

Good morning, church family.

Take your... Morning. There we go. That was a good one today. Yeah. Turn with me in your Bibles to Mark chapter 2, please. Mark chapter 2. We're going to begin in verse 23, and then we're going to read into chapter 3 as well. And this morning's message is entitled, The Lord of the Sabbath. And we're going to dig in here to see the fourth and fifth encounter between Jesus and the religious leaders. This is the straw that broke the camel's back, if you will. And so we're gonna dig in here and see who the true Lord of the Sabbath is. So if you're able to, please rise with me, Mark chapter 2, 23 through 312. We will stand in honor of the

one who gave us this word, and I'll read it for us. 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. And the Pharisees were saying to him, Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? And he said to them, Have you never read what David did when he was in need, and he and his companions became hungry? How he entered the house of God around 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. And Jesus was saying to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. And he entered again into a synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they were watching him to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, Get up and come forward. 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. And 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. And the Pharisees went out and immediately began taking counsel together with the Herodians against him as to how they might destroy him. And Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples, and a great multitude from Galilee followed, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Edomia, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. A great number of people heard of all that he was doing and came to him. And he told his disciples that a boat should stand ready for him because of the crowd. so that they would not crowd him. For he had healed many with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around him in order to touch him. Whenever the unclean spirits were seeing him, they would fall down before him and cry out, saying, You are the Son of God. And he earnestly warned them not to tell who he was. This is the word of the Lord.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we glorify your name together today. We are here to worship. We are

here to glorify you and encourage one another to look to Christ, to rest in all that you have done for us. And I pray, Lord, that you would be glorified in the preaching of your word, that the Spirit would apply what needs to apply to each of our hearts. I pray that you would remove any hindrances from me, any nerves, any distractions, for I am utterly dependent upon you in this manner. We love you, Lord, and praise you, and I pray that you'll help us to glorify you today. In your name I pray, amen. Okay, you can be seated. Now, I know your first thought may be, that's a really long passage. Don't worry, we're not gonna go too terribly long, I hope. So, the thing that I want us to focus on today is who is the Lord of the Sabbath and what does that mean? So we're gonna look at what it means for Christ to be the Lord of the Sabbath. Now, in the overall Markan tradition, process that we're going through, the gospel itself, and true to his normal writing style, he takes chunks of things, makes his point, and moves on. And so what he's been doing the last couple weeks, as we've been looking through here, if you recall, is he takes five different instances of the religious leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees, challenging Christ in what he was doing. And so this is the fourth and fifth altercation. First he healed the paralytic, Then he ate with sinners. Last week we talked about fasting. Today we're going to talk about Sabbath work and Sabbath healing. And each one of these five occurrences continued to escalate the frustrations of the religious leaders. And we're going to see today, as we read through there, you probably heard it, that they went out and agreed with the Herodians to kill him. So this is essentially the straw that broke the camel's back, these last two. This is the sacred cow, if you will, of Judaism. the pinnacle, just below circumcision to a true committed Jew is the Sabbath. This is it. And so this is a big deal, and the reason why it's such a big deal for them is because this particular law of the Old Testament, we're going to look at it together, but this particular law held more extra-biblical laws than any other law in Scripture. This one they put the most emphasis on, they put the most requirements on, they took as the most serious. You were not a committed Jew if you weren't circumcised and you did not hold to the Sabbath law. There was no way around that. And so we're going to look here together today at the Lord of the Sabbath and see what it is specifically means to be the Lord of the Sabbath. So let's look at number one, a Sabbath meal. So we're going to tackle verses 23 through 28 of chapter 2 first. And we're going to look at him having a Sabbath meal, the disciples rather had a Sabbath meal. Now,

I want to establish a few things about the Sabbath first, so we can understand the extent of what the religious leaders were saying, because we cannot understand the impact of what Christ said and did without understanding how seriously they took it. So

first, if you would, if you have your Bibles, turn with me to Exodus 20, verses 8 through 11. Exodus chapter 20, verses 8 through 11. And once we get there, we'll read first. This is, of course, part of the Ten Commandments, is what we're going to read first. And then we're going to read a couple of other places in the law, just to kind of show a well-rounded

view of what the Scriptures say about the law. And then I'm going to go through and give you some of the examples of— there's not enough time to read all that's— even a small fraction of all that's been written on the Sabbath. But I want to give us an idea of some of the laws that were added out of what Scripture says. So Exodus 20, verses 8–11 reads,

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your God. In it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female slave, or your cattle, or your sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Now turn over, if you would, just a few pages to Exodus chapter 31. Exodus chapter 31, we're gonna be looking at verses 12 through 17. This is gonna go into a little bit more explanation of the Sabbath day. Exodus chapter 31, verses 12

through 17. In this text, it reads, Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep my Sabbaths. For this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahweh who makes you holy. Therefore you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death. For whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Six days' work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Yahweh. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death, so the sons of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever, for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.

