

Matthew 12:1-14

“The Kingdom and Sabbath Rest”

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Jesus is our King and the Calling Realm

When Jesus is your king you discover and use your gifts to build the body of Christ. Are you regularly serving in a church (or Para-church) ministry?

Discussion Qs

1. What are some of the benefits of the Sabbath for man?
2. What are some obstacles to observing Sabbath?
3. How do you try to observe a Sabbath rest?
4. How have you experienced spiritual rest for the soul so that you felt satisfied [i.e. You felt your hunger quenched, refreshed, and restored]?

Intro. Man’s greatest desire and need is rest for the soul. True rest for our souls is fulfilled through Jesus [Matt. 11:28-30]. The purpose of Sabbath: God’s desire for His people to rest their soul and be refreshed in Him is fulfilled in Jesus. The Sabbath is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar except Yom Kippur, and is a symbol of the covenant between God and Jews. But Jesus’ ministry conflicts with rabbinic tradition about Sabbath, but also reveals true rest that satisfies. Let’s discover how together...

Subject: Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

Object: Rest in Christ and be satisfied

I. Jesus satisfies your hunger needs [1-8]

A. Jesus shows mercy to the hungry on Sabbath

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”

1. Sabbath observance prohibits work generally [Ex. 20:8-10, Gen. 2:2]

a. Sabbath principle: set aside significant time to focus on God, worship, and refresh the soul, mind, heart, and body.

What are some of the benefits of the Sabbath for man? Sabbath is a joyous feast – a reminder of creation, God’s covenant, and promise to bless those who observe

b. Is plucking grain a work that violates the Sabbath [1-2]?

i. Pharisees accuse as not lawful [2]: the issue is not trespassing or stealing. The law provides that you can pick as you pass [Dt.23:26]: God provides for the hungry

2. Sabbath is to satisfy our hunger [3-5]

a. Not all work violates the purpose of Sabbath

i. The example of David eating the holy bread in the temple [3-4] But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? [1Sam 21:1-6]

i. Only priests could eat that bread [4] [Lev. 24:5-9]. But God did not rebuke David, because God showed mercy to David when he was hungry

ii. The example of the priests [5] Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

i. Jewish priests serve in temple & their work does not violate Sabbath [Num. 28:9-10]

ii. God shows mercy to His people as the priests serve the people for God

B. Jesus desires mercy more than sacrifice [6-7] Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. ⁷ But if you had known what *this* means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice you would not have condemned the guiltless.

1. God gives the Sabbath to man to display and cultivate mercy [7] [Hos. 6:6]

a. The Pharisees knew the verse, but did not understand or apply. Thus wrongly accuse others (the disciples) of Sabbath violation. The Sabbath is to bless man.

i. Withholding mercy on the Sabbath is inconsistent with God’s purpose to bless man

C. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath [8] the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath

1. Jesus has all authority to declare the purposes and practices of Sabbath

a. Son of Man: Messianic title, but Jesus uses it to show Sabbath is to benefit man

b. Jesus is greater than the temple [6] and can declare what God desires

2. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath [Mk. 2:27]

3. Jesus is the Bread of Life that satisfies our hunger [Jn. 6]

a. God desires to satisfy your hunger, and your soul’s hunger is satisfied in Christ!

i. Your greatest hunger can only be satisfied when your soul is right with God

What are some obstacles to observing Sabbath?

II. Jesus satisfies your healing needs [9-14]

A. Jesus affirms compassion to those in need of healing on the Sabbath

⁹ Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰ And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—that they might accuse Him.

1. Jesus meets with His people where they assemble [9]

a. The synagogue (assembly) is a place to learn about God and worship Him [9]

b. The religious leaders pose the question to Jesus about Sabbath healing in order to accuse Him [10]. They expect Jesus to declare it is lawful [His compassion is renown]

c. The rabbinical interpretation allowed healing on the Sabbath only if there was imminent danger of risk of life.

2. Jesus shows it is lawful to do good on Sabbath [11-12] Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? ¹² Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

- a. They would rescue a sheep that fell in a pit on Sabbath even though it wasn't in imminent harm [11]
- b. A man has greater value than a sheep (created in God's image) [12]
- c. **Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath [12]**

B. Jesus displays compassion and heals on the Sabbath [13-14] Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. ¹⁴ Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

- 1. **Jesus' command appears impossible [13]** Stretch out your hand
- 2. **Jesus will enable us to do all that He has commanded us to do [13]** And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other:
- 3. **Jesus blesses and restores those who obey Him [13] [Matt. 11:28-20]**

III. How to rest in Christ and be satisfied [14, 11:28-30]

A. Avoid legalism [14] adding burdens beyond what God intended

1. Jesus' enemies seek to destroy Him for healing on the Sabbath [14] Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

- a. Rabbinical interpretation of Sabbath commandment prohibiting work (multiple chapters) resulting in a heavy yoke that offers no rest since performance based
- b. Legalism blinds people to the heart of God and thus unintentionally oppose God
- c. The Pharisees have no joy over the miraculous healing, but hate, anger, and desire to destroy Jesus [Irony is they think they are pleasing God].

B. Avoid liberalism [Matt. 11:28-30] God's grace is not license to neglect Him

1. Sabbath is the only one of the 10 Commandments not repeated in NT

a. The Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus

- i. NT not bound to observe Sabbath Fri-Sat [Col. 2:16-17, Rom.14:4-6]

C. Avoid neglecting Jesus

a. Time away from work & time with Jesus yields an eternal perspective and results in satisfaction + restoration [His rest]

- a. You need rest from work and rest from Christ
 - i. Cf. Escape from work provides temporary rest from burdens upon the body, mind, and heart (emotions), but doesn't provide rest for the soul.
- b. When the soul is at rest the body, mind, and heart can rest.
- c. Sabbath observance is a matter of faith/trust in God
- d. **Sabbath principle: set aside significant time to focus on God, worship, and satisfy and restore the soul, mind, heart, and body in Christ.**