



Sermon Series: His Power

Sermon Title: Walking in Freedom

Date: 11/5/2023

Mark 2:23-28

This passage is primarily about legalism. Legalism places the burden of rules and traditions upon the backs of its victims. Legalism strangles the liberty that God's grace offers. The apostle Paul dealt with this in the Galatian church. **Galatians 3:3**

Big idea: Trust in the sufficiency of God's grace for your salvation

Let's take a look at two contrasting spiritual worldviews and their impacts.

THE BURDEN OF LEGALISM

Jesus and His disciples were walking through grain fields on the Sabbath, and His disciples were picking grain and eating it. This was a perfectly normal biblical practice (**Deuteronomy 23:25**). The religious leaders popped up to challenge Jesus and asked Him why they were harvesting on the Sabbath.

God declared in the 10 commandments that the Sabbath is a day to be set aside as holy. The Pharisees, however, took the commands of God and expanded them into a burdensome set of rules.

Jesus addresses their question by giving them an account of David when he was running from King Saul and was starving, and the priest gave David and his men holy bread. The priest and David understood that laws and ceremony are good, but not when it takes priority over basic human need.

Jesus addressed the issue of their man-made rules at different times throughout His ministry. **Matthew 23:4**

Legalism kills joy, strangles freedom, and if you embrace legalism, ultimately, you'll miss and underappreciate what God's grace truly is – a gift from God. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

THE LIBERTY OF GRACE

Jesus explained to this group of oppressors what the real purpose of the Sabbath was (**Mark 2:27-28**).

Jesus is the author of the creation. He is the author of the Sabbath. Jesus offers freedom from the burden of trying to live up to a level of righteousness that is impossible to reach on our own. **Matthew 11:28-30**

No amount of works can bridge the gap between our sinfulness and God's holiness. In the OT, the prophet Isaiah said **Isaiah 64:6a, Romans 3:20**

There is only one way to bridge that gap between sinful people and holy God, and it is faith in Jesus alone - it's not by anything we bring to the table.

The good news is that Jesus promises to all who come to Him that He will give them rest from the heavy burden of trying to earn their way into heaven and rest from the oppressive yoke of self-righteousness and legalism.

Jesus doesn't require a cumbersome list of do's and don'ts – only to trust in Him. Salvation doesn't have to be complicated. It's as simple as people are sinful and separated from God – Jesus died to take our punishment – put your faith in Him as savior. The Bible repeatedly calls the salvation that Jesus offers a “gift.” The fact that it's a gift means nothing is owed in return – it is by God's grace alone.

When someone truly understands the free gift of salvation that God offers them, they will willingly obey what is written in His word- not out of a sense of obligation or a means of being justified but out of gratitude, love, and deep appreciation.

Pastor Alistair Begg said, “While legalism teaches, “I obey; therefore, I am accepted,” biblical Christianity says, “I am accepted; therefore, I obey.”

The two opposing spiritual worldviews can be summarized as this:

Legalism is Faith + Obedience = Justification.

Grace is Faith + Justification = Obedience

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What are common things people do or do not do to try and add to their salvation?**
- **What do you think was the Pharisees' motivation for making so many restrictions?**
- **Is there any action that you feel compelled to do because you believe it impacts your salvation? Explain**
- **Jesus said his burden is light. How have you seen that truth in your own life?**
- **Which one of these two statements do you believe is biblical? Explain. "I obey; therefore, I am accepted," "I am accepted; therefore, I obey."**