There's another example in Deuteronomy

5, 12 through 14. You don't have to turn there, but you can take note of that. Deuteronomy chapter 5, verses 12 through 14 is another well-rounded example of a delivery about the Sabbath. So why am I taking time to explain

all this to you is because it is absolutely true that the Old Testament, the law of God, took the Sabbath seriously. It was one of the Ten Commandments. In fact, it was so serious that if you broke the Sabbath, as it said here, to not work, you were to be put to death. This is a serious thing to the Lord, keeping the Sabbath holy. But I want to give you what progressed throughout Judaism, throughout the Israelite history, between the Old and New Testaments especially, and I'm going to give you some examples of things that simply do not work and have any of your slaves' work on the Sabbath turned into. And there's no better example than legalism, pietism, and moralism than what I'm about to read to you. So we just read from scripture, don't work. That seems pretty simple, right? Don't work. Okay? But what does someone who has outward appearances of righteousness want to know? What does work mean? But what does work mean? What can I get away with? What can I do? What can I not do? What do I have to do to still be perceived as righteous? So let me give you some examples of how our human minds can twist the law of God so, so quickly. So the Sabbath was accustomed to, the Jews considered it to be secondary to circumcision. This is what set them apart from the nations around them, both circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, Some of the most rigorous additions to the Old Testament law for the Sabbath are found actually in the Dead Sea Scrolls, believe it or not, that said if you carried one of your children on the Sabbath, that was work. If you helped an animal give birth on the Sabbath, that was work. If you pulled an animal from a pit that had fallen into, that was work. So remember, the toll of this is death. So how many parents in here have to carry your children on the Lord's Day? I think many of us would be put to death already today, if we're honest with ourselves. Some other, they were a little less strict, but there's some other things I want us to see here. Now, there's normal things that you would consider work, because in those days, work was considered providing for yourself. You didn't live to work, you worked to live, right? So the plowing, hunting, butchering, things like that were considered work. Naturally, that makes sense. But the things that were added to it is that you could not tie or loosen a knot on the Sabbath. You could not sew more than one stitch on the Sabbath. You could not write more than one letter on the Sabbath. And some of the most extreme examples is that you could not set a dislocated hand and foot because it was not life-threatening. If an injury was not life-threatening, you could not offer anything as of aid or assistance. They had to wait until the next day. So as long as you were kept alive, in other words, they would provide first aid to make sure you didn't bleed out, for example, but you could not do anything for comfort, you could not ease their pain, you could not offer any medical assistance outside of basic first aid to keep them alive. And then

after the Sabbath is over, then we can attend to you. So I want to make sure we understand the extreme nature to which these leaders upheld these laws. These are all additional to the Old Testament. You can do an extensive study in the Old Testament Scriptures, and each time it talks about the Sabbath, it says, do not work, keep it holy. And holiness means to set apart, right? It's different than the other days. It's set apart, it's holy, it's not the same mundane thing. So now we see the Pharisees adding on all these additional things, so that they can check the box, yep, I was righteous on this Sabbath. I didn't do any work. So now we see how serious they took it. So when we look at our text in Mark chapter two, verse 23, if you wanna flip back over there, Mark chapter two and verse 23 again, we see, It says, 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. Now you may think to yourself, well, they're in some stranger's field. That doesn't seem right. That seems like not only breaking the Sabbath, but it seems like theft to me. Well, it's not. As per the Old Testament law in Deuteronomy chapter 23 and verse 25, it reads, when you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hands, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain. So by Old Testament law, if you were walking, everybody walked back then, pretty much. There were a few that had animals, but pretty much everyone walked. So if you're walking and you needed a snack, it was per the law of the Old Testament that you could have your snack from your neighbor's grain. It wasn't considered work. You couldn't work in the field and harvest with a sickle, but you could have a snack. So the disciples, by Jewish law, according to the actual Old Testament, were doing nothing wrong. There was nothing wrong. Now, when you look at it under the regulations of the Sabbath, which I've read to you already, by the way, on the Sabbath you were not allowed to walk more than 1,999 paces, or roughly 800 meters. So there's a good chance that by them walking in the field, they were already breaking the Sabbath just by walking. And now, how dare they? They're working. They're reaping. But that's not what the scriptures say. That's not what the Old Testament said. It said not to work. It doesn't say anything about not eating, does it? And so now we see the conflict. We see the disciples doing what is absolutely allowed by law. It's not prohibited for them to take this grain, roll it out in their hands and have a snack while they're walking. And yet the Pharisees say, how dare you? So in verse 24, this is their reaction. And the Pharisees were saying to him, look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? So the Pharisees would have considered even the plucking of one head of grain

to be work. One head of grain to be work.
And so they go to the leader, because you never address the disciples of any teacher, they go to the leader, how dare your disciples, you're responsible for them, how dare you let them work? And Jesus answers in one of the most unique and interesting, almost confusing ways that he answers almost anybody in all of Scripture, in my opinion, in the Gospels. He says, have you not read, so verse 25 of our text, have you never read that David, excuse me, what David did when he was in need, and he and his companions became hungry? Now he entered the house of God around 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. So now, as these Pharisees have approached him and said, hey, these extra-biblical laws, now remember, technically speaking, these were not laws. These were additions to the law. Now, yes, the Jew recognized the writings of the religious leaders as law, although they not necessarily should have. But I'm just saying, from a scriptural perspective, what God handed down to Moses and said, pass along to the nation of Israel, this is not what God said. This is additional in addition to. So the Pharisees are upset over their own man-made additions to the law, to what God said. And Jesus answered, have you not read? So what he's referencing is back in 1 Samuel 21, if you'd like to turn there. 1 Samuel chapter 21, verses one through nine. So we're gonna read the story that he's referencing. Now, before I read here, and you see a different name, and you get as confused as I did at first, so I did some research. In the text of 1 Samuel 21, you're going to read that Ahimelech gave David bread. But Jesus said, Abiathar. Abiathar is Ahimelech's son, and what Jesus is doing is referencing the part of the Samuel scroll for them to go look at. So they would have had it divided up into times of priests, or times of people living. And so Jesus is referencing a particular time of the scroll, or where to research what he's saying, not necessarily the exact person that handed David the bread. So that's why it says in verse 26, it was the time of Abiathar, but here in our text in 1 Samuel it says Ahimelech. So it's not an inaccuracy. The only reason I bring it up is people have used that to try to cast doubt on both Christ and the Scriptures that this is an error. It simply isn't, it's just how he's articulating where to reference the story he's talking about. So 1 Samuel 21 verses 1-9 reads this, Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came trembling to meet David, and said to him, Why are you alone, and no one is with you? And David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king has commanded me with a matter, and has said to me, Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am

