

Introduction -

Please turn in your Bibles to Mark 2:23

As you do, let me tell you a story from the book "The Odyssey"

Odysseus tied to the mast

Fourth and Fifth Capernaum Controversy

Controversy 1 - Jesus has authority to forgive sin

Controversy 2 - Jesus has authority to forgive the worst of sinners

Controversy 3 - Jesus presence is cause for celebration, turning fasting into feasting

Controversy 4 + 5 - He is Lord of the Sabbath

Please follow along with me as I read starting in Mark 2:23

Constitution

Preliminary observation

The US Constitution contains **4,543 words**, including the signatures and has four pages. IF YOU INCLUDE THE AMENDMENTS It contains 7,591 words which adds roughly two more pages. 6 pages. The contents of the constitution and the amendments were intended by the founding fathers of our nation to serve as a strict boundary for any law that would ever come to pass in the future of the nation.

229 years has resulted in some deviation from those original Constitutional laws

There are currently between 1.8 and 2.1 million pages of federal laws, which does not include tax law.

Some laws in America are very strange, go to [dumblaws.com](http://dumblaws.com)

Where it is illegal to drive with potatoes in the passenger seat or utilize donkeys to hunt ducks.

We have had 229 years to add to the laws stipulated by the constitution. The Jews had roughly 1600 years to add stipulations to the Law that God had given to Moses.

5 ridiculous interpretations that were

1. You could not set an egg on the sand because if the sand got too hot it would cook the egg and cooking is working.
2. If you were a doctor you could not make someone well, but could only keep them from getting worse
3. If a house collapsed crushing a family inside, you could not remove the rubble unless there was evidence that they were still alive. Otherwise, you would have to wait till sundown to dig them out.
4. False teeth could not be worn because they exceeded the weight limits.
5. You could only walk 1999 steps from your home....

1. The Controversy of Grain
2. The Controversy of Healing
3. Application

1. The Controversy of Grain

What is not being disputed

1. Right to pick the grain - Deut. 23:25
2. Walking more than 1999 steps from the house
  - a. Jesus and the Pharisees are probably walking to or from the Synagogue through a grain field.
  - b. They would stash things in houses and on boundary stones
  - c. In Queens, the Jewish people purchase wires----

What is being disputed

1. This is the first time Jesus is being accused of sinning
  - a. Please note that the last confrontation dealt with why Jesus' disciples did not observe the fasts. These fasts were not required by the law, but they were seen as a way to be pious

and devout - super religious. They did not consider it sinful to ignore the fasts.

- a. When He is confronted, Jesus could have just said, you Pharisees are being legalistic! That is not what the law says to do at all! But He Doesn't! Instead He gives these three arguments. Presenting an argument in this manner is very common during this time as a form of debate amongst religious leaders.
- b. At this point we will consider all three arguments that Jesus gives to explain his actions.

2.

3.

#### 4. Argument 1 - History Lesson - vs 25-26

- a. Jesus says to the Pharisees, ““Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? (OF COURSE THEY HAD!!!)**26** In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”
- b.
- c. Let me give you the background of what Jesus is talking about.
  - i. David has been anointed as King, but has not yet taken the throne because Saul is still alive.
  - ii. After being warned by Jonathan, David flees for his life with some trusted followers. This is the Desert Fox portion of David’s life.
  - iii. When they were at the point of starvation, David goes into the Tabernacle and is given the twelve loaves of bread that represent the twelve tribes of Israel known as the bread of the Presence or the Showbread.
  - iv. This bread was only allowed to be eaten by the Levitical priests after it had been sitting out for six days, starting on the Sabbath day.
- d. So, why does Jesus say this? What is His point? There are many opinions about this among theologians. I am going to give you the the most common interpretation and explain why I think it is flawed. I will then offer another, and I believe, more accurate interpretation of what Jesus is getting at here.
  - i. Well being is more important than strict observance of the Law. Spirit of the Law vs. Letter of the Law. Here is the argument....

1. David was starving. What he did was not lawful at any other time, but because of his desperate need it became acceptable.
2. That is why Jesus said "Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man"
3. Let me illustrate the idea in this way -We have a rule about bedtime - But what if there were a fire? The intent of the rule is to benefit our children with rest and good life patterns. The goal is health. If they obey that rule when a fire comes, they do so to the detriment of their health. Therefore, when obeying the law becomes a danger to someone's well being, it is OK to break the law.
4. Here are the problems
  - a. No evidence that Jesus and His followers were starving
  - b. There never seems to be another Law that is OK to break based upon physical need.
    1. Consider the Fiery furnace - Shadrack Meshack and Abednego
    2. If there was ever a time that someone's well being was at stake!
  - c. Mark adds the words "Then He said to them" Before he writes that Sabbath was made for man which seems to indicate that they are separate arguments.
  - d. Finally, the biggest problem with this interpretation is that it would basically amount to Jesus admitting that He broke the law, but He is basically saying, David did it, so I can do it too.
- ii. Here is an interpretation of the passage which I think better explains what Jesus is saying.
  1. Where the previous argument says that David was allowed to eat the Bread of the Presence because of his need, this interpretation says that David was allowed to eat the bread

because of His Identity. As the promised King who was to rule and reign over the nation.

