

Well then, Jesus got rapped over the knuckles because his disciples 'did work' on the Sabbath.

But they weren't really busting their gut, were they???? –I mean the accusation was pretty laughable - they rubbed out a few heads of wheat for a little snack as they wandered through a wheat paddock. I've been doing that ever since I was a kid ... As soon as the wheat's ready to harvest, if you're any where near it, you pick a bit, and rub it out, and chew it, and it turns into chewing gum... Who does that????

The funny thing is, Dad never felt he had to pay me for doing all that work... Actually that's probably a bad example... (Dad's aren't real good at paying....) But it's not work is it????

There's 2 issues at play here, and one glorious truth. The first issue, is the burden of the pharisaic law – The Pharisees had made life, downright unpleasant – It had gotten to the point that ordinary people were afraid that they were doing the wrong thing, when it wasn't really God's law at all. – The Pharisees had taken God's law, which was good, and bound it up so tightly, in all of their own interpretation of it, that ordinary old Joe Blo, didn't know where he stood with God – that's the first issue. – man-made rules, mucking up God's law.

The second issue, was the rising opposition of the Pharisees to Jesus. You see, Jesus **absolutely challenged** this harsh application of the law. And here, it began as a little thing – rubbing out a few grains – and being accused of working..... But then we get to see the Pharisees as they actually are. We get to see the hardness of their hearts and we get to see their

hypocrisy... Their law said it's OK to rescue a sheep out of a ditch, but it's not OK to rescue a person from their affliction...

They were upset that Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath. He did an amazing miracle (and it was **no** effort for him) - a man with a withered, twisted up hand - Jesus said, stretch out your hand, and as he did, it became normal. I don't suppose that Jesus even raised a sweat.

That's the 2 issues, but there is also a glorious truth – what we learn from all of this, is that Jesus is The Lord of the Sabbath, and I'll explain that shortly.....

So, let's start at the beginning, “What is the Sabbath? Or what was the Sabbath?”

Well, I wasn't kidding – we do have to go to the beginning – We go right back to Genesis, and the creation of the universe. In 6 days, God created everything that has been made. And then we read in Genesis chapter 2: <sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Now, do you think that God rested because He was knocked up and about to collapse? I don't think so. God rested on the

7th day to make it holy – His resting, made the day Holy. What does it mean that The seventh day is holy? Well, ultimately, it means that man shall rest on it also.

God rested, to demonstrate that this day is special, making it holy, meaning that we humans rest on that day too.

So lets slip forward now to when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses:

Exodus 20:<sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.

Alright, part of being created as a human - part of being created in the image of God - means that we are not machines designed to endlessly produce stuff. We are designed to work, **and** to rest. And our Creator – The Lord our God, has designed that work and rest, into a seven-day cycle.

In creation, God is showing us that He hasn't made us live to work – we work to live. Now, it depends who you are and how lazy you are, whether you need to be told, "Stop working and have a proper day off!", or if you need to be told, "Stop resting and get up and do some work!" God gave us days to

work, and days for rest. And blessed is the man and blessed is the woman, who are able to do both – able to work – and able to rest...

So, we've seen creation. We've seen when the ten commandments were first given... Lets skip forward now to when the people of Israel were about to enter the promised land. And Moses reminded them of the Ten Commandments. They'd just come out of slavery in Egypt, and they're being told, don't enslave yourself to work, all over again....

This is what he said:

Deuteronomy 5:<sup>12</sup> " 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labour and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> 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 or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. <sup>15</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Do you get this? The Sabbath is so you can have a rest, it's so the whole of society can have a rest. It's so the animals can

have a rest. It's so that, even employees get to have a rest... Even if you live in a society that has slaves – even they, in God's justice and mercy, receive rest... What Moses is saying, is "You've just been freed from slavery. Now, don't enslave yourself, and don't enslave others."

*As I meet people in this world... As I meet people in this town... As I meet people, even in this church... I constantly encounter, a people who are tired – a people who are in need of a rest...*

God made the Sabbath for **us**. It is a merciful gift, for **us**. We need it.

The world has already been created. You don't have to keep striving... God has already done that. And He finished it, and He said "This is very Good... Ahhh". And you know what, God created the world in such a way, that you have everything you need, in order to enjoy a day of rest (every week) – a day holy to God. And that's what the Sabbath is.

But as soon as any of us start to try to 'police' the Sabbath – as soon as you make it a law that you have to keep – well once that happens, it's not a blessing any longer – it's a burden....

Jesus said to the Pharisees Matthew 12: <sup>7</sup> **And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.** <sup>8</sup> **For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."**

The Sabbath isn't a sacrifice – it is a gift – a gift expressing the mercy of God. And we too, should show mercy – even on the Sabbath.... When Mark recorded this same incident, he tells us that Jesus said, Mark 2:<sup>27</sup> ..., **"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."**

The Sabbath is to serve you. It's not so we have to slavishly have a day off and hate every minute of it, because it curtails our money making, consumer driven , wealth gathering activities....

