

1 Now it came about that on a certain Sabbath He was passing through some grainfields; and His disciples were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" 3 And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, 4 how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?" 5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

We begin chapter 6 of Luke's gospel this morning, and Luke has been progressively revealing who Jesus is to us by selectively telling us stories in the chronology of Jesus' ministry.

After the miracle of creation when the fish almost sink their boats, Peter worships Jesus as God. He understands, only God can create out of nothing.

The masses, the people are mesmerized by His teaching and by the miracles. They are following Him to hear Him speak and to see the miracles of healing.

God had done miracles in Israel from time to time as He expanded His revelation to His chosen people. Little smatterings here and there as He introduces the law through Moses, and also as He establishes the prophets as the voice of the Lord.

You could count them all on your fingers and toes. But when Jesus appears on the scene, after His baptism, the miracles come like a flood. Never before and never again. So many miracles that John says all the books in the world couldn't contain them all.

He speaks with power and authority, and the miracles should have been the witness that God is doing something mighty, something new in the

midst of His people. It should have been a no brainer.

Their prophets had told them Messiah would come. This Man who speaks as if He is the author of the book, with all authority and power, and who is followed with a flood of miracles never before seen in that land. It shouldn't have been a challenge for them to put 2+2 together.

But in all this drama, there is a group of religious men who are the architects of the current religion in Israel. The big dogs. The most powerful men in that land are the top religious rulers, and they are a sect called the pharisee's.

And the religion they have developed out of what once was Judaism is a false religion that God hates. Thus when Jesus comes on the scene, well, actually before the ministry of Jesus begins, John the baptist who has the ministry of calling a people to God who will be ready to receive their messiah, when these folks, the scribes and pharisee's show up at the Jordan river, conflict breaks out.

God is in conflict with false religion, and these architects of false religion are in the crosshairs. John opens both barrels on them. Vipers. Poisonous snakes. The axe is laid at the root of their tree of false religion, it's about to be cut down. God will raise up sons out of these stones before He will receive these poisonous snakes.

Where did they come from? How did such a false religion devolve in Israel? Let me give you some background to set the scene. A drama is about to unfold this morning in the conflict between Jesus and the architects of false religion in Israel. I want you to understand why.

God, in a brevity of words that only the brilliant mind of God could have achieved, gave Moses 10 commands. The ten commandments.

And if we look at those, the first four commands are about man's

relationship with God who created him. And then 6 commands are about how man is to interact with other men in this fallen world.

The fourth commandment is about setting aside time for un-hindered fellowship and worship with God. He requires a day of rest from other labors, set aside for rest and worship. From Exodus 20, here it is in all of it's simplicity;

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Our seven day week came from revelation from God to His chosen people. We are still on a seven day week 6000 years later.

Just as an interesting sidebar, consider what Daniel 7:24 - 5 say about the anti-christ.

24 And the ten horns are ten kings who will rise from this kingdom. After them another king, different from the earlier ones, will rise and subdue three kings. 25 He will speak out against the Most High and oppress the saints of the Most High, intending to change the set times and laws, and the saints will be given into his hand for a time, and times, and half a time.

I believe that may be saying that anti-christ will in his rebellion against

the God of gods seek to change the calendar from a God instituted 7 day week. Perhaps that's why in the prophecies about the final 3 1/2 years it tells you how many days. Is it because the anti-christ in defiance of God's 7 day week that has been our standard for thousands of years is revised and done away with.

Just something fun to ponder. Such is the articulation of God's Holy Book which cannot be done away with. Antichrist could change the calendar or as it says, the times, and yet God's book will inform anyone who reads it that it was prophecied thousands of years earlier and that we have the number of days, which he cannot change, God set the world spinning and days will be days no matter what anti-christ says.

OK, sidebar over. Back to the Sabbath day. The command and the idea behind it are very simple. God says, you set one day aside each week for the purpose of rest. And it isn't hard to figure out. Stop working. Stop it. Take a day off. Set your occupations aside for one day and rest.