2. Just as the priests were not in violation of the Sabbath when they sacrificed lambs and bulls and birds, so a King was not in violation of the Sabbath for upholding his office or protecting his nation.
3. This argument comes down to the notion that, God ceased work on the Sabbath, He did not cease to be God (the sustainer of the universe on the Sabbath).
4. Jesus is comparing Himself to David for the express purpose of declaring Himself to be the rightful heir of the throne of David that was prophesied in the OT.
5. The Showbread's purpose is to give glory to God and the way that it gave glory to God in this instance was to preserve the life of the man who would be an ancestor of the Messiah.
6. I believe the Pharisees would have been perplexed with this history lesson. Think about it, Jesus is comparing Himself to the greatest king in the history of their nation. They were probably asking themselves, is He claiming to be the Son of David that was foretold?
7. So Jesus is not admitting that He has broken the Law. Rather, He is declaring that He has an office of authority which is required to be fulfilled at all times, everyday, even the Sabbath.
8. If you would like to speak at length about the different interpretations of this passage, please speak to me, I love to talk about these things. But for the sake of getting to the heart of the text, let's keep moving forward.

#### 5. Argument #2 - Defining the Law - vs 27

- a. Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

- b. By saying this, Jesus is trying to lovingly rebuke the Pharisees and help them to understand the actual reason for the Sabbath.
- c. God's purpose of giving the Sabbath was to have a forced rest whereby the nation of Israel could focus their gaze back on Him.
  - i. Think about this - what a gift - no other nation had a day off
  - ii. Consider the commandment as it was given in Exodus 20:8-11
  - iii. **8** "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is **a Sabbath to the Lord your God.** On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. **11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
  - iv. A Sabbath to the Lord means that the Lord is the point, He is the purpose for the day. God gave the Israelites a blessed day to refocus their hearts and minds on God!
  - v. Instead of doing that, the Pharisees had turned the Sabbath into its own kind of god that had to be appeased. They had thought through every possible aspect of life and created specific do's and don'ts and then began to find ways around their own rules.

- vi. The Sabbath was created to be a blessing to the people, not a curse. It is HARD WORK to obey all of the rules they created.
- vii. For Orthodox Jews today who own a refrigerator with a light inside...
- viii. By saying this simple phrase, Jesus debunked all of the extra policies that had been heaped up by the Pharisees.
- ix. This brings us to the final of the three arguments

#### 6. Argument 3 - The Argument of Authority vs 28

- a. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."
  - i. The term Son of Man comes from Daniel 7:13-14 which says
  - ii. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
  - iii. When Jesus says that He is the Son of Man who is the Lord of the Sabbath, He is claiming the right to this dominion and glory and kingdom!
  - iv. This is significant because Jesus is saying that the Sabbath is under His authority! He is the one who makes the rules. He is the one who enforces the rules. He is the LORD (in Greek kurios) - absolute authority over the Sabbath
  - v. NOT ONLY THAT but the Sabbath is therefore for Him!

- vi. Remember, the Sabbath was to be Holy to the Lord...
- vii. So if someone was observing the Sabbath correctly, what they would be doing would be taking a day away from work to give honor and glory and attention to HIM!
- viii. Mark does not tell us how the Pharisees respond to this statement. In order to see their response we must move to the Controversy of Healing.

## Controversy of Healing

In this passage, we will see Jesus publically expose the heart of legalistic observance of the law and how it is diametrically opposed to the mercy and grace of God.

In order to examine this controversy, I will make 5 observations from this text.

1. OBSERVATION 1 - After their previous encounter with Jesus, the Pharisees have conspired together to trap Jesus by tricking Him into publicly breaking the Sabbath so that they could point out to the watching world that Jesus was a Law breaker. We see this in vs 1-2
  - a. Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. **2** And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him.
2. OBSERVATION 2 - Jesus knows what they are doing, yet He sets up the exact scenario that the Pharisees were hoping for. vs 3
  - a. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here."
  - b. The Pharisees are looking on like a fisherman who can see a fish circling the bait, and when Jesus calls the man over to Him they are probably holding back joyful smiles that He has almost completely taken the bait.  
**NOW ALL HE HAS TO DO IS HEAL THE MAN!**
3. OBSERVATION 3 - If Jesus would have healed the man without saying anything, the Pharisees would have used that event to completely discredit Jesus in front of the entire Synagogue community. This is supposed to be a smear

campaign.... BUT Jesus utterly diffuses the Pharisees plan by asking a simple question in vs 4.