sending you. and with which I have commanded you, and I have directed the young men to a certain place. So now, what do you have on hand? Give five loaves of bread into my hand, or whatever can be found.' And the priest answered David and said, There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread, if only the young men have kept themselves from women. And David answered the priest and said to him, surely women have been kept from us previously when I set out, and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey, how much more than today would their vessels be holy? So the priest gave him consecrated bread." And you can finish reading there if you'd like. So the story here is that David went and did something that was not lawful. According to the Old Testament law, the Levitic priests, the Levites, were the only ones allowed to eat the bread off the show table. It's called the show bread. This was consecrated, special, holy bread that was set aside to be put in the tabernacle, and the only ones allowed to eat it by the law of God were the priests. And yet David walks in, he's been on this long journey for context in 1 Samuel, he's running around doing errands, doing things, fighting, he's hungry, he comes to Ahimelech, And he says, I need something to eat. And the Himalayan says, as long as the men have been celibate during your journey, they can have the showbread. He eats the showbread and he goes on. Now, when you're reading this story in context at first hand, you're like, okay, that's no big deal. It's David. It's King David. He didn't get in trouble. God didn't come back and chastise him. Nowhere in scripture is it spoken of in a negative light. God allowed David, this is the key, God allowed David to break the law for the sake of humanity, for the sake of human need in that moment, and did not chastise him. Okay? So, when we think about that, our first reaction, I'm just telling you, my first reaction was, that's, What does that mean? So what does that mean for us? So Jesus is here, following the law of the Old Testament technically, but is breaking the Pharisaic laws, his disciples are. And he references David, not following the law, the Levitical law, the tabernacle, eating holy bread that was set aside only for priests. But it was to feed and sustain himself and his men in their time of need, doing what was needed. So what do we do with that? What do we do with that? How can Jesus be referencing something like that to justify or excuse what he's doing now? And there's two different things going on here in Christ's answer, and I want us to wrap our minds around it. I'm gonna do my best, hopefully, to help us do that. So in the case of what Jesus is doing, the Old Testament incident was designed to provide for the needs of David. David broke the law so that he could provide for his men. This is a precedent of a pious man providing for the human need in the moment outside of the law. It's getting to the heart of

the law. The heart of the law is what? Let's think about context. We're gonna reference this a couple different times today. So the heart of the law is summed up in Matthew 22, 36 through 40. That's my favorite passage, by the way. Matthew 22, 36 through 40. Anyone know what I'm talking about? My wife probably does, because it's my favorite passage. But Matthew 22, 36 through 40 is when a group of priests came to Christ and says to him, Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the law? And they were trying to test him. And Jesus' reply was what? Anybody know it? Love the Lord your God. The first one is love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. So all of yourself. Love God first. Love your neighbor as yourself. Now, does the law of God in that summation, because then he continues and Christ says, Upon these two, all the other laws and prophets hang, right? So does that sound like the law is meant to burden humanity to a point where they don't help and focus on the love of each other, taking care of human need, prioritizing the need of your neighbor? Or does it sound like the law is designed to become a yoke, yoke, not a yoke, that's an egg, a yoke, designed to weight people down so that they can prove themselves as more righteous than someone next to them. Do you see the difference? So I want to make sure you're understanding the difference. I am not saying, so here's what I'm not saying. You're going to hear me try to really focus on balance because we can swing the pendulum very easily in two different directions this morning. But what I am saying is that the law is there, the Sabbath specifically, what the point Christ is making is the Sabbath specifically is here for men to rest. The law, in essence, the law as a whole is here for the benefit of man, not for their detriment. And how many times does he teach this? Think about this. How many of us have studied the story of the Good Samaritan? Sunday school on up, right? Probably one of the first Sunday school stories that kids learn. What is the point of that story? That the law became a hindrance to taking care of humanity. Because had those priests stopped, the first ones that were there, they would have been unclean on their way to the temple. And they put the law, the letter of the law, instead of the heart of the law, above what was necessary in that moment. And so Christ is looking back at David as a precedent, that what David did was right. He is saying David had it right. The needs of those men in that moment, the needs of the hunger of those men was the right choice to eat that bread. And then he applies it. Now, another thing that he is doing here as well, remember, as we've been going through Mark, Jesus is also revealing himself as the Messiah. So now he has not only pointed at David as the precedent, this is how the law is intended to be used. Yes, on normal circumstances, only the Levites eat the bread.