On our Saturday morning breakfast a week ago, Michael brought us a good brief word about pleasing God. Is it in our hearts to be pleasing to our Creator who owns us? How do we achieve that. And one of the verses describes that in such simple terms.

*Micah 6: 6 With what shall I come to the LORD
And bow myself before the God on high?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?*

*7 Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

8 He has told you, O man, what is good;

*And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

God doesn't delight in burnt offerings. Rivers of oil and thousands of rams would not please Him. You could offer your first born for your rebellious sins and He would not be moved. No delight can be achieved through religious hoops.

What then? What does God want from his people. He wants them to treat each other with justice and kindness, and He wants them to walk with Him in the humility of the truth that we are sinners and He is holy.

All your religious offerings do not remove your sin. He removes your sin, and that fact, that idea that we are helpless to do anything about our fallen state and He is the one who must pardon our guiltiness, it's all Him and none of us, that humbling truth, and the invitation to just humbly give that all to Him and walk humbly in fellowship with Him, that pleases our God.

But that dis-pleases men. Our pride, our fallen lostness sees this helplessness as impossible. Man hates that he is helpless before God and so he will invent a thousand different ways that he can actually jump through a lot of difficult hoops and ultimately, he can earn his way back to God. That's the premise of every man made religion on earth. Do stuff!

In Luke 18 we see these two opposite ideas side by side. *9 And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that*

I get.' 13 "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

One guy thanking god, small "g" because in his religion he is god, thanking god for making someone as awesome as he is. I do stuff. I fast and I tithe.

The pharisees had made an artform of doing stuff. And think about it a little bit with me, the first three commandments are all inside you. No way to show outwardly that you are keeping those. And the last 6 commandments are about other people, so they don't matter. But the 4rth commandment has some real possibilities.

With this whole sabbath idea we can drill down and ultimately make an arform for others to see how incredibly religious we are about doing stuff. And so their false religion had as it's centerpiece, the sabbath.

Also, consider this. It has been almost 500 years since the debacle of God punishing His people with the 70 year captivity at Babylon. They learned their lesson about idols. Idolatry. But listen to what God had told them about their captivity.

Leviticus 25: 1 'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. 2 'You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD. 3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.

You can go there and read if you're interested, but it goes on and on in warnings about blessings for obedience and cursing for dis-obedience. If you jump down to vss. 30 - 35 *'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols; for My soul shall abhor you. 31 'I will lay waste your cities as well, and will make your sanctuaries desolate; and I will not smell your soothing aromas. 32' And I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it. 33 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.*

34 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it.

Leviticus 26:34

Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths all the days it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies. At that time the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths.

Now a little history lesson this morning about God's dealings with His people the jews from II Chronicles 36

15 And the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; 16 but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. 17 Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old

man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. 18 And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon. 19 Then they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its fortified buildings with fire, and destroyed all its valuable articles. 20 And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

God will have His Sabbaths, and the land will enjoy it's seventh year sabbath's even if God has to remove His people from the land and make it a place of desolation. It's all about the sabbath, which we looked at, which is a time set aside to walk humbly with God.

That's what pleases God. Time alone with Him, spent humbly, walking with Him in adoration that He has done everything for you to remove your sin. A humble walk with God. Time with God. That's the sabbath.

So the architects of false religion in Jesus time have set everything else aside and they have made up a religion of doing stuff, and there's no humility, no walking with God, no recognition that they are helplessly sold under sin, but instead, the stuff they are going to do, is all about not doing stuff on the sabbath.

When they were done, they had invented a religion that was completely foreign to anything God had ever devised or wanted. It became the religion of pleasing God by becoming automatons from sundown on friday to sundown on saturday.

And when they got to the time of Jesus this religion they had created was layers upon layers, centuries upon centuries of rabbi's adding more and

more layers of oppression about what you couldn't do on the sabbath day. And it got to the point of bizzareness.