- a. And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent.
  - b. If the Pharisees said, it is unlawful to do good on the Sabbath, then they are not only making themselves the bad guys who are keeping Jesus from healing a needy man, but they are also calling into question the goodness of the God who gave the Law.
  - c. On the other hand If the Pharisees admit to the obvious answer that it is lawful to do good and save life on the Sabbath, then they would have been openly allowing Jesus to heal on the Sabbath with impunity.
  - d. SO THEY SAY NOTHING. This is when they realize that Jesus is not a simpleton that can be easily manipulated into discrediting Himself. Rather, He has unveiled their hard hearts to the public with a single question.
4. OBSERVATION 4 - Jesus does not take this opportunity to gloat in His PR Victory. Rather, He becomes angry and grieved by their legalistic, unloving hearts.
- a. vs. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.
  - b. As a reader, it is really easy for us to cheer for Jesus the way that some people cheer at sporting events - by booing the other team. Jesus is grieved by these Pharisees. It is a sorrowful thing that they are more concerned about trapping Jesus than they are about this man whose life is radically altered by Jesus's healing! EXPOUND!!!

- c. The heart of God is one of grace and mercy. Legalism is brutal, ruthless, and unwaveringly heartless.
5. OBSERVATION 5 - The Pharisees are so concerned about protecting their system of legalistic additions to the law that they immediately go out and conspire with the Herodians.
- VS 6
- a. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.
  - b. Who are the Herodians? These are the Jewish people who are part of the court of Herod. He was a vassal king who had been set up by the Romans. He was wicked and rejected most of the religious aspects of Judaism. THE PHARISEES HATED HEROD AND ALL THAT HE STOOD FOR! But they were so desperate to hold on to their power and their system of teaching that they allied themselves with the Herodians (and eventually the Romans) to kill Jesus.
  - c. Eventually, the Pharisees would devise the plan that would send Jesus to the cross.

Now that we have considered both Controversies, let's apply this message to our own lives.

## Application

1. We no longer observe the Sabbath. There are many ways to defend this truth, but for the sake of time I will list 3.
  - a. In **Colossians 2:16-17**, Paul explicitly refers to the Sabbath as a shadow of Christ, which is no longer binding since the substance (Christ) has come. It is quite clear in those verses that the weekly Sabbath is in view.
    - i. The Sabbath is literally a foreshadowing of Jesus, we will see how in a few moments.
  - b. The New Testament never commands Christians to observe the Sabbath. In Acts 15, we have the first Jerusalem Council where the Jewish Christians convene to determine what the new Gentile believers need to believe and adopt as holdovers from Judaism. **THEY HAD THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY** to command that they observe the Sabbath, but they didn't.
  - c. Jesus has fulfilled the Sabbath.
    - i. Hebrews 4:9-10
    - ii. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, **10** for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.
    - iii. There is a rest that Christian enter into and they rest from their works like God did.
    - iv. You and I were once like the Pharisees. Perhaps some of you here are still like the Pharisees. We created our own pollicies and procedures manuals for our lives. We determined our own standards by which we thought we would be judged and we worked to reach those standards.

- v. Those good works would never gain you heaven and they would never allow you rest.
- vi. Jesus died in the place of sinners so that He could give us rest from our works. His yoke is easy, His burden is light.
- vii. If you are a Christian, your good works do not count for you and your breaches of the Law do not count against you because when God sees you, He sees Jesus. We find our rest in Jesus.
- viii.

## 2. The way to hate sin is to love God

- a. Odysseus had his men tie him to the mast. It worked. He didn't go to the Sirens. But he wanted to.
- b. Simply setting up systems of laws that keep you from physically committing sins (like the Pharisees did) will not ultimately help you if your heart still longs for those sinful things.
- c. The Pharisees were not more godly because of their more strict observance of the law.
- d. You will not necessarily be a more godly person if you don't watch any television, you read 10 chapters of the Bible every day, you pray out loud at work before you eat, etc. You can set up pornography blockers on your internet and channel blocks on your tv. You can set up accountability relationships with multiple friends inside of the church and make sure they are asking you difficult questions about your anger and pride and lust and spending and your relationship with your spouse. Those are good disciplines, but if your heart is still in love with sin,

you will find ways to get that taste of sin. Sin can occur just as easily in your mind or heart as it can in a physical manner.

- e. The only way to hate sin is to love God
- f. The Pharisees were in love with their rules not God.
- g. Odysseus had his men tie him to the mast. It worked. He didn't go to the Sirens. But he wanted to.
- h. In another story, Jason and the Argonauts, Jason also sailed by the aisle with the Siren's, but he took a different approach. Jason got Orpheus, who had the most beautiful voice in the world, and brought him on the ship. When they came to the aisle of the Siren's, Orpheus sang and Jason was so entranced by the beauty of Orpheus that he completely ignored the Siren's.
- i. Be wise. Set up boundaries for yourself in areas that you know you are weak. Create systems of accountability. But do not expect them to help you hate your sin.
- j. See the beauty of Jesus. Meditate on the love of God. Hold fast to goodness of the gospel. Fall deeply in love with your Savior and you won't want those sinful things anymore

### 3. The gospel is of first importance

- a. Notice in our passage today that Jesus doesn't back down from these Pharisees. It would have been easy to just leave the synagogue without healing the man with a withered hand. But Jesus, knowing that it would eventually lead to His death, healed the man.
- b. Jesus' mission was to die in place of sinner's.

- c. If you are here and you are saved, live in light of that truth by doing everything you do as worship to your Savior.
- d. If you are not saved, THE GOSPEL

PRAY