But in extreme circumstances, when men are starving to death, eat the bread. Right? On an extreme circumstance, when there's a Samaritan laying on the side of the road, be unclean, help that man. Do you see the argument that Christ is making? And now he's actually lining himself up with David. And we all know that the Jewish, Tradition, the Old Testament pointed to the son of David, the Messiah coming. So he has aligned himself up as the Messiah as well. So I want to read a quote here that hopefully will help us tie a bow on this idea of what's going on here. So, the relationship between the Old Testament incident and the infringement of the Sabbath by the disciples lies in the fact that on both occasions, pious men did something forbidden. The fact that God does not condemn David for his action indicates that the narrowness by which the scribes interpreted the law was not in accordance with the tenor of Scripture. Jesus argues that the tradition of the Pharisees is unduly stringent and exceeds the intention of the law." The intention of the law. So the intention of the law, as Christ told us in Matthew 22, is to love the Lord your God with all of you, and to love your neighbor as yourself. And so Jesus is saying what David did was loving his neighbor as himself in that moment. And so when we think about the...

So that kind of ties a bow on the idea of where it accords to the law. And then regarding the reference to the son of David and Christ identifying himself with that. I'd like to give you a couple reasons why that is there as well. Jeremiah chapter 23 in verse five, if you'd like to write that down, I'm gonna read it here for you. Jeremiah chapter 23 in verse five. Behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and he will reign as king and prosper and do justice and righteousness in the land. This is just one example of a prophecy from the Old Testament about the Son of David coming. So Jesus is not only correcting the pharisaical additions to the law, and he's teaching them what the law's true intent is, he is also identifying himself as that fulfillment. In fact, The common phrase of the Jew of that day, in Christ's time, was a phrase that they would repeat often as a prayer. And they would literally pray the words, "'Cause the branch of David, thy servant, speedily to sprout, and let his horn be exalted by his salvation.'" They were so looking, so enamored with this idea of the son of David, that when Jesus identified himself, they should have immediately went, oh, that makes perfect sense. He's done the miracles. How many times have we seen him slowly, but still through almost a veil, right? We talked about the veiled revelation or the veiled revealing of Christ himself over the past several messages. He's doing it again. He is, for those who have ears

to hear, he is revealing himself as associated with David. He is the one to come, that was to come to fulfill the son of David prophecy. So we see why he used this story. So I hope with us looking at this, it helps alleviate some of the concerns about that particular passage. Because throughout my entire life, to be completely honest, I had no idea why in the world Jesus referenced David in that particular scenario. I just never looked into it until... by God's providence, we're here this week, and I had to deal with it. And so now that we've dealt with it, I'm like, oh, okay, that makes perfect sense. So I hope that it does to you as well. If you have questions about that, please let me know, because I know it can get a little twisty. But as we move forward from that regard, Jesus adds something additional in verses 27 and 28. So to wrap up our first point, let's look at those two verses together. Chapter 2, verse 27 and 28 in Mark. It says, "...and Jesus was saying to them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." So let's think through what that means for us tangibly and practically. First of all, the Sabbath was made for man. The Sabbath is a gift to us. Let's think about this practically speaking. The sovereign God of the universe, who's all-powerful. We've been going through the attributes of God on Sunday mornings and Sunday school. He's all-powerful, all-knowing. He's everywhere. He can speak things into existence. There's nothing He can't do. He doesn't sleep. He doesn't need rest. We know all this is revealed to the rest of Scripture. But for some reason, sometimes, at least, I know I've been guilty of this in the past, when we read Genesis, we go, oh, he must have been tired. Right? We apply our human, we overanalyze it and go, oh, well, he, you know, he worked six days. That was a big job, speaking of all that. God didn't even need six days. Like, understand, God could have instantly willed everything into existence exactly as he wanted it, and in a fraction of a second, it had all been done. He did it the way he did it for our sake, to establish the laws of nature to go forward. So after those six days, did God need a day of rest, like as we would consider humanity needing a day? No. God took a day of rest to establish for us who he planned to create for the rest of eternity, a day when we can rest, recuperate, and focus on him. The requirement of the law, the Sabbath, was not so that he could get more glory on one specific day. Yes, we need to be worshiping God. Don't hear me say that. The point of the Sabbath was so that man could stop what they were doing, be forced to rest, and find their refreshment in Him. forced to. And there's been countries around the world that have tried a seven-day workweek. Anybody ever seen people try to mess with the workweek? You guys ever seen those studies? There's actual studies. If you

go look at it, you can find studies of different cultures or different places that tried to play with the five days on, two days off, or six days on, one day off. And they would work, you know, 14 days in a row and then take five days off. There's different experiments. Don't quote me on those exact days, but you get the picture I'm trying to make. And it was a disaster. People became physically ill. They couldn't sleep. Their entire sleep schedules were off. Everything about them from a physical perspective fell apart. It's almost like God knew what he was doing. Right? It's almost like he said, hey, this is the way I'm going to design you. So even before I create this law, I'm going to lay down foundationally in the very laws of nature, a day of rest. Here's the example, follow me. He didn't need that. He did that for us. The Sabbath was made for us. We were not made for the Sabbath. We were not made to have this burdensome extra law put on our shoulders outside of what God had already commanded for our own benefit. And Jesus corrects this misinterpretation of the Torah. He corrects this in other places. Matthew 11 comes to mind. 28 and 30, what does Christ say? Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. He is, in that passage in Matthew 11, He is speaking against the extra laws, the weight of the extra laws of the Pharisees. This is something Christ teaches throughout His time on earth. He is correcting the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the law. And then He sums up, verse 28, Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. In the Greek here, this word, the wording here, quick nerd lesson real fast. In Greek, to emphasize something, you put the word that you want most emphasized at the beginning of the sentence. In Greek, it gets really confusing because sentence structure doesn't really matter. It's how words end and that kind of thing. They're not the only thing. Sentence structure really matters is emphasis. And the first thing that's in this sentence, even though in English it's towards the end, is Lord, Lord of the Sabbath. That phrase is the first thing in the sentence. That's what's emphasized. So when we see that's what's emphasized, in reality this, straight from the Greek, could actually read, who is the Lord of the Sabbath? The Son of Man is. Christ is establishing His authority, His exousia, if you've been listening to the last few messages, you remember that's the word for authority used here. He is establishing His authority as the one who gives the correct interpretation, because we know from the text, by God's grace and having it in front of us, that He is the one who wrote the law. So he is the Lord of the Sabbath. Now as we think about application

