

THE SERVANT KING'S HEART

(Mark 2:23-3:6)

Legalism keeps so many people from coming to know the joy of salvation. The Pharisees' hearts were a picture of legalism, and their rules of the Sabbath were the posterchild of their condition. In this confrontation with Jesus over the Sabbath, we see that Jesus releases us from legalism and frees us to obey Him with joy.

I. THE TRUE INTENTION OF THE SABBATH (2:23-28)

1. Circumcision and the Sabbath defined Jews and set them apart from Gentiles.
 - Jewish oral traditions further defined the Sabbath with detailed prohibitions.
 - The humanistic restrictions had become a legalistic fence around the true intention of the Sabbath.
2. Jesus and His disciples pass through a grain field.
 - It was not biblically illegal or immoral to gather grain from a neighbor's field.
 - But it was, however - according to oral tradition - to do it on the Sabbath.
3. Jesus appeals to Scripture to settle the controversy (v.25).
 - Jesus draws a parallel between David and his men and Himself and His disciples.
 - Jesus is King of Kings. Jesus is revealing His identity.
4. Jesus points them to the righteous purpose of the fourth commandment (v. 27).
 - The Sabbath was made as a period of joy and refreshment.
 - It was to keep man from focusing so much on work that he would forget what life is all about.
5. More importantly, it was a day set aside for focusing deeply on the Lord and His Kingdom (v.28).
 - We should see the importance of taking time for rest and to meditate on the things of God.
 - It's not about keeping a bunch of rules. It's about wanting to please the Lord and declare our love for Him.
 - And it's about encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ.
6. Jesus desires a relationship with you, not a boring life of do's and don'ts.
 - Worship is not something you simply have to do; it's something you *get* to do.

II. THE TRUE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH (3:1-6)

1. Jesus and His disciples regularly worshiped in synagogues.
 - Jesus saw a man with a crippled hand.
 - He was probably the focus of sneers and ridicule, but Jesus had compassion.
2. Jesus raised the bar from the list of prohibitions to the higher principle (v.4).
 - In their concern for legal detail, they had forgotten the grace and mercy of God.
 - For Jesus, the gospel of God was about the disposition of the heart, unlike proper religion which was all about keeping tradition.
3. Jesus became grieved over their stubborn hearts. He never became angry with tax collectors and sinners; He got angry with self-righteous religious leaders.
 - He was sorrowful over their inability to rejoice in God's goodness to men.
4. Jesus fulfilled the heart of the law—He loved God and loved others.
 - We must seek to have a heart like His.
 - We must avoid passing laws that God doesn't make.

Jesus cares about you. There are no hoops you must jump through to earn His love. God does have rules, but we cannot keep them perfectly. When we ask Him to forgive us and put our faith in Him, He saves us; He sets us free.