

### 3. How should we Sabbath

If we aren't going to fall into the trap of the Pharisees and make a list of rules to follow on the Sabbath, then how do we follow God's commandment to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy?

Here are 4 steps suggested in Practicing the Way by John Mark Comer.

*10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." - Psalm 46:10 NIV*  
*4 Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. - Psalm 37:4 NIV*

1. Stop- The word Sabbath means cease, and that is the beginning of Sabbath. We need to stop and be still in God's presence. Set aside a time each week, starting with a couple of hours, to intentionally cease from work, chores, even the busy thoughts you may have and focus on God's presence with you.
2. Rest- this is countercultural in our day. *During your Sabbath, what do you need rest from? (phone, chores, people, sports, internet...) Find a quiet, distraction-free place and time to breathe and to rest in God. Then invite the Holy Spirit to come and illuminate your mind.*
3. Delight- Unlike the Pharisees who made the Sabbath a burden with their many rules, God intends Sabbath to be a time of blessing and refreshing. *How can you delight in God's world, your life, and God himself? Select an activity that brings you delight to include on your Sabbath.*
4. Worship- To keep the Sabbath holy is to set it apart to God's purposes. It is a time to worship. You can do this by listening to worship music or praying with a friend or going on a walk in nature—the options are endless. The end goal is spend as much of the Sabbath as you possibly can in conscious communion with God.

#### WRAP-UP

Mark brings us the Good News the God's Kingdom has come, and Jesus is Lord of all. He demonstrated that when challenged by the Pharisees that He wasn't observing their rules about Sabbath. He pointed back to scripture and to the heart of God- Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. And when there is an opportunity to do good and to heal, the traditions of man will not stop Jesus. A part of the rhythm of our lives needs to be observing a time of Sabbath, just as the Father and the Son did. We should set aside time to stop, rest, delight and worship our Lord.

#### MEMORY VERSE

*28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." - Mark 2:28 NIV*

*Challenge- Set aside a few hours to practice the 4 steps of Sabbath this week.*

## The Lord of the Sabbath Gospel of Mark - Week 11

### INTRODUCTION

As Jesus gathered followers and continued to share the Good News that the Kingdom of God had come, he was opposed by the religious teachers and those in authority. The message He brought challenged what the Pharisees and priests were teaching. Jesus was sharing the heart of God with His people, while the Pharisees were enforcing their own rules and traditions. In this week's passage we see a confrontation involving the Sabbath.

#### Ice Breaker

*When do you find yourself completely relaxed and restful?*

#### Key Passages

*27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."  
- Mark 2:27-28 NIV*

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. What is Sabbath?

*23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"  
- Mark 2:23-24 NIV*

*8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. - Exodus 20:8-11 NIV*

As we have seen earlier in this chapter of Mark, Jesus has come under the scrutiny of the Pharisees. Previously, he was questioned about who he chose to eat with, and about his disciples failing to fast. In this passage they accuse Jesus's disciples of violating the Sabbath. But what is the Sabbath? The word

for Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word *šabāt* which literally means to cease, desist, rest. The Sabbath was observed once weekly by the Jews in response to the commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. So, the word Sabbath means both to rest or cease from work, and the day on which we rest.

*God gave Moses the commandments on Mt. Sinai so that the people would know how to live Godly lives, pleasing to the Lord. God specifically commands that the Sabbath be kept holy, which means set apart. How does Exodus 20 explain how to keep the Sabbath holy? If we are not doing work on that day, what else should we be doing?*

Ceasing from work is more than not clocking at the office. God created us in His image, to be like our Heavenly Father. And on the seventh day of creation God sabbathed, and Jesus modeled the Sabbath as well.

*28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."  
- Matthew 11:28 NIV*

*The rhythms of working and resting are ingrained in us. We need rest. But the rest we need doesn't come from taking a nap or binge watching our favorite shows. Where do we find our rest according to Matthew 11:28? How does this influence what you might do to observe the Sabbath?*

## 2. Command or Tradition

*1 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. 2 Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. - Mark 3:1-2 NIV*

*6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.' 8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."  
- Mark 7:6-8 NIV*

Jesus was challenged more than once regarding the Sabbath. In Mark chapter 2 his disciples picked heads of grain to eat and in Mark chapter 3 Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. On both occasions the Pharisees accused him of doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath. But they were using more than the scripture to evaluate Jesus' actions. Over time, many rabbis had written their interpretation of what was allowed on the Sabbath. The collection of the rules based on those interpretations, known as the

Mishnah, has 39 categories of work forbidden on the Sabbath. These rules detailed how much you could do in everyday practices, without "working" on the Sabbath. In other words, what can you get away with without breaking God's law.

*How does Jesus characterize this perspective in Mark 7? Whose opinions are they most focused on, God's or man's? In what ways might we be practicing our faith to be seen by man rather than to please God?*

If we have surrendered our lives and our hearts to God, we should be asking, "What more can I do that honors and pleases God?" Jesus directs the Pharisees back to what is found in God's word and in God's heart in response.

*25 He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?"  
- Mark 2:25 NIV*

*4 Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.  
- Mark 3:4 NIV*

It is ironic that Jesus asks the teachers of the law, "Have you never read?" and "Is it lawful?" They should certainly know the scriptures and the laws of God. God gave us the scriptures as a way of knowing Him and learning how to live a Godly life, pleasing to Him.

*27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."  
- Mark 2:27-28 NIV*

*1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,  
- Mark 1:1 NIV*

*What do you think it reveals about God that the Sabbath was made for man? The culture of Jesus' day was so intent on man's rules about the Sabbath that it had become a burden to them, fearing that they might do something considered work, they missed the blessing that God intended the Sabbath to be for them. How do you think the culture of our day misses the blessing that God intended the Sabbath to be for us?*

As Mark stated in the first verse of his Gospel, this is good news about Jesus the Messiah. The Kingdom of God has invaded our world, and Jesus is the Lord and ruler in that Kingdom. When He was challenged about the Sabbath He pointed back to a time when King David was given the consecrated bread lawful only for priests to eat. Jesus is our king and our high priest. When He and his companions picked grain, they did not break the law of the Sabbath, neither did Jesus break the law of the Sabbath when He healed the man's hand in the temple in public view. These actions reflect God's heart for His people and Jesus' authority on the earth. The more we know the scripture the more we understand the heart of God is not to catch us in an infraction, but to see us blessed by His presence and healed by His touch.