on this first point, I want to, for just a brief moment, address something. This is something as we as leadership want to address and make sure this is a perfect opportunity for us to do it and explain why. So we as a church confess the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. multiple chapters, you can look at that, we have copies of it if you'd like one. There is one point that we have an asterisk on, one small part of one chapter, based on this text and a proper understanding of the Sabbath, and that is 22.8. And 22.8 in the 1689 holds what we feel is a slightly too legalistic view of the Lord's Day. Now, we are absolutely 100% following Scripture and keeping it holy and resting. We don't think you should do work. You need to take a rest and set aside and have that time of rest and reflection and worship of God. But the 1689 has been used in that particular point of the chapter to, what in my opinion, put a modern-day yoke of extra-biblical teachings on the Sabbath, in our opinion, as leaders. So we would say, yes, honor the Sabbath, keep it holy, don't do work. I'm not going to tell you that mowing the yard is work for you, because I actually enjoy mowing the yard. I like hopping on a lawn mower with some headphones and just praying and enjoying myself. That to me is restful and relaxing. I work in an office all day, so to be outside, that's great for me. But if that's work for you because you mow the yard all week, don't mow the yard. Do you see what I'm saying? So we leave it up to the conscience. So we don't put stipulations on that. So that's the one thing that we would clarify in the 1689 is that one point. So I just wanted to clarify that while we're here as a body to explain what that means. But I want us to also think about the absolute privilege it is to have a day of rest each week to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually and physically. And I commend you, I encourage you, I exhort you to take a day every week to do that. Every week. I recommend Sundays because most of us are off on Sundays, but if you're not, take another day in the rest of the week. Take a day of rest. Take a day of time to set aside, take a Sabbath, okay, not from the laws that we've been talking about, but take a Sabbath and set aside a time to spend time resting. But the last point of application for that is, let's not add to the law of God, shall we? Let's not. The Lord has given us what we should do in His Scriptures. This is the law of God. If it's not in here, don't add it. Don't take away from what is here. I'm not saying that, but don't add to it. I've been in too many churches. I've grown up in church my entire life. The denominations I've been in are the most legalistic, extra-biblical laws outside of Scripture I've ever seen in my life. If you'd like to have conversations about that, come talk to me. I'm happy to explain where that

came from. but don't add the law. Do you see the burden that the Pharisees had on people just as simple as feeding themselves, just as simple as taking care of a man on the side of the road that had been bloodied and beaten? Adding to the law does human harm. The law is there for the good of man, the benefit of man, not to add burdens and take away from that, okay? And we're gonna talk more about this. I'm gonna find the balance, I promise. We're gonna get there. because I can see a lot of wheels turning and a lot of thoughts are, oh, so we don't have to care about what the law says? That's not what I'm saying, okay? Just give me time to get there. Number two, a Sabbath healing. So this one's gonna go a little bit faster. I've set up the stage for Sabbath, right? We know what the old law was, we're not gonna rehash that part of it, so we're gonna move a little bit more quickly through this particular point. Chapter three, verses one through six, it reads, and he entered again into a synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they were watching him to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, get up and come forward. 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. And 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. And the Pharisees went out and immediately began taking counsel together with the Herodians against him as to how they might destroy him. So if you were able to catch the introduction of Mark, if you remember, I explained some specific writing techniques that Mark uses, and one of them is irony. This is one of his first big uses of irony, because what he is pointing out, and Christ says it as well, but he is using the irony of these men being mad at Christ for healing on the Sabbath, while they at the same time plot to kill him on the Sabbath. How ironic is that? And Christ calls them out of it here in just a minute. He's going to tell them, is it lawful to heal or to kill? He knows what they're doing. He knows what they're thinking. And so the irony that Mark uses here is so thick. He's making a fantastic point. So with that irony in mind, let's dig in the text here quickly. So this is likely the same day that they were headed to the synagogue, that's likely why they were walking in the field. There's no way to know that for sure, but it's thought that they were likely walking to the synagogue, so it's the same day. And they walk in, and there's a man with a withered hand here. Now remember what we talked about earlier. You weren't even allowed to set a dislocated wrist or ankle. And so healing was very frowned upon on the Sabbath. And so they knew what Christ had been doing. They knew His reputation. And so they were there to look at Him to see if they could find

