

## Scripture Reading:

**Luke 6:1 “Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grain fields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. 2 And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” 3 But Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?” 5 And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.” 6 Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. 8 But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Arise and stand here.” And he arose and stood. 9 Then Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?” 10 And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. 11 But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.”**

# *The Lord of the Sabbath*

As we continue our journey through Luke into chapter six we should remember that Luke told his friend Theophilus that he was going to give him an ‘orderly account.’ With this morning’s reading we learn that this does not mean a strictly chronological account: On day one this happened, then on day two that happened etc.

- Luke is presenting to Theophilus an orderly account of how Jesus came to save His people from their sins and to establish His Kingdom that will fill the whole earth.

In doing so, he will show who Jesus was and explain the mission He came to accomplish. Next week we will discuss the calling of the Disciples in contrast with the many crowds that followed Him but this week we twice see the enemies of Jesus looking to find fault with the activities of He & His disciples on the Sabbath.

- Both accounts will teach us about the proper use of the Sabbath & should lead to some very practical discussions and applications for us today!
- Matthew, Mark AND Luke group these two together, so the emphasis on proper Sabbath practices should not be missed.
- The Spirit teaches us that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath by surrounding His statement not with a list of do’s and don’t: But rather with stories – true stories to challenge our thinking!

First we will see what Luke presents in the text, then look briefly at some church history with how the Lord’s Day is handled in various creeds, and then spend the bulk of our time looking at what it means for us today here at Church of the King.

By and large in American churches the principles of faithful tithing and proper use of the Lord’s Day have fallen on hard times, with most neglecting both under the guise of “new covenant” freedom or grace as opposed “old covenant” regulation.

- **I think it will become clear this morning that this is not what the Bible has to say about living under new covenant grace:**
- **For example, if someone objects to teaching that Christians should tithe today because that would be “legalistic” I usually ask: “Then how much MORE should we give in this age of grace than was required in the old covenant law?”**
- **Faithful obedience in these areas should not and must not lead to legalism: We saw this clearly in this in the text which we read this morning!**
- **However, obedience in these areas should and will bring blessings in our lives when we come to understand that Jesus IS the Lord of the Sabbath, and how this impacts what we do on the Lord’s Day**

**With that in mind, let’s look at the text we have before us this morning:**

- **We find Jesus and his disciples walking through grain fields on the Sabbath and Matthew tells us that the disciples were hungry.**

**Luke 6:2 “And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"**

- **Even though these false shepherds are looking to discredit Jesus, our Lord quickly comes to the defense of His disciples: He is their advocate! He removes all doubt of their guilt.**

**Luke 6:3 “But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?"**

**Luke gives the direct argument that applied to what the Disciples were doing**

**Matthew adds that Jesus confronted them with the fact that priests “work” on the Sabbath when they prepare the sacrifices and also reminds them that God “desires mercy and not sacrifice.”**

**Mark’s account relates that Jesus also told them that, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”**

**It is in this context that Jesus then declares to them in all three accounts:**

- **“The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”**

**These simple statements from our Lord have been abused in many ways down through the centuries!**

- **We have seen Christians become as legalistic about Sabbath keeping as these Pharisees**
- **We have also seen the Lord’s Day neglected and abused by those who do not understand what it means for the Sabbath to be made for man and not man for the Sabbath.”**

**We have tried to strike the proper balance here at Church of the King and we will discuss that after we look at the second account and some history in our creeds:**

- **The second account is included again in all three synoptic Gospels...**
- **The Holy Spirit does not want us to miss the importance of understanding what it means for Jesus to be Lord of the Sabbath!**

**Here Jesus is going to use the situation at hand to clearly make His point:**

**Luke 6:6 “Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered.”**

**Here we see the true motive of these false shepherds of Israel:**

**Luke 6:7 “So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.”**

**Jesus knew their thoughts and motives and chooses to challenge them directly saying to the man "Arise and stand here."**

**Having placed this man front & center, Jesus then asks them:**

**"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"**

**As Jesus asked these questions, I cannot help but think that he expected His disciples and us to notice the contrast between how these religious leaders were reacting to this needy man standing right in front of them**

**and the friends of the paralytic who did whatever it took to get him before Jesus to be healed!**

**Here again, the Spirit uses all three Gospel writers to give us the complete picture of our Lord's actions at this point:**

- **Matthew simply says that Jesus spoke to the man**
- **Luke says, "When He had looked around at them all,"**
- **And Mark adds, "with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts,"**

**Here is a man in great need standing before them, Jesus has asked whether it is better "to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy, on the Sabbath. [Questions, by the way, that should be central to all OUR consideration of how we act on the Lord's Day!]**

- **Jesus is grieved by the hardness of their hearts and takes the time to make eye contact with each of them around the room and then simply says to the man with the withered arm:**

**"Stretch out your hand."**

**Just as we see later when Jesus calls Lazarus forth from the grave, this withered hand is made whole as Jesus speaks and this man simply obeys in faith. And just as these religious leaders sought to kill Lazarus rather than believe what was done before so many witnesses, we see no hint of repentance with these men, but rather open rebellion:**

**Luke 6:11 "But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus." – Hard hearts indeed!**

**The Gospel writers have used these two events to drive home two important truths:**

- **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath**
- **The Sabbath is a time to do good, rather than evil, to serve God in Liberty rather than be in bondage to regulations!**