The day God had set aside to enjoy rest and spend time humbly walking with Him had become a day of dark oppression. It was an oppressive burden.

When Jesus said, Come unto Me, all ye who are weary, and heavy laden, He was speaking of the oppression of the requirements of the false religion of oppressive laws regarding the Sabbath, that no one could keep.

Listen to some quotes from MacArthur, teaching on this passage. I'll just read through these quickly because the whole thing is so painfully laborious that I didn't want to do it over. I couldn't say it better than him so here goes;

----- john macarthur teaching on luke 6:1 -
6-----

[Begin Quote] It finally became the most painful day of the week. People hated it. It was a day of tremendous restriction. Let me just give you a little of the...the things that fit into Sabbath law and I can't give you all of it. For example, in the Talmud there are twenty-four chapters of Sabbath laws required, twenty-four chapters. And one rabbi, says the Talmud, spent two and a half years in the study of one of those twenty-four trying to figure out all of its ramifications. It was a ridiculously complex system by which you could earn your salvation by maintaining all these strictures.

And what were they? Well, you could travel no more than 3,000 feet from home. Unless on Friday before the Sabbath you had planted food at the 3,000-foot point and then you could go 3,000 more because you'd constituted that point as a home because your food was there. Now if you lived down a long, narrow street and you might have been a few

hundred feet down from the end of the street or the end of the alley, you could take a piece of wood and put it across the end of the street or alley or you could take a piece of rope and put it across the end of the alley, or you could take a piece of wire and string it across the end of the alley and that would, in the eyes of God, turn it into a doorway and you could consider that the front door of your house so you could go 3,000 feet from there.

You could lift up certain things and put down certain things only from certain places. You could lift up something from a public place and put it into a private place or from a private place and put it into a public place. You could lift up things from a wide place and put them into a narrow place. You could put things in a free place. You say, "What is that?" I don't know because you have chapter after chapter of rabbis with endless discussion as to what it means. You couldn't carry anything on your person that weighed more than a dried fig. There goes your wallet and certainly there goes your purse. But you could carry half a fig two times on the Sabbath.

You couldn't eat any of the forbidden... There were all kinds of food forbidden on the Sabbath. You couldn't eat any forbidden food larger than an olive. And if you put an olive in your mouth and spit it out because it was bad, the Talmud said you couldn't replace it with a good one because your palate had tasted the flavor of the first one.

Now remember, your salvation depends on this. This is how the people thought. You're pleasing God. If you threw an object in the air, you could catch it with this hand that you threw it with, but if you caught it with the other hand, it was sin because there's less work in doing that than that.

If you were in one place and your arm stretched to reach for food and the Sabbath overtook you, you had to drop the food rather than bring back your arm or you had carried a burden and sinned. A tailor couldn't carry

his needle. A scribe couldn't carry his pen. A pupil couldn't carry his books. You couldn't even examine your clothes before you put them on, lest in the examining, meaning kind of brushing and shaking, you killed an insect. Wool couldn't be dyed. Nothing could be sold or bought or washed. A letter could not be sent even with a heathen. No fire could be lit. No fire could be put out. Cold water could be poured on warm, but warm couldn't be poured on cold. An egg couldn't be boiled even if you buried it in the hot sand, which is how they would boil an egg in the desert. You couldn't take a bath for fear that the water would flow off of you and wash the floor. You couldn't move a chair since it might make a rut and that would be too much like plowing. Women could not look in a mirror or put on any jewelry. And if she were to find a white hair, she had to resist the temptation to pull it out.

When it came to grain and food, the laws are just staggering. You could have no more grain than a lamb's mouth full. That's the max amount you could pick. You couldn't leave a radish in the salt because it would make a pickle. The laws go on endlessly about wine, about honey, about milk, about spitting, about getting dirt off your clothes. You could have enough ink to write two Hebrew letters. You could carry enough wax to fill a small hole somewhere. You could stick a wad in your ear if you had an earache, but you couldn't put on false teeth. And this is how it goes, twenty-four chapters of this.