something. In verse 2, they are premeditated. They are looking at the end so that they might accuse Him. They had their eye on Him because they knew in their hearts this troublemaker was going to cause some more trouble. And Jesus drew attention to the man. I can imagine that the man himself, with his withered hand, wanted to be in a corner and not be brought to attention. He was just there to attend the synagogue, and yet Christ pulls him up in front of everyone. And he uses this time, Christ uses this time to teach a valuable lesson. An extension, if you will, of what we just learned. That the human need is important to the Lord. So he says in verse three, he said to the man, get up and come forward. And then in verse four, he says, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill? But notice they kept silent. They wouldn't answer him. They refused to even give him an argument. They were quick to say, how dare your disciples eat and feed themselves? But when asked a direct question, they refused to answer. They were proponents of religion. They wanted tangible, measurable ways to show that they were righteous. The Pharisees' focus is, what can I be viewed as? Can I be viewed as righteous? Are there things that I can tangibly check off on a box that says, I didn't heal today, I didn't give birth, I didn't carry my child, I didn't help an animal give birth, excuse me? And so Christ is coming in to put a juxtaposition. He is putting them in a corner. He is backing them in to a place where they have to make a decision. Because the motive of the law, the purpose of the law is about the heart. It is to support the heart. When you think about Matthew 22, 36 through 40, when you think about loving God with all of you and loving your neighbor as yourself, where does that come from? The internal. The internal. It's about the heart condition. The entire Sermon on the Mount is correcting the wrong view of the law and the religious leaders. Go read it in Matthew. Three chapters of him correcting their view of the law over and over and over. And every time, where does Christ bring it back to? You have heard it said, but I tell you, every time he comes back to the heart as the issue. It is not about the outward sign. That is not what justifies you. It is about the inside. The gospel is about the heart and the change of the inner man. It is about what changes you on the inside. And the response of Jesus here tells us the truth of what He is teaching. And verse five, and after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart. This is the single most intense expression of emotion by Christ outside of the passion itself. The wording that's used here. It's an intense expression because these men are willingly ignorant. The term there, hardness of heart,

can be understood as willingly ignorant. Has anybody ever dealt with someone who's willingly ignorant? Think about the frustration of that. It's one of my biggest frustrations when I worked at my previous employer. There's someone who still works there who's smirking. When people are willingly ignorant, when you have customers call in, it was a call center, and you get on escalations, and people are, they know it, it makes sense, you can hear their tone change, you know you got through to them, and they still go, no, I think you're wrong. And I'm like, no, no, the sky is blue. No, I'm telling you, it's purple. No, no, the sky is blue. Scientifically, I can prove it to you. And the person still goes, no, it's purple. And so this hardness of heart of these Pharisees is to the point where he looks at them, he gives them what I call the dad stare. Anybody ever have all the dads in here? You guys know what I'm talking about? Like half our job is looking at your kid like, really? Okay. And that's what I'm comparing this to. He looks around at the crowd and he gives them this dad look. And then he's grieved and angered at their reaction. and so that you can get tangibly what this feels like. Parents, have you ever watched your kids do something that you knew was gonna hurt them and you're angered and grieved at the same time? Anger that they didn't listen to you, grieve that they're now in pain, and you have this intense emotional reaction because of how they are. That's what I want you to think about here. He is looking around at His creation, His people, His chosen nation that He had to bring about redemption, and they are willingly ignorant of what He's trying to teach them. He's making the lives of people worse by adding to His law. He gave them a gift and they defiled it. They took the law and they defiled it with their additions to it. Because for them, it was about the rigid rules, not about human need. I think today about an example, modern day. Have any of you, maybe you may or may not know, but the Jehovah's Witnesses, a cult, think that they have the Bible, they know what's right. They've rewritten several parts, it's called the New World Translation. If you ever have that translation, pitch it. But they have the New World Translation. And one of their strict rules is, don't take a blood infusion. because of misinterpretation of Old Testament law. I had conversations, I read the stories. Don't take a blood transfusion, doesn't matter how bad you're injured, doesn't matter what medical needs you have, you don't take a blood transfusion no matter what. Do you know how many Jehovah's Witnesses have died in a hospital bed when a simple blood transfusion would have saved their life? That is a prime modern day example of what the Pharisees were doing in that day. taking the law of God, adding onto it, and prohibiting the sanctity of human life. Another prime example of it today is abortion. People have, the world, I shouldn't

say, not from a religious standpoint, but an ignorance of the Old Testament

law has led to abortion being rampant and allowed to go, and our job as Christians is to correct that injustice. That's what I'm leading up to. I want to use the word injustice, but I don't want it to be tagged with all the garbage that's on it nowadays, okay? So when I say that the law of God is here to prevent injustice, is to prevent injustice by God's definition of injustice, not by a woke definition of injustice. Okay? Not by a racial definition

of injustice. But I can't explain this well enough without using the word injustice. So please hear me when I say, it is God's definition of injustice. But the law of God is there is to prevent injustice, to prevent the harm of those who cannot protect themselves. to have the benefit and good of man of arrest on the Sabbath day, to not covet your neighbor's property so that it doesn't end up in a murderous, treasonous, backbiting situation. And I could go on through all the Ten Commandments and show you that the law is designed for the good of man, not the bad of man, when it's left alone and not added on with rigorous, unjustifiable twisting of additional rules. And so now we see that Christ

is teaching us that the human need justifies the occasion of the stringent application of law that is outside the biblical context of what is right. So, lest we swing the pendulum too far, I told you we would get this far. This does not mean that we ignore the plain teaching of the teachings of Scripture, the law of God, for the sake of love. Okay? Now, how do I apply that? Love

wins. Anybody ever heard that phrase?