OK, the Sabbath is because it gives God **delight**, to show His mercy to us, in giving us this day of rest.

But here's where I want to bring us to the glorious truth of the Sabbath.

The Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ. Jesus didn't come to abolish the law – He is the fulfilment of the law. So, how did Jesus Christ fulfil the Sabbath? Well, to answer that, I want to take us to Colossians 2, where Paul says:

Colossians 2: <sup>13</sup> **And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the**

rulers and authorities and put them to open shame,  
by triumphing over them in him.

(alright, he's talking about being saved from sins – We're no longer subject to the law, which can only condemn us – we're forgiven from sin... alright...)

**16** Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

(OK, we are now under, a **new** covenant. I can't judge you if you **don't** keep the Sabbath, because keeping the Sabbath never got anyone to heaven – it's only faith in Jesus Christ that gets us to heaven... And then He continues)

**17** These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Are you hearing that? The Sabbath was a dull image of something that was to come – and what was that thing? Christ. **the substance belongs to Christ** . The guts of what the Sabbath was all about, belongs to Christ...

In Christ we enter Gods Sabbath rest. We rest from striving to work for salvation.....

Hebrews 4:<sup>9</sup> So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup> for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

The Pharisees thought that by keeping all of their rules and regulations – all of their hard work – to always do the right

thing – they thought that would save them... Well let me tell you, you can't work that hard. I can't work that hard...

Jesus Christ did the work on the cross for us... There's nothing I can do to take away my sins... All I can do, is repent of my sins, and confess my sins to Christ, and ask for His forgiveness, and receive forgiveness... Rest... Rest from striving... Rest from always worrying "Am I good enough? Have I done enough good? Have I kept enough laws???"

... Just let go of it, and rest in Christ.... For my sins, I deserve death, but Christ died in my place, so I can rest from trying to be good enough...

And **that**, is the glorious truth of the Sabbath. That's why it is a holy day to God – because it looked forward to the coming of Christ.... That's the glorious truth of the Sabbath...

Righto, now the question I suppose you're all wondering is, "Should I still keep the Sabbath?"

In the Old Testament, it was a command... But do I still have to keep that commandment today, now that we're not under the old covenant any longer? ... Well, the answer is, "No", you don't **have** to keep the commandment... Paul said, "...let no one pass judgment on you in questions of... (the) Sabbath

We're not judged by how well we keep the laws...

**But** as disciples of Jesus Christ – as a people who have been forgiven of all of our sins, we should constantly be looking to God’s word – God’s instructions for living – to understand God’s will for our life... ( you want to know God’s will for your life, don’t you?)

And God’s will, is that we find more to life than work. And keeping the Sabbath, yells out to a world, that is consumed by greed and a constant yearning for more and more.... “I have found my rest, in Christ. In Christ, I have enough...” And I rest...

Keeping the Sabbath is the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 10 commandments...  
Let’s have a look at the other 9.

- 1. Do not worship any other Gods... Is that a commandment we should still keep? Of course it is.
- 2. Do not make any idols... Is that a commandment we should still keep? Of course it is.
- 3. Do not misuse the name of God... Of course we won’t do that?
- 5. Do you think God wants us to still honour our Father and Mother???
- 6. Do not murder
- 7. Do not commit adultery
- 8. Do not steal
- 9. Do not lie
- 10. Do not covet

Now that you are a Christian – now that you are living under the new covenant, do you think God wants you to keep those 9 commandments???

Why would number 4 be any different?

God didn't give us the 10 commandments for us to keep, whenever it's convenient to do so – their purpose, is to follow God's way, when other things try to distract us from God's purpose.

God made a seven day cycle – that's how He's designed us to live, and if you think you know better, well.... do it your way, at your peril. ... I did for a while...

*When I was younger, I did about a month straight, without having a day off... And it was awful... I leaned the wisdom, of using God's instruction book for living....*

The Sabbath is a day of rest, but it is also a day we set apart to be "Holy" for the Lord (not for us to be Holy, but the day – we should be holy all the time)...

It's not just rest from the 'daily grind' of employment... - it is a day, dedicated as 'holy' to God... Originally it was a Saturday. Later on, the Early Church began to celebrate Sunday – the day of the resurrection, and to keep **it** Holy for God...

I don't think it matters **what** day it is... but keep **a** day holy for God. And Parents, that's us too... The world has changed over the last couple of decades, and now, more than ever before, the world has us rushing around after our kids – filling every day of the week up until it's full and overflowing, and we're frazzled... God's desire, is for us to rest, and to keep a day Holy for Him...

It's the Devil who drives us to fill every day up... It's the Devil who wants to run ourselves into the ground, it's the Devil who wants to keep us from God...

Our kids learn what's important, by what we do... And many kids today, have never been shown, how to rest, and how to keep a day holy for God.... Don't you think that's important???

God, has given us the Sabbath. Enjoy it.

Questions????