could keep the law perfectly, that they could actually obey it, and that by that perfect performance and that obedience, they could somehow become righteous.

Their problem wasn't with the view of the law.

The problem was with their view of themselves, that they could somehow do right things or enough right things to balance out the bad things that they had already done.

This personal problem of self-justification, right?

I can do enough good stuff to justify all the bad stuff I've done before.

this personal problem of self-justification, spill it over into their relationships in the form of making additional rules and lists, right?

So they're like, hey, we got to keep the law.

God gave us the law.

We got to keep it and we got to keep it like perfectly so that we can be right in God's eyes so that we can justify ourselves.

And I want to do this personally, but I also want this for all of my Jewish brothers and sisters and the people around me.

So I'm going to make more rules and lists so that we can kind of do this together and not slip up.

In a sense, they created more laws and burdens on top of God's law already.

So Moses' law, God's law that he gave to Moses, had some rules regarding the Sabbath, mostly surrounding like business and commerce, like what you could do.

Chick-fil-A, obviously observing the Sabbath.

They close on Sunday.

And we'll get to that in a minute.

But the religious leaders decided that these rules weren't specific enough.

They were too gray.

God gave us some general ideas, but he didn't get specific enough, right?

He didn't give us enough.

We gotta add to it so that we all are clear about exactly what we can and what we cannot do.

So they developed these rabbinical codes to help everyone achieve some sort of clarity of what was acceptable and what was not acceptable, right?

We're gonna take godly discernment out of this, and we're gonna tell you exactly how the Sabbath is meant to be kept, right?

What exactly you can and can't do on the Sabbath.

And this quickly, very quickly, became burdensome and I would say even ridiculous.

For example, you could travel, only travel, by the rabbinical code.

This is not God's law.

You could only travel a thousand feet.

So God says you're not supposed to work on the Sabbath.

Traveling is work.

So we're going to limit your movement to a thousand feet from your house so that you're not accidentally traveling and working on the Sabbath.

But

You know what?

If you get a thousand foot rope and you tie it to your fence post, we'll let you travel an additional thousand feet because you've extended your household a thousand feet from your house.

Ridiculous, right?

Or don't look in the mirror.

Just don't even go there.

Because if you look in the mirror, you might find a gray hair and pluck it, which would be work on the Sabbath.

Or you know what?

You can spit on the Sabbath.

We'll let that go.

But don't spit in the dirt because you might accidentally cover it with your foot and you'll be working the soil, which is obviously work on the Sabbath.

Just ridiculous stuff.

And we all laugh.

We find these examples ridiculous.

But this is a sinful tendency we all have, right?

It's a sinful tendency that we all have.

We look at the messiness of life.

We look at the chaos around us caused by sin, both our own sin and other people's sin.

And we stick our hand up to God and we say, hold on, God, I got this.

I know you gave us your word.

I know you gave us supposedly everything we need for life and godliness, but it's not working out so well.

So hold on.

I got this.

If everyone would just do blank, everything would be better.

I know how to clean up this mess.

If everybody would just...

believe blank or do blank or say blank, everything would be fine.

If everyone would just care about the poor like I do, we would be a more godly church.

Or if everyone would just spank their kids a little bit more like we do, maybe we wouldn't have so many deconstructors and backsliders.

If everyone would just put down their phones and engage others like I do, then everything would work out.

Or if everyone would just vote Republican, we wouldn't have so much turmoil and strife.

Listen, if everyone registered with the Republican Party tomorrow and towed the party line, we would still have problems.

All right, we would still...

We would still have problems because the party line is in scripture.

Public policy issues are downstream of our biggest problem, that we need to be reconciled to God and transformed from the inside out.

Politicians aren't our savior, right?

We've only got one, and we know this, right?

We know politicians aren't our savior, but I think sometimes we function that way.

Jesus saved me, the Republicans are gonna save the US, right?

Like there's only one savior, right?

He's given us one book which is sufficient for life and godliness.

That's one side of the pendulum.

And some of you were cheering me on and some of you were like, what is he talking about?

Please stop talking.

The other side is that we have to figure out what it looks like to live this book and to follow our Savior in the context in which we live.

And there are certain public policy issues that are very clearly spoken on in the scripture that are non-starters, right?

That define certain party lines.

We've gotta figure out how to live this book in the context that we are in, just like the Jewish people had to figure out how to live out the law under Roman occupation.

The problem becomes, here's the problem, right?

The problem isn't that we've gotta make decisions and that we've gotta somehow apply this book to our context.

We've all got to do that work.

The problem becomes when our commitment to our conclusions and our applications of the Bible carry more weight than the Bible itself or more weight than God himself.

So there are ways that I'm very convicted that I need to live certain decisions I need to make, certain ways I need to act in the world around me based on this book.

But there's a subtle difference between my interpretation and my application of what this book says and what this book actually says.