Love wins. This doesn't mean that God, that we look at scripture and go, hey, because I love this person, the needs of humanity dictate that those who live in a homosexual relationship should be accepted, loved, encouraged, and told that they don't need to repent and believe the gospel. That's not what I'm saying. Don't swing the pendulum too far, okay? There's a legal, there's a pendulum when it comes to the law, and it swings all the way over here to antinomianism, which means we throw away the law completely. God has no standards. Love wins. All we have to do is love people. This will love people straight into hell for all eternity. Then there's a pendulum that swings way too far to the other side. And there's the legalism side that says, hey, we have to have all these additional laws and rules and all these things to make sure we never get even close to what God, breaking what God says. This is not right either. And this rule following leads people straight to hell. There is the balance of the correct interpretation of scripture that tells us this

is a law of God. This is what it says. And the gospel comes along and says, you can't uphold it anyway. So here's the grace that makes you righteous before a holy God, and now out of gratitude for the working of the Spirit within you, go and live as such. And then we mess up every day, don't we Christians? And we repent every day, and we go, thank you God for your grace every day, and we rest in Him, and we go, it is only because of you and your strength that we're even here. and we look to Scripture and we go, yep, these are things I need to work on, and the Spirit interprets that and applies it to our heart, and He works within us to sanctify us, and we move forward. Do you see the big difference? Don't go over here, okay? Don't go over here. Land in that middle. It is so hard to be in that middle. We as humans are so fickle. We want to go one way or the other. Either tell me what I'm supposed to do verbatim, word for word, letter for letter, or let's just ignore the whole thing. Okay? Find that balance. Scripture teaches us that balance. Now, let's take this last little section here, chapter 3, verse 6. Mark 3, verse 6. And the Pharisees went out and immediately began taking counsel together with the Herodians against him as to how they might destroy him. So now he's healed their hand. He's held this man's hand, he's giving him the dead look, his immense emotion is here, and the Pharisees don't even reply. They simply leave the synagogue and begin talking to the Herodians. Now, the Herodians is a very interesting group, because nobody knows anything about them. From historical nature, there's only two old historians that even have that word, and it doesn't give a clear definition of who they are, all that's known about them is that they supported Herod. So now we have the religious leaders, and this is very interesting, Because these men associated with supporting Herod, the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees themselves, that hated everything about Gentile culture, everything about Greek culture, everything about the Romans, are now so frustrated with Christ, so adamant about killing Him, that they will conspire with their normal enemy to bring Him down. That's the point of why Mark is referencing this. We don't know anything about the Herodians outside of they were politically supporters of Herod. That's it. That's all we know. And yet these Pharisees have had their toes stepped on so many times, they are done. They're gonna go, hey, let's go get whoever we need to have to get, doesn't matter who we have to partner with, doesn't matter. Let's go find a way to kill this man. He has put us in our place one too many times. And so they begin to conspire. So we've reached the end of these five stories that Mark gives us about the increased aggression of the Pharisees culminating

in a plan to kill him, and now from here going forward, we'll be able to track the rest of Christ's life up to the Passion. But in application of this last point, I want to ask about Matthew 22, 36-40. I'm going to ask you to raise your hand. I'm just going to ask, what is your view of the law? Where do you view Matthew 22, 36 through 40 in your life? All I would ask you to do is look and see. Does the gospel live down? Does the grace live down in your life? Or are you more interested in checking a box every day to show your righteousness? I'm not gonna give you specifics because that's where it gets down to legalism, doesn't it? If I give you my opinion of what that looks like, I'm no better than what I just taught against in this passage. So please understand, my job is to simply present the scripture and say, view yourself in light of it. So I'm not giving you any extra specifics. I want you to, by your conscience, believer, if you profess Christ, you have the Holy Spirit living in you, speaking to you in your conscience, Look at your life compared to this passage. And that's what I'll leave you with. That's as simple as I can make that application. Number three, continuing ministry. Continuing ministry, and this one will go fairly quickly. I decided to include this in this sermon because it doesn't go with the next text, and it's not enough to preach in one sermon, so we're simply gonna look at the continuing ministry of Christ in these last few verses of our text this morning. Chapter 3, verses 7-12. It reads, "...and Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples, and a great multitude from Galilee followed, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Edomia, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. A great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him." And he told his disciples that a boat should stand ready for him because of the crowd, so they would not crowd him. For he had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around him in order to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits were seeing him, they would fall down before him and cry out, saying, You are the Son of God. And he earnestly warned them not to tell who he was. Now this little passage here, this little section, it's almost like it was an afterthought of Mark. Remember, Mark is known for how quickly he goes from point to point, but he's also making sure his readers know that Jesus didn't do just the things that he talks about in detail. Jesus did much more than Mark is able to record. In fact, there's one portion of scripture that says if books were attempted to record everything that Christ did, that there would not be enough places to hold them. I can't remember the exact, that's my loose translation. The point of this text here is so that Mark can help us understand that Jesus continued to minister and do more than what he's recording.