**Keep these in mind as we quickly look at how the Sabbath has been handled down through history in various Christian creeds and then review how we are doing today here at Church of the King.**

- **As we move alphabetically from the Augsburg Confession to the Westminster, I think you will see where the church has been too lax and too strict: And some seem just right!**

**Augsburg Confession:**

**“for they that think that the observation of the Lord’s day was appointed by the authority of the Church instead of the Sabbath, as necessary, are greatly deceived. The Scripture which teachest that all the Mosaical ceremonies can be omitted after the Gospel is revealed, has abrogated the Sabbath. And yet, because it was requisite to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Christian Church did for that purpose appoint the Lord’s Day.”**

**Heidelberg Catechism:**

**“*Question 103* . What doth God require in the fourth commandment?**

***Answer* . First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear his word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a Christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by his Holy Spirit in me: and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.”**

**Irish Articles of Religion:**

**“The first day of the week, which is the Lord’s Day is wholly to be dedicated unto the service of God; and therefore we are bound therein to rest from our common and daily business, and to bestow that leisure upon holy exercises, both public and private.”**

**New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1833:**

**“We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day, or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.”**

## The Confession of the Free-will Baptists, 1868

**“This is one day in seven, which, from the creation of the world, God has set apart for sacred rest and holy service. Under the former dispensation, the seventh day of the week, as commemorative of the work of creation, was set apart for the Sabbath. Under the gospel, the first day of the week, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, and by authority of the apostles, is observed as the Christian Sabbath. On the this day all men are required to refrain from secular labor and devote themselves to the worship and service of God.”**

## Westminster Confession of Faith:

**“This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”**

- **After that quick survey, let us now focus on how we apply all of this today?**

**As we review our practice; thinking about the teaching from today’s Scripture text and what we saw in the creeds; I would suggest that there are three important principles that we should keep in mind when considering our actions on the Lord’s Day:**

- 1) REST: God calls us to rest one day in seven! Pictured both by the creation account and the deliverance from Egypt.**
- 2) WORSHIP: God Calls us into His presence to renew His covenant and prepare us for another week of service: Reminding us that Jesus IS the Lord of the Sabbath.**
- 3: VISION: We rest and worship on the Lord’s Day, the first day of the week when Jesus arose from the grave, knowing that His Kingdom will fill the whole earth as we go forth to disciple the nations.**

- We have tried to incorporate these principles into the covenant statement that those who join Church of the King have signed:

Our 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> vows are relevant:

#1. “I will attend this church's worship services unless providentially hindered, worshipping the Triune God of the Bible only, honoring His name and avoiding all idolatry.”

#4. “I will keep the Lord’s Day, the Christian Sabbath, worshipping and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, the risen Savior, refraining from unnecessary commerce and labor, enjoying opportunities of Christian fellowship, and benevolent activities, as the Lord provides.”

- Our goal in giving instruction regarding appropriate practices on the Lord’s Day is to be encouraging rather than legalistic. The words in these vows were chosen carefully and prayerfully-

Some examples:

- “providentially hindered”

Having a sick child at home to care for would not be questioned.

Being too tired because of all the work you did that week, would be very suspect!

- “Unnecessary commerce”

Buying gas to get to church versus buy gas because it is cheap

- “Christian fellowship”

Despite Chariots of Fire being my favorite movie, Eric erred in telling the boys to put away the ball after Church: I do not object to the chess games at the fellowship meals or my house on Sunday night!

Skipping church to go boating on Lake Folsom with “Christian friends” would be a sin!

How are we doing?

Well as with most things, better than we have and with a long way to go!

- Again, our desire is to be encouraging and not legalistic.



**Best way might be to simply share some personal perspective – Stories!**

**As a couple, Linda & I strove to make the Lord's Day a special day:**

- **Mom & Dad set the tone for how the children see this day: both with attitude and practice**
- **No work -- Including Linda**
- **Be faithful! IF we find excuses for not attending services, they will find even more.**
- **Be excited! IF we see the Lord's Day as the highpoint of our week, so will they.**
- **Even worked our vacations around the Lord's Day**

**Dealing with conflicts:**

- **Story of working with Long's**

**Having patience with one another:**

- **Sunday meals at Louie's for years.**

**The Lord's Day IS the first day of the week, the first day of a new week: Get it right and we are off to a great start for the rest of the week.**

**To get it right we must keep in focus what the Gospel accounts taught us this morning about being with Jesus:**

- **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath**
- **The Sabbath is a time to do good, rather than evil, to serve God in Liberty rather than be in bondage to regulations!**

**In doing this we should remember the principles that I outlined earlier – the keywords at the bottom of page 8 in the order of worship can be reminders to help us to walk properly on the Lord's Day!**

- **1) REST: God calls us to rest one day in seven!**
- **2) WORSHIP: God Calls us into His presence to renew His covenant and prepare us for another week of service.**
- **3: VISION: We rest and worship on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week when Jesus arose from the grave, knowing that His Kingdom will fill the whole earth as we go forth to disciple the nations.**

**If we do this faithfully, we will demonstrate to our covenant children AND to a watching world, that Jesus IS Lord of the Sabbath!**

#### **Communion Meditation: Rest – Worship -- Vision**

**1 A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.**