So how do we know?

How do we know?

How can we tell if we're more committed to our own rules and our own code than we are to God's word and God himself?

That's a difficult question.

And I'm gonna give you one that should be obvious, just based on the question itself.

And then I'm gonna let the passage give you two more tests to see if you're living more by your own rules and your own code than God's word himself, that are a little bit more like the fruit that we talked about at the beginning of the passage.

All right, so the first one,

It's just, if we claim, right, to be living more by this book than interpretations or applications of this book, like if we claim that this is the foundation, this is what we're living on the most, like, are you still reading it?

Are you still wrestling with God's word, trying to do the hard work of understanding it for yourself?

Like not running to a commentary or not running to a book about this book or a podcast about this book,

But like, are you taking some time to dig into God's word?

It is hard, but it's not inaccessible, right?

Reading God's word.

And before I touch anything else, like this is what I try to do on a weekly basis.

We try to give you some tools over the summer.

There's some other more simple tools that we'd be glad to help you work towards.

But before I read about what anybody else says about this book, am I trying to do the hard work for myself of understanding what's written here?

And then let me go see what other people have to say and see if I'm way off base or if I'm kind of in the general vicinity, right?

So like, are you still reading this book?

Or are you just in the habit of reading books and listening to podcasts about this book?

That's the one that I think just kind of comes out of asking the question itself.

Let's continue to look at the passage and see the other two things that I think are symptoms of us making our rules, our code more important or bigger in our eyes than God's word and God himself.

First one we see is rooted in what Jesus did.

Look at verse 11 again.

But he answered them, so they asked him, like, who told you to do this?

It's against the law, the Sabbath law to take up your bed.

The man who healed me, that man said to me, take up your bed and walk.

So he's pointing out to them, right?

I've been healed, right?

Why are we talking about the Sabbath?

Why are we talking about this rule and me carrying my bed?

Just a little while ago, I couldn't carry my bed.

We see in this verse that the Pharisees aren't questioning that the man was healed.

They weren't like, are you sure you were healed?

Everybody knew.

He had been there 38 years.

They don't even dispute it.

It just has no effect on them.

They don't even bat an eye at it.

They just go after him about their rules about carrying the bed.

Carrying the bed was not a Moses rule.

It was not a law that God gave to Moses for them.

Carrying the bed was one of these rabbinical codes that they added on top to clarify what work was and wasn't at the time.

What's important to see here, though, is that they've lost their wonder and amazement at God's miraculous work.

God did a miracle, an incredible miracle, right in front of them, and there's no wonder, there's no amazement at what God's done.

Have we?

Have you?

God does the miracle of new birth in people and they respond in faith.

And God begins to change them from the inside out.

And the angels rejoice.

And we're like, meh.

Okay, call me when they get their kids in line.

Or they quit smoking.

Or do we even know how they're voting?

It'll mean something when that changes, right?

When I see some more fruit in their life.

Meanwhile, they're running around like, I can walk, right?

I can walk.

And God told me to take up my bed and walk, and I did.

My dead heart is beating and sensitive to God.

I've taken these first small steps in obeying God.

And honestly, I never thought that that would happen in my life, right?

Rejoicing with those who rejoice.

No, they're not perfect, and neither were you at that time, right?

Brothers and sisters, this is happening.

It's happening, I'm telling you, I've seen it.

It's happening all around you right now, these last several months.

It's happening right now in this room by God's grace.

Have you missed it?

Are you missing it?

Have other people's shortcomings or their perceived shortcomings been looming so large in your vision, so heavy on your mind that you're missing the glorious and miraculous work of God and the person that might be sitting right next to you right now?

Missing God's glorious and miraculous work in others around you is a sign, it's an indicator, it's a symptom that your own rules and your own code are more important than God's word and even God himself.

Because they're not only unmoved by what Jesus did, they're actually offended here by who Jesus is.

They're not just unmoved by what he did, but they're offended by who he is.

Look at verses 15 and 18 again.

The man went away and told the Jews that this was Jesus who had healed him.

And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them, my father is working until now and I am working.

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.

Jesus didn't have to heal this guy on the Sabbath.

He heals him on the Sabbath on purpose, right?

And he heals him on the Sabbath on purpose because he knows that if he can get them or get us to see the significance of the Sabbath, it'll actually help us to see and understand why putting up our own rules and our own code above God's rules or making them more important than God's rules matters.

is so terrible and self-destructive.

So first off, who is Jesus?

He's two things in this passage, two things in particular.

One, he's God of the Sabbath, right?

Or he's Lord of the Sabbath.

Why is the Sabbath so important?

And like some of you are like, why are we talking about the Sabbath?

Why are we taking time to talk about it?

We don't keep it, we don't observe it.

Well, the Sabbath is important for a couple of reasons.

One, it's rooted in creation, right?

