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Mark 2:23-3:6

How To Rest: Sabbath & Simplicity

Jesus Gives Rest

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Introduction: **(S#1)**

1. Have you ever spoiled something good with bad rules?
2. A couple years ago Monica and I purchased the board-game Monopoly.
3. We played a couple rounds and I won every single one and now she won't play with me anymore.
4. Whenever she describes how I play Monopoly she accuses me of using crazy "house rules."
5. For example, if someone lands on one of my properties and can't pay me, I'll offer them a pass.
6. But if I land on their property for the next 2-3 rounds, I don't owe them anything, like insurance.
7. I don't what the problem is... I'm pretty much just offering derivatives and future contracts.
8. These are the same tools that resulted in the most recent financial recession, just in monopoly.
9. To me, I seem generous and loving, but to Monica my "house rules" ruin the game.
10. Maybe you once ruined a friendship or relationship by how you demanded the other person act.
11. Maybe you've run into bad policies or procedures at your office that hurt your business wrongfully.
12. Maybe you had a once beautiful relationship with God, but then you kept stacking on the rules.
13. Today we're looking at a story of well-meaning religious people ruining God's gift of Sabbath.
14. Israel's Sabbath lasted from Friday evening to Saturday evening and on it they could do no work.
15. I define Sabbath for Christians today as one day in seven set apart to rest, worship God, and play. **(S#2)**

I. The Pharisees ruined Sabbath rest with bad rules. **(Read Mark 2:23-24)**

A. Religious regulations have a way of spoiling life.

1. The Pharisees are the religious elite of Jesus' day (ethically upright).
2. In Mark 2:13-17 Jesus eats with "tax collectors and sinners" and the Pharisees don't get why.
3. Jesus wasn't formally educated like them and doesn't try and appease them first.
4. They try to control him and think they find a way when his disciples pick grain on the Sabbath.

(S#3) Exodus 34:21 "Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest. (NIV®)

5. A harvest was not this but when you took the sickle to the field and was a time of intense work.
6. What the disciples were doing was acceptable according to the God's OT law.

(S#4) Deuteronomy 23:25 If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to their standing grain. (NIV®)

7. Have you ever heard that expression, "Make a mountain out of a molehill"?
8. The Pharisees are professional "legalists" who reduce belief in God to a list of do's and don'ts.

(S#5) "Legalism is the reduction of life to mere technicalities." Mark Buchanan *The Rest of God* 107

B. The natural response to a sermon series on "Sabbath" is to go home and create rules for your family.

1. We're going to make sure we read the Bible as a family, pray, and not watch any TV.
2. Well, we can watch football but not Netflix, and mom can't cook; dad can't go to the gym.
3. In fact, we can't do anything fun, like play monopoly because it's not spiritual enough.
4. I had a friend growing up who wasn't allowed to play computer games on "the Sabbath."
5. When Sabbath becomes about what we can't do, we've missed the point.

(Religious regulations have a way of spoiling life.)

(The Pharisees ruined Sabbath rest with bad rules.)

C. We treat Sabbath as a list of rules when we're scared.

1. 600 years before Jesus, the people of Israel were exiled to Babylon for disobeying God.
2. When they returned they were so afraid they created "oral law" as an addition (Mishnah AD200).
3. If God's law is a fence, they dug a moat around that fence and filled it with alligators.
4. They created such rigorous rules so that it didn't even look like you were breaking Sabbath.
5. Ironically, in their zeal to keep this law the Pharisees break it by walking after Jesus.
6. Obedient Jews couldn't travel more than 1,999 paces (800 meters) on the Sabbath (Pillar).
7. Don't be afraid of Sabbath rest—your Father in heaven gives it to you as a gift.
8. Sabbath rest is never a punishment; it's like a weekly Birthday. **(S#6)**

II. Jesus tells us Sabbath rest is for our good. (Mark 2:25-28)

A. Jesus tells a story of Israel's most famous monarch, King David. **(Read v. 25-26)**

1. Before David was king, he was chased by bad king named Saul who wanted to take his life.
2. He went to the priest of the time, Abiathar's father Ahimelek, and asked for food (1 Sam 21).
3. He gives him the bread of the presence which only priests could eat (Ex 25:30, Lv 24:5-9). **(S#7)**
4. The bread of presence was said to rest in God's presence, before his face, so it was holy bread.
5. Jesus is asking... If David ate sacred food when in need, why can't my men eat on a sacred day?
6. If King David can eat holy bread, Jesus' disciples can eat heads of grain.

(The Christian God isn't impressed with religious rituals but cares about real people and their needs.)

(In Hinduism and Buddhism, the goal is nirvana, which means "extinction, disappearance.")

(In Islam, it is said that Allah cares, but he does not seek fellowship with us or become man.)

