

—{1}. **Mark 2:23–28** **The Lord of Rest**

A. Introduction

1. in keeping the message shorter this morning, I am still hoping that we can look profitably at the Sabbath in two parts
 - a. the Law of the Sabbath
 - b. the Lord of the Sabbath

2. whenever we speak about the law, we should always convey some very important truths
 - a. first, the law is not the means by which you can be saved; never has been; never will be; never can be
 - (A) salvation comes firstly, only by the grace of God as found in Ephesians 2: 8–9 (NAS): *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*
 - (B) this is made even clearer in Romans 3:20 (NAS): *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*
 - (C) keeping the law will never save you from your sin: only receiving the gift of salvation purchased by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross can do that
 - b. second, the law is not the means by which we keep our salvation once we have become a child of God in Christ —it was this false premise that caused these words to be written to the churches in Galatia (3: 1–3): *You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*
 - c. third, notwithstanding these truths, the law has not ceased being God’s authoritative word:
 - (A) Jesus says quite clearly in Matthew 5: 18 (NAS): *For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.*
 - (B) it is still relevant, 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NAS): *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

B. The Law of the Sabbath

1. Disregarding the use of the term “law” to refer to the first five books, written by Moses, and the history contained therein, the laws found in those books can be divided into four classes; and each of these classes was so that the LORD God of Israel might be glorified in His people Israel
 - a. The social laws that were to regulate Israel as brothers living in a just and fair society: in many cases these same laws can be found in our laws of the land, while others had particular application to Israel’s dwelling in Palestine. The continuing applicability of the principles of these is found in the many injunctions the New Testament contains
 - b. The laws that distinguished Israel from the nations around them including the dietary laws (being conducive to health in that climate and country) and reaffirmation of the mark of the covenant in the circumcision of every male. The Lord’s words to Peter in his vision and the teaching of both Jesus and the apostles makes clear that these no longer apply. It is the Holy Spirit who now distinguishes believers.
 - c. The laws of worship including the sacrifices and all of the furnishings of the tabernacle, and later the temple. The book of Hebrews, in particular clarifies that these were but types and temporary, point to Christ. Jesus Himself states this in his words to the woman of Samaria: John 4:23–24 (NAS): *But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*
 - d. The moral law of what is right and what is wrong which are embodied in particular in what are called the Ten Words or Ten Commandments. In the New Testament, the believer is enjoined to keep these laws either explicitly or by the two love laws:
 - (A) *You shall love the Lord your God with* everything
 - (B) *You shall love your neighbour as your own soul*
 - (C) and these are yardsticks whereby we can examine our selves to check if we have given control of our lives over to the Holy Spirit
 - (D) or, as that Ephesians passage we read before goes on to say (2:10, NAS), *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
 - (E) are we indeed showing evidences of His workmanship?

2. But now, I come to that fourth commandment, to “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” set apart, special and we find deep divisions in practice among Christians
 - a. Sabbatarians would us treat Sunday as a continuation of the Sabbath, with all its Mosaic and traditional rules: it is not
 - b. Secularists would say it has no significance; it’s a fun day
 - c. The time is too brief to debate the various arguments; rather let us look at three New Testament passages for guidance
 - d. Colossians 2:16–17 (NAS): *Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.* – as I understand this, that although the Sabbath was established at creation, it was, just like the sacrifices, intended to point to Jesus Christ and for us to realize fully in Him
 - e. Romans 14:5–6a (NAS): *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, ...* – the New Testament teaching is not that a tithe (one-tenth) of our income belongs to God but every last cent of it; not that one day in seven is to be special to God, but every single day: *“This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it”* (Psalm 118:24)
 - f. Revelation 1:10a (NAS): *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, ...* – and that, the first day of the week, the day that Jesus rose from the dead, was set aside in a special way to gather for prayer and teaching and for spiritual exercise as was John

3. but let us turn from the Law of the Sabbath to

C. The Lord of the Sabbath

1. to the Scribes and Pharisees, the keeping of the Sabbath was just one of the 613 (?) laws that they had identified and listed that if a man kept them he could stand up before God and announce himself to be righteous; this was their yardstick of orthodoxy
 - a. but Jesus took apart their system and their reckoning in the Sermon on the Mount where he showed that even the single statements in the Ten Words were not one command but many: eg., “Do not kill”

also meant "Do not hate"

b. so we must avoid such a legalistic view of God's moral law

2. Jesus reminds us that the Sabbath was made for man

a. this is evidenced in the existence of a rest day (not always the seventh) in just about every society

b. God made us a certain way, and part of that way was our need for periodic rest

3. Yet, when I look at this subject of rest in God's word

a. I find that its meaning is much richer than ceasing work

b. one passage that you can find this in is the fourth chapter of Hebrews which culminates with these words, 14:9–11a (NAS): [There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, ...](#)

c. and rest in this sense, where we recognize that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, has to do with the appropriation to ourselves of the finished work of Jesus Christ (forgetting our own human or fleshly efforts and relying upon the power of God's indwelling Holy Spirit)

d. to share every benefit, every joy, every blessing of the rest that Christ provides, of the peace with God in Christ Jesus, of the reconciliation between us and our Creator, in the day by day love relationship we have with our Father and in which we can walk throughout this earthly pilgrimage.

D. Invitation

1. Have you failed to come to God in faith and to find peace with Him through the reconciling work of Christ; have you yet to find this rest in the Lord of Sabbath, the Lord of Rest? Then come to Him today while there is yet time.

2. Christian, have you let the cares and pressures of this world – yes, even those expended in serving in the church – rob you of the rest that Jesus would have you find in Him? Renew your fellowship with Him. God's invitation in Christ Jesus is ["Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good Way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls."](#) (Jeremiah 6:16, NAS) ["Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls."](#) (Matthew 11:29, NAS)

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AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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