The Sabbath rest or resting on a day of the week, a particular day of the week,

is rooted in the seventh day of creation.

Yes, God gave the explicit command to Moses to observe the Sabbath, but he roots it in creation.

He says, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

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.

Listen, God wasn't tired.

He made the world.

All he did was speak it into existence.

He wasn't tired.

He finished his work of creation, and then he took some time to enjoy his creation, or that which he created, setting a pattern for us.

But we, as the creation,

Worship and enjoy the creator, right?

So we take a day a week, right?

Set aside a time a week to worship God and enjoy him and to rest.

Believers have observed a couple of things about this seventh day of creation or the fact that God rested.

They've observed a lot of things.

I'm just going to highlight two.

One, there's a morning and an evening for the other six days of creation.

There's not a morning and an evening for the seventh day, which implies that God is still Sabbathating, right?

He's still resting in a sense.

Or in other words, the author of Hebrews refers to it as the Sabbath rest.

So there's like every week, you know, you take a little rest to enjoy God and worship God, but there's the rest, which is kind of like the promised land that we all enter into, believers enter into,

when they die and they go to be with the Lord.

So in one sense, God is still resting, right?

He's still Sabbathing.

But Jesus says here that he's working.

So that's another observation that believers have made about day seven of creation.

That even though God rested on the seventh day, he was still working.

God upholds everything by the word of his power.

If God stopped willing us into existence, we'd all just die.

disintegrate like Thanos or just not, you know, we wouldn't be here anymore, right?

God upholds everything Paul tells us in Colossians constantly by the word of his power.

He's always active in the world.

He's always working in a sense, which is why Jesus replies in verse 17, my father is working until now and I am working.

So that's the second thing, right?

So the Sabbath is important because we need to take time to enjoy and worship our creator and remember who he is and what he's done and the beauty that he's made around us.

But we also need to take a rest

And a step back from the work that he's given us to do to acknowledge that God is working.

And that God's work, that there is a work that is appropriately God's.

Work that is his alone to do from which he never rests.

And we're not God.

We don't do that work.

We are dependent upon the work that God does.

We purposefully take a rest from the work of providing and caring for ourselves as a reminder that our work is secondary to God's work.

Our work comes in in importance under God's work in the world.

Ultimately, you and I have all that we have from God.

Some of you are like, no, man, I started my business.

I pulled myself up from my bootstraps.

I worked hard for everything that I have.

Hard work is great.

We ought to encourage it and promote it.

But where did you get the ability and the opportunity to provide for yourself?

Where did you get the intelligence to provide for yourself?

If God allowed it, how easy would it be for an accident or a disaster to take it all away, right?

Even your ability and your opportunity to provide for yourself.

It's a lot more fragile than we recognize or we like to think about sometimes.

God's work behind the scenes, God's work in giving us the ability and opportunity to work is far more foundational and fundamental than our own work.

On our own, we have no power to provide for our basic needs.

No power to provide for our basic needs.

And taking a regular weekly rest to enjoy God and worship him and to acknowledge God,

that it's not my busy work that's ultimately providing for my needs, it's you, God, that regular rest is crucial to remembering that we can't provide for our spiritual needs either, right?

We can't provide for our physical needs ultimately.

God's work is most foundational there, but his work for our spiritual needs is most foundational as well.

That's the connection with the Pharisees' self-righteous lists

And the Sabbath, this is really important.

That's the connection.

I can't do it.

I can't provide for me and my family on my own.

It's God's foundational work that is ultimately responsible for that.

I can't provide for myself spiritually.

That's the connection with the self-righteous rule-keeping and the rabbinical codes and the Sabbath.

Ironically, the Jewish leaders, they were inactive on the Sabbath.

They, quote unquote, rested.

They didn't do stuff.

And they had lists to help them not do stuff.

But they were not truly observing the Sabbath.

They weren't enjoying God, and they weren't acknowledging their dependence on him.

Ironically, they were using the Sabbath to somehow make themselves feel more independent from God.

I'm doing this good thing, so God owes me.

This is something I can do, I can keep, so that I'm justifying myself and I'm making myself more righteous from God.

They got 100% wrong, 100% wrong for the whole purpose of the Sabbath.

You are dependent on God for everything.

They said, no, we're gonna keep these rules and we're gonna justify ourselves.

And here's where it hits home, right?

A weary body and a bitter soul that never rests are symptoms of

of a heart that doesn't trust God to be in control and doesn't trust God to accept us as we are.

A weary body and a bitter soul.

I'm not talking about being spent.

I'm not talking about your head hitting the pillow and you're just tired because of all the good stuff you've done.

I'm talking about weariness and bitterness.

You cannot find joy or happiness in the work that God's giving you to do anymore.

That's a symptom of a heart that's not trusting God to be in control of the stuff around us

And it's a symptom of a heart that doesn't believe that God can possibly accept me where I'm at right now.