B. Our God cares about us so much he gives us a day each week to rest. **(Read v. 27)**

1. This is why we can't create a list of things you should and should not do on your day of rest.
2. I shouldn't sit and do heavy translation, but maybe that's the only time you have to do this.
3. If you do landscaping and work with your hands, chances are you shouldn't do yard-work.
4. But if you sit at your desk all day, maybe yard-work is really refreshing and relaxing.
5. The principle is to stop doing the work you usually do and do what fills you up with joy.
6. Jesus tells us Sabbath rest is for our good.

C. Jesus is also claiming he has the right or authority to tell us to stop and rest. **(Read v. 28)**

1. The "Son of Man" is a both a messianic title for God's chosen king and a divine title. **(S#8)**

Daniel 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like **a son of man**, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. (NIV®)

2. By calling himself “Son of Man” Jesus is claiming to be God, to have created the Sabbath.
3. When he references King David, he’s also saying, I’m greater than King David. (2 Sam 7)
4. God had promised a descendant of David would come and rule, and that king is Jesus.
5. He isn’t a dictator but a gracious ruler that invites us to come and rest.

(Have you ever been invited to someone’s home who is in a different social class?) (gray fox estates)
 (They have a huge home, 4-car garage, green lawn, a waterfall, coy pond, and everything is pristine.)
 (You feel honored just to be there... Jesus is the king of the universe and he invites us into his rest.)
 (When you arrive, he doesn’t hand you a list of rules, but says put your feet up and enjoy.) (S#9)

III. Jesus shows us Sabbath rest is for our good and the good of others. (Read Mark 3:1-6)

(Jesus enters the Synagogue, a place like church, and publicly heals a man with a shriveled hand.)
 (This week I went to a luncheon at a local hospital hosted by the local Chaplain for area ministers.)
 (This place has cutting edge technology and healing capabilities but it can’t do what Jesus does.)
 (I know this because the helpful woman at the welcome center had deformed hands.)
 (I don’t tell you that story to make light of her, but to remind you of how amazing Jesus is.)
 (He’s about to do something, heal a shriveled hand, which we still can’t do 2,000 years later.)

A. Jesus shows Sabbath rest is for our good and the good of others.

1. The story of this man isn’t so different from many of us.
2. He has needs, he’s broken, others can tell, and he can’t do anything about it.
3. But his real problem is spiritual... he needs to be forgiven (Mark paints picture).
4. Jesus deals with both the physical and spiritual need when he tells him to get up.
5. For the man to rise is to express faith in Jesus in front of the whole synagogue (in the middle).
6. These are people that could make life hard for him but Jesus still challenges him to believe.
7. Jesus challenges the Pharisees too... Is Sabbath rest about doing good or being religious?
8. Sabbath rest is ultimately about dealing with our heart problems and **finding rest in Jesus**.
9. Sabbath rest is for our good and the good of others (ok to volunteer/serve/rest).

(There’s a surprising truth Jesus is teaching them here.)
 (Jesus is saying that true rest is only found through him.)
 (Real Sabbath rest is only possible through our Sabbath savior.)

B. The Pharisees reject Jesus and so reject true Sabbath rest... but that doesn’t have to be you.

1. It says Jesus was distressed at their “stubborn hearts”—they had “hard hearts.”
2. They’re so offended by Jesus they end up doing evil on the Sabbath by plotting to kill him.
3. The good news of Christianity is that you don’t have to be a religious Pharisee.
4. Jesus doesn’t take healthy people with shriveled hearts (he came to save sinners).
5. He takes shriveled men and women who want to be healed and makes them whole.
6. The Pharisees were the ultra-conservative religious group who trusted in good works.
7. The Herodians were nominal Jews who trusted in the local politician, Herod.
8. You be the shriveled man or woman who wants to know Jesus and be healed.

(The Pharisees and Herodians succeed in murdering Jesus.)

(But Jesus is the king who rises again with joy and happiness.)
(He says, if you'll believe in me—if you'll stand up in the middle—I'll make you whole.)
(I'll take your sins and your brokenness and give you my life, my holiness, my joy.)
(Jesus heals hard hearts so that in Him the restless can rest.)
(We take a weekly Sabbath to remember we're whole in Jesus.)
(Sabbath rest is for our good and the good of others.)

Conclusion:

1. *In The Rest of God* by Mark Buchanan quotes J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. (pg 125)
2. There's this part in the trilogy where the Hobbits arrive at Rivendell, the safe haven of the elves.
3. Although they're surrounded by terrible events, in this place together they find rest. **(S#10)**

*For awhile the hobbits continued to talk and think of the past journey and of the perils that lay ahead; but such was the virtue of the land of Rivendell that soon all fear and anxiety was lifted from their minds. **The future, good or ill, was not forgotten, but ceased to have power over the present.** Healthy and hope grew strong in them, and they were content with each day as it came, taking pleasure in every meal, and in every word and song.*

4. A sabbath day is a day where you and I don't worry about breaking rules or getting stuff done.
5. Just like the Hobbits, we don't need to worry about the future, but are refreshed and recapture joy.
6. Sabbath rest is for our good and the good of others. **(S#11)**

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (NIV®)