

**“Keeping the Lord’s Day, the Lord’s Way” - Mark 2:23-27, 3:1-6**

TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 2: 27, 28 where he says:

***“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.***

TODAY we will speak of the “Sabbath” under the message title: “Keeping the Lord’s Day the Lord’s Way.” Since I will make the connection between the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day – these terms and this linking of the two-need careful explanation.

1. Lord Sabaoth (“Lord of Hosts” is not the same as Lord of the Sabbath (“rest”)
2. “Sabbath” = “Saturday” (sp. “Sabido”) = day of rest = 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week
3. Christians began worshipping on Sunday (the first day of the week) after Christ’s resurrection to celebrate that all-important occasion. This has been observed since the first century. [Saturday worship has primary continued primarily among Jewish groups and 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists.]

*1 Corinthians 16: 2 On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper that no collections be made when I come.*

4. We refer to “The Lord’s Day” as Sunday since we set it aside for a special day of worship, and yet let us remember that every day is the Lord’s day and we are to worship every day in our service and sacrifice for Him.

*Psalms 118: 24 This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*  
[with no reference as to the day of the week]

*Romans 12:1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.* [implied: every day]

5. The observance of the Sabbath (Saturday) as the holy day of rest is part of the OT ceremonial law, from which we have been set free. We are not obligated to “keep the Sabbath [Saturday] holy” as it says in the fourth commandment.

*Romans 14:5, 6a One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord...*

6. Jesus made it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that he did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them. (Matt. 5:17). This means that the principles of the OT law were still valid, and fully validated in Jesus and worthy of being observed.

*Matthew 5:19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus goes on in Matthew, chapter 5 to explain many of the OT laws in new terms of application. For instance, murder = hating another in one's heart; adultery = thinking lustful thought.

7. Finally then – we conclude that although we are not bound to observe the Saturday Sabbath and are free to worship God on Sunday in commemoration of His resurrection, there are principles of the Sabbath day that are fulfilled in Jesus and we are wise to remember and bound to follow. These principles are given us in TODAY'S PASSAGE as **we observe Jesus in THREE ROLES: 1) As KING, 2) as SON OF MAN and 3) as LORD OF THE SABBOTH.**

So, let us today learn how to keep the Lord's Day the Lord's way.

**OUR PRIMARY TEXT: Mark 2: 23-27, 3: 1-6**

- v23 And it happened that He was passing through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.
- v24 The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"
- v25 And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;
- v26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"
- v27 Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.
- v28 "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."
1. He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.
  2. They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.
  3. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!"

4. And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.
5. After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.
6. The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

It was Saturday – the Sabbath – God’s holy day of rest for all Jews. The account in Luke 6: 1 uniquely says, literally, that it was “the second first Sabbath” – meaning the second Sabbath after Passover. This marks the beginning of the second year of ministry for Jesus.

Jesus and his disciples were on their way to the Synagogue, hungry for breakfast, and passing through a grain field – some say it was wheat, others corn – it doesn’t matter. The OT law had provided for the poor and hungry on such an occasion.

*Deuteronomy 23:25 When you enter your neighbor’s standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor’s standing grain.*

The Pharisees, the self-appointed religious experts in keeping and defending God’s law, had categorized the Old Testament Law into 39 principle works to be observed, each one subdivided into six minor categories - 234 categories in total – describing all the prohibited activities on the Sabbath. One prohibited activity was to reap on the Sabbath, and this was what they saw Jesus and his disciple doing this day.

Jesus’ classic response – recorded here and in Matthew 12 and Luke 6 – is more than a justification of his actions. It is an important teaching on who Jesus is and what the Sabbath Day observance is really all about.

And “in a nutshell” here they are:

1. **SINCE JESUS IS THE KING (like King David) he can do whatever he wants on the Sabbath - specifically take care of personal needs (such as eating breakfast in the fields).**

**And we, as his followers and children of the King, can attend to our personal needs on Sunday, whether it be mowing the lawn, paying bills or even working to earn a living, if need be.**

2. **SINCE JESUS IS THE SON OF MAN (the Divine One, representing mankind) he will do on the Sabbath what only God can do – DO GOOD (as Jesus in Mark 3 points out – “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?”**

**And we, as his followers, will seek to make Sunday a special day of doing good – ministering to the needs of others, serving the Lord, meditating on the Scriptures, praying and representing our God to family and friends.**

**3. SINCE JESUS IS THE LORD OF THE SABBATH or “Lord of all rest” he will exemplify this day as a day set aside as different from the others – resting from his regular work and routine and going to Synagogue.**

**And we, as his followers, will make this day special (“holy” – set apart) for a break in our weekly routine – maybe a special day with family and friends - and a special day of worship – going to church, if at all possible.**

As time allows, let’s make some observations on these 3 major points.