He may not want you to stay there.

He's got a plan to sanctify you and to glorify you.

But he accepts you and justifies you where you're at right now.

But we can trust him.

Because not only is Jesus Lord of the Sabbath, but he's equal with God, which shows us something about God.

He's equal with God, meaning that everything that Jesus said and did reveals God's heart to us.

And what do we see in Jesus?

What do we see in who he is and what he's done?

We see that God is willing to work for his people at great cost to himself.

When Jesus hung there on the cross and he rose up again the third day from the dead, we saw that God was willing to work for his people at great cost to himself, even the high price of his own son.

Listen, you want to earn your own redemption?

You got to see the cost.

You see the cost on the cross.

That's the price you will have to pay for your own sins if you want to go that route.

If you want to justify yourself, it's going to lead to your own destruction.

And that is the price that you exact from everyone else around you when you're trying to justify yourself.

It's a blood price that you are exacting from yourself and everyone around you, whether you recognize it or not.

You can't pay it.

You can't pay the price of your own redemption.

But he did.

And if you know he did that for you, if you know that he paid that price for you, don't demand from others what you didn't have to be able to pay for yourself.

Don't demand that others get in line before they receive grace.

Or don't demand that others do this thing that you might be really good at so that they can somehow earn the free gift of grace from God.

Listen, we miss God when our rules are more important than his.

We miss what he does and we miss who he is.

So let me just review these tests really quick and sum them up because they're important.

Have your own rules and your own code become bigger and more important in your life than God's word.

One, the very simple test of, are you in God's word for yourself?

Are you reading his word?

Are you doing some work to try to understand it on your own?

I'm not saying you're going to get it right all the time.

I don't get it right all the time.

I'll read stuff and I'll be like, I think it says this.

And then I'll talk to some other people.

I'll talk to some of my friends and I'll read some books and I'll be like, actually, I think I'm wrong there now.

But are you going through the exercise?

Are you putting this first?

And are you digging into it first?

Two, are you missing God's glorious and miraculous work in other people's lives around you?

Have you rejoiced with anyone who's come to know Christ recently?

Or have you rejoiced with anyone who has noticed and experienced spiritual growth in their life?

Has that brought you any joy?

Has it brought you any satisfaction and peace and comfort?

And then number three, are you taking regular weekly time to rest?

We're not under the law.

You know, there's no set things that you can and cannot do on a Sabbath day.

But the Sabbath was never rooted in the law.

It was rooted in creation.

Taking some time to enjoy and worship God and remember that you're not God is built into creation.

God actually kind of forces us to do it even if we don't do it willingly, right?

We all have to sleep and acknowledge I'm not in charge here for at least, you know, seven hours, eight hours, however many hours of sleep you get.

God wants us to do it willingly, to willingly take time to acknowledge that he's God, we're not, and to enjoy and worship him.

You need him, right?

You need him to provide for you.

You need him to make you worthy.

You need him to take care of the mess and the chaos around you.

Taking some time to step back, to rest and worship helps you remember that, helps remind you that you need him.

Listen, you and I are not making all things new with our lists and our rules and our favorite books and podcasts.

But God is making all things new by the power of his word, which cannot fail, right?

His word cannot and will not fail.

And he is creating a new heavens and new earth, right?

Starting with his church.

And one day we will all be restored, made new, glorified with Christ forever.

In the meantime, I don't want to overstate my case.

But in the meantime, if lists and rules and favorite books and podcasts help you live more in line with God's word, that's great.

Like, let's talk about it.

Like, what are some things that you are doing to help yourself grow and become more holy and sanctified?

But let's have those discussions humbly and with grace.

Right, humbly and with grace, remembering that we're all at different points on our journeys.

and keeping the main thing, the main thing, right?

Trusting that this is what guides us, that this is ultimately God's word revealed to us.

And there are different opinions, different things that we can come to his word with.

God's been good to us.

He's given us his grace.

He's given us his word.

He's doing miraculous things around us all the time in people's hearts and in people's lives.

Let's ask for the grace as we go to humbly see that and not be blinded by our own pride and our own insecurity.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your grace and mercy that's new every day.

Lord, you know these tendencies that we see in the Pharisees are in my own heart.

Lord, I believe that they're in all of our hearts.

And Lord, I pray that you would help this vision of your son

doing the work that we can't do, paying the price that we can never pay would soften us, would give us grace and humility to depend on you and to rest in you and rely on you.

Lord, we want to go hard after holiness.

We want to become more like you.

But Lord, you've given us your word and you've given us each other to help us understand your word

And Lord, I pray that you would just, again, help us to value rightly what you've given to us in your word and give us a love for it and a desire to be in it.

We're thankful for this time that we could spend in your word.

We pray that you would work it in, that you would change our hearts, that you would renew our minds.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.