So once again, we begin with Jesus withdrawing from them, He wants to go have solitude. We've talked about that a couple different times when Christ would have a big encounter or a big... altercation with the religious leaders, he would often withdraw for times of solitude and retreat. Only this time, whenever he went down to the sea, and it's thought that he went down because of where these different regions were. He's went from Capernaum back down to where the Jordan River enters the sea, because there were no cities there. So he would have traveled around the rim of the sea, most likely. He's in this hopefully solitary place he was looking for. Only this time he has people from coming not only in Jerusalem, so we have Judea, but we have now Gentiles and Greeks. Edomia is 120 miles south of the sea. 120 miles south. Think about traveling and walking in those days. If you can walk a 20 minute mile, you're hoofing it. 15 minute mile, that's a fast pace, that's speed walking. So you've got 4 miles an hour if you're really cooking. how long it would take to walk 120 miles to come see this man. You've got east of the Jordan, which is referencing the Gentile world, and then Tyre and Sidon was 50 miles north of where Christ was, north of the sea. So we have all these people traveling from this huge radius, miles and miles and miles around, and they're coming to Christ for what they can get out of Him. Notice there's no reference of faith here. There's no reference of seeking Christ for who Christ is. What are they seeking him for? What can I get out of this? What can I get right now? What makes me feel good in this particular moment? And they were so aggressive in it, so aggressive. Look at verse nine and 10. He told his disciples that a boat should stand ready. So he literally wanted to have an escape route. He was probably backed up, picture this, he was probably backed up against the sea. The crowd is here. Remember how hilly? I told you guys, remember how hilly and wilderness this? He has nowhere to go. The mountains are here filled with people. And the ones that are close to him, the wording in verse 10 for pressing it around him is actually falling on him. Think of a mob. This is literally like a mosh pit. They want to get to this person. He is up against the sea and he's telling his disciples, have a boat ready. We're going to have to get out of here. This crowd is looking for what they can get out of him in that moment. And they don't care about his safety. They don't care about who he is. What can Jesus make me feel right now? Now, He's still ministering. He's still healing. He's still showing his exousia, the authority over the unclean spirits we see in this text. But out of all of this, I want

us to learn one particular lesson. In our world today, What would you say is the vast majority of America specifically, the impression of who Jesus is? Just think to yourself for just a minute. A evangelical understanding that has pervaded the majority of culture of who Jesus is, right? This Americanized version. I call it the boyfriend Jesus mentality. where what can I get from Jesus right now? How can he make me feel good about myself right now? What songs can I sing? Is Jesus simply a giant vending machine in the sky where I can swipe a credit card of emotional appeal and get what I want from him? You turn on to any prevalent Christian TV channel in America today, the primary proponent on those channels is the prosperity gospel. What can you get from Jesus? Isn't it? When you look in Walmart on the religious shelf, you see the same thing. The common view of Christ in America today is what can I get out of him? The only difference is he's not physically here. Otherwise we would have the same problem. I 100% believe if Christ was to walk through the lands of the United States today, we would pressure and follow and mob him the same way simply for what we can get out of him. And our point of application, believer, that I want us to walk out of here with is He owes us absolutely nothing. He owes us nothing. In fact, the only thing that we should ever expect to receive from the God of the universe is wrath and punishment for our sin. That is it. That is it. But here's the beautiful thing. We have grace. But, believer, we are sitting here because God changed us and He gave us a free gift anyway. That we are children of His because He, out of the love that He has for His creation, gave us a Redeemer that took our sin upon Himself on a cross, for three hours in total and complete darkness, in the most excruciating pain that our finite human minds can never comprehend. And He took that upon Himself and then gave us His perfect righteousness. and clothed us in it and said, we, you are my child. You are now part of this family. And believers, we are now part of that family here gathered. Amen. How glorious is that? Because we need to understand that every breath we have in the morning is a gracious gift of God, even as believers in his children. because we sin against Him daily. We still go against His word and His will every day. Every day, don't we? So every day we get a breath, a gracious breath again to rise up and serve Him. The roof that you have over your head is because He's gracious. The food that you put in your stomach this afternoon is because He's gracious. He owes us nothing but judgment before He reaches down and gives us grace. And even after He gives us the grace of salvation, if we were to die poor, broke, alone, and beaten in a ditch somewhere, we are still more wealthy than we ever would have been without it because

of that grace. Because after that death, where do we awaken? and the presence of our Savior to spend eternity with a God whom we spat in his face over and over and over again. Don't let us get caught up in the mentality of this mob that all that matters is what I can get from Christ now or what emotional high I can have. Let's remember that all we have is because God is gracious and we deserve none of it. And when you really think through that, your worship will change. There's one guarantee I can give you. When you think through what you have, your worship changes. Your view of your morning having a flat tire changes. The view of the kids fighting for the 17th time that day changes. Because you look at everything as a gift. You don't look at it as a level of entitlement where you need more. Just imagine that change in your life. when you view it in that manner. So in conclusion, we've went

through these five places, these five stories that Mark has given us. So Christ is now considered a blasphemer, a friend of sinners, one who rejects religious custom and authority, and a Sabbath breaker. That's been quite a ride that we've seen our Savior take in the last few weeks. And yet everything from here going forward is going to accomplish, that Christ is going to accomplish, will be in the shadow of the cross. Because now Mark has introduced it. He's introduced it, and he said here they're going to kill him, they're planning to kill him, and now we have to look through everything we study in Mark in the shadow of the cross. So even if I forget to say it in a sermon, don't forget, everything from here going forward is in the shadow of the cross. Everything. We know what they call Him. We know what they want to do

to Him. And so the cornerstone for the passion has been put into place, the passion of the Christ that we're going to eventually get to in Mark. And so now we get the distinct pleasure of seeing Him minister on the earth as He trudges to His ultimate death according to the will of the

Father for grace and love for us. and the beautiful picture of his salvation that he earned for us. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank

you so much for the opportunity to take a look today at who is the Lord of the Sabbath, what it means for the beauty of the gift of the law, the good that it is for when looked at through the appropriate lens that you have given it to us, Lord, as a benefit for humanity, corrects the injustice as outlined per your scriptures. And I pray, Lord, that we will look to you and praise you for the gracious gift that we have and not be like this crowd today. Help us to go into this week focused and resting in what Christ has done and glorifying you for that, that we would ever grow closer to you in our relationship. We love you and praise you in your holy name, amen.