The following 39 are forbidden things. And here's the list from Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, a classic work on the history of the people of Israel. They are forbidden: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sifting, grinding, sifting in a sieve, kneading, baking, shearing the wool, washing it, beating it, dying it, spinning, putting it on the weaver's beam, making two threads, weaving two threads, separating two threads, making a knot, undoing a knot, sewing two stitches, catching deer, killing, skinning, salting, preparing its skin, scraping off its hair, cutting it up, writing two letters, scraping in order to write two letters, building, pulling down,

extinguishing the fire, lighting the fire, beating with the hammer, and carrying one thing from one place to another. [End Quote]

You get the idea. The false religion of doing stuff became insane about doing what you're not doing.

I've been thinking this week, and I confess that my thoughts were not about this passage of scripture, but rather about the political state of our nation, and I was thinking about a statement that a guy had made about intellectual honesty. Intellectual honesty. Going with what we all know is false, just because.

Intellectual honesty cannot survive in our world. And intellectual honesty had likewise been replaced by the pharisee's of Jesus day, who were the architects of everything religion in Israel.

Their concocted religion of oppressively doing of not doing was intellectually dishonest. They had replaced crystal clear truth with ridiculous rules. Listen to Isaiah chapter 1

2 Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth;
For the LORD speaks,
“Sons I have reared and brought up,
But they have revolted against Me.

3 “An ox knows its owner,
And a donkey its master’s manger,
But Israel does not know,
My people do not understand.”

4 Alas, sinful nation,
People weighed down with iniquity,
Offspring of evildoers,

Sons who act corruptly!
They have abandoned the LORD,
They have despised the Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away from Him.

5 Where will you be stricken again,
As you continue in your rebellion?
The whole head is sick
And the whole heart is faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head
There is nothing sound in it,
Only bruises, welts and raw wounds,
Not pressed out or bandaged,
Nor softened with oil.

7 Your land is desolate,
Your cities are burned with fire,
Your fields—strangers are devouring them in your presence;
It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.

8 The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard,
Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.

9 Unless the LORD of hosts
Had left us a few survivors,
We would be like Sodom,
We would be like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
You rulers of Sodom;
Give ear to the instruction of our God,
You people of Gomorrah.

- 11 “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?”
Says the LORD.
“I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
And the fat of fed cattle;
And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.
- 12 “When you come to appear before Me,
Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?
- 13 “Bring your worthless offerings no longer,
Incense is an abomination to Me.
New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.
- 14 “I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts,
They have become a burden to Me;
I am weary of bearing them.
- 15 “So when you spread out your hands in prayer,
I will hide My eyes from you;
Yes, even though you multiply prayers,
I will not listen.
Your hands are covered with blood.
- 16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight.
Cease to do evil,
- 17 Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Reprove the ruthless,
Defend the orphan,
Plead for the widow.

18 “Come now, and let us reason together,”
Says the LORD,
“Though your sins are as scarlet,
They will be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They will be like wool.

You can't be intellectually honest and read those words, and come up with a religion that is 10,000 different rules on how to please God by doing nothing, oppressively doing nothing on the Sabbath day.

None of it was God's idea. None of the rules beyond what we read in Exodus 20 were from God. They were working themselves to death, doing stuff for God, which was endless and oppressive.

And Jesus comes along, and He ignores these religious architects, these religious rulers who were the most important people in all the land, He ignores them, He picks fishermen and tax collectors to be His disciples, and He ignores their phony baloney false religion.

Jesus is the King of intellectual honesty. He's walking through the field, with His disciples, and they're hungry, and they're having a little snack of grain as they go, and it's making the most important people in Israel, crazy.

That's the other side of intellectual dis-honesty. It causes derangement. You have to go sort of crazy to live in the dis-honest world you created. And that is the scene before us this morning. That was the introduction. But knowing the background allows us to simply (almost) just read through the story and it makes perfect sense to us.