1. **Re: KING** If King David can be hungry and in need and take and eat the consecrated showbread from the Holy Place – surely King Jesus can eat from the fields as provided by the Law and common sense. And surely, we can use Sunday to accomplish personal tasks of work or pleasure for which the rest of the week did not allow. We should not monitor what children of the King can or cannot do on Sunday or any other day. Under God’s leading it can be “used” as we wish.

Jesus pointedly asks the Pharisees “have you never read what David did . . .” This speaks to us today. “Have you never read” the Word? You are a Christian and have you never read the Bible? You come to church, Oaks Bible Church, and you do not bring or read the Scripture? Reading the Bible for yourself is not only an incredible PRIVILEGE that many people and cultures do not have, but it is THE WAY TO GROW in your faith.

*1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.*

2. **Re: SON OF MAN** This is the second time Jesus uses the term “Son of Man” for himself. He first used it earlier in Mark 2:10 when he healed the paralytic. “*But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . .*” All in all, he uses this term of himself 14 times in the gospel of Mark alone.

**SON OF MAN = DIVINITY** It is NOT just the counter to “Son of God”. One doesn’t describe his manhood and the other his Godhood. BOTH describe his Godhood. Jesus uses this term for himself based upon its first usage in Scripture. {TURN TO READ}

*Daniel 7: 13,14 I kept looking in the night vision, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming. And He came up to the Ancient of Days [God the Father] and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might*

*serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.*

Jesus is claiming to be that Son of Man – pre-existent, royal, superhuman, divine – and Jesus is claiming that Daniel’s vision has been fulfilled in him.

In the Sabbath story of Mark 3 we see this Son of Man choosing to heal a man with a withered hand – doing good and “saving a life” on the day that the Pharisees saw such healing as unholy “work.” If there is anything that the Son of Man and we his disciples should be doing on the Sabbath it is “doing good” and representing the Divine One.

Regarding this passage in Mark 2 and this designation of Jesus as the Son of Man, Pastor Geoff Thomas of Alfred Place Baptist Church in Aberystwyth, England in a sermon delivered in 2003 said the following:

*This Lord Jesus who walks through the cornfields on this Sabbath day knows who he himself is. Many of you have no idea who you are let alone who Jesus Christ is. He is from another world. He is great David’s greater son. He is the Lord from heaven. He has been sent here by his Father and willingly he has come. He is to return to that heavenly world when his mission is accomplished. His whole life is pervaded by the uncanny and the invincible and the crudely supernatural. It is often so unsophisticated and primitive! Suddenly he will rebuke a demon... he will curse a fig-tree... he will walk on water... he will raise a dead boy to life in a tiny community called Nain. Then he will go on and preach the most sublime ethics ever heard on this planet. This is how incarnate God behaved in Galilee 20 centuries ago. His realm is the Ancient of Days; his status symbol, the clouds of heaven; his jurisdiction, universal; his dominion, everlasting; his destiny, glory and sovereignty; the proper response to him, worship... The resistance and hostility beginning in the cornfields of Galilee were going to increase in hatred and result in death but one day would be followed by glory, not man’s glory but the glory of the Son of Man.*

### **3. Re: LORD OF THE SABBATH**

- a. First, he is Lord of the Sabbath because he created the Sabbath. It was Jesus, the creator, who made the earth in 6 days and then rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day – the “Sabbath.”

*John 1:3 All things came into being by Him [The Word = Jesus] and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

- b. Second, he is Lord of the Sabbath because he is the God who gave the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment in Exodus 20:8: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”

As we have seen, we are not today bound to keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day, Saturday, “holy” – but the principle of a day of rest and consecration to God is for us always.

- c. Lastly, he is Lord of the Sabbath because he is Lord over time, over our work and over our rest. Ultimately, he will be the Lord of our ETERNAL SABBATH REST in heaven.

*Hebrews 4:9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.*

This refers to our rest in heaven, under the Lordship of the Lord of the Sabbath.

**CONCLUSION: How do we keep the Lord's day the Lord's way?**

- 1. Use it wisely for our personal needs.**
- 2. Use it doing good – representing the Son of Man**
- 3. Use it for rest and worship – “set apart” as different from the other days**