Stay with me, this will go fast.

Now it came about that on a certain Sabbath He was passing

through some grainfields; and His disciples were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.

That's the setting for conflict. They are enjoying the Sabbath. Walking with God. Picking grains and rubbing them in their hands.

The wheat had a husk you didn't want to eat. If you rubbed it in your hands it would separate the husk from the fruit and you could gently blow the husks away, like threshing did on a big scale, and eat the wheat.

But to the pharisee's, this is blatant sin. Not according to God's rules, but according to their multiplied oppressive traditions. Enjoying the Sabbath, walking, picking grains, rubbing them together, why, my goodness, there's a good half dozen sins right there!

So we have to ask, did *they* "sin" according to their own made up standards in order to keep up with Jesus so they could hurdle this accusation at Him. Did they travel more than 3000 feet so they could be there when Jesus broke that rule? Remember, it isn't God's rule, it was a rule created by them.

2But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

Not lawful according to their invented religion, not according to God. What they're really asking is; Why do you ignore our oppressive rules that are the stuff we do in order to make ourselves righteous.

If you think you're the messiah, why don't you get in line with us! Why do you show open disdain for our false religion?

3And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read

This is a format that Jesus will use over and over with them. Have you not read?? They prided themselves as being the experts of the book. They were the self described experts in all things God. All things revealed.

So when Jesus says to them often, *Have you not read*, it's a direct jab at their intellectual dishonesty. They had read and read and read and continually dug themselves deeper into the hole of dishonesty. Read read read, and come up with the answer that is diametrically opposed to the meaning. What a burn.

what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?"

This story is obscure. David is running from Saul the King of Israel. He's God's annointed, and Saul is trying to kill him. So David and his men, he had a small army of men who were sworn to protect him, they're hungry, and David goes in and asks the priest, Ahimelech for some bread for him and his men.

But the priest says, we don't have any. All we have is the showbread. Showbread was an offering put out before the Lord, in the temple, once a week, fresh showbread, and it was an offering of thanks for the Lord's supply.

It had been changed out with new showbread and the 7 day old stuff was what Ahimelech had. And the law of God said only the priests could eat that bread when it was changed. And the difference here is that this law actually is in God's word, where as the pharisee's rules about walking and eating grain on the sabbath were not.

You're thinking who wants 7 day old bread anyway. It was flatbread,

and quite edible after 7 days. Not like our grocery store stuff that turns green. So Ahimelech gives David 5 loaves for him and his men. And the point Jesus is making is that mercy, David needed that mercy for his men, mercy trumps ceremonial law of God.

God was pleased with the mercy, more than keeping the letter of the ceremonial law.

Jesus examples to these pharisee's always deal with heart over legalism. God prefers mercy, not legalistic rote. God desires our hearts.

And then the final words, which if you're already de-ranged with hatred, can only cause one thing.

5And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

This is a direct blow of their everything. These lords of the sabbath over the people, who held oppressive legalistic judgement over everyone, these rulers, who hold the oppressive power of the sabbath over everybody have just been told by Jesus, that He trumps the Sabbath.

He owns it. Jesus has all authority over the Sabbath.

One of the other synoptic gospels tells us, it was at this point, that these pharisee's, deranged with hatred, and threatened by Jesus, conspired together about how they might destroy Him.

I think we've seen the derangement of hatred just in the last week. Small potatoes compared to the hatred and vitriol these men now have for the Lord of the Sabbath.

But that hatred will boil in their pots for over 2 more years while they wait for the chance to destroy this Jesus. Everything is working on schedule according to God's time clock. Confrontation is already at the

boiling point, and we're just getting started.

Lord of the Sabbath is a direct claim of deity. There is only one Lord of the Sabbath, and that is God. God the Son tells these dis-honest men, in simple, easy to understand terms, that He is that person. He is Lord. Lord of the Sabbath, Lord of everything.

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. Enjoy the day. Spend time alone with Him.