

Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath

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[0 : 0 0] The reading today is from Mark chapter 2 verses 23 to 28 which is on page 1010 of the church bibles. One Sabbath he was going through the grain fields and as they made his way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain and the Pharisees were saying to him look why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath and he said to them have you never read what David did when he was in need and was hungry he and those who were with him how he entered the house of God in the time of Abathar the high priest and ate the bread of the presence which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat and also gave it to those who were with him and he said to them the Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath so the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Thanks Lucy. Let's pray again as we begin. If you keep that passage open as well. Father we long to see Jesus more clearly.

His beauties to trace his majesty to adore and so we pray now as we come to your word that you would be opening eyes and softening our hearts in Jesus name amen. Good morning. You've got a handout that might be helpful and can I just add my welcome to any who are joining us for the baptism of of E and we read in. Thank you. It's great to great to see you. You're really welcome among us and you join us as we're making our way slowly through Mark's gospel and this series that we're looking at at the moment is we're calling it the goodness of Jesus because that is what Mark is showing us the goodness of Jesus as we as we look through this eyewitness account.

I just want to begin by pointing you to a a YouTube video one of my favorite YouTube videos sometimes something seems to be the be-all and end-all it's all you can see but then something greater hoves into view and you realize that what you thought was the be-all and end-all was actually not.

There's a star comparison video has anyone seen it on YouTube where it basically it starts with the moon and you can see the moon and then the moon shifts over and compared to the earth the moon is pretty small and then the earth shifts over and the sun is there and imagine the sun sort of the size of a football the earth next to it the size of a pea and you think wow that's that's incredible there can't be much bigger than the sun and then the sun shifts over and you get this star called Arcturus which is if that star is the size of a football the sun is the size of a pea and you think gosh that is I can't even get my head around that and then Arcturus shifts over and you get the pistol star the size of a football Arcturus the size of a pea or what size is the sun compared to that why am I mentioning that at the beginning of this talk well the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people at this point

[3 : 39] I think this is a little bit like an epistol star moment for them where what they thought was great that is the law of Moses the Sabbath commands is dwarfed by the far greater I just want to just flick back to the very first verse of Mark's gospel so here we have the claim that Mark makes about Jesus that he is the Christ that is God's anointed king and that he is the son of God but the question is who is the son of God what has he come to do we may easily use that term without grasping who he is well who is he and what has he come to do we've been seeing in the last two weeks the son of God is like a doctor who has come for sin to heal sinners the son of God is like the promised bridegroom who has come to bring his people to an everlasting wedding feast the kingdom of God and thirdly in this section three offices of the Lord Jesus the son of God the doctor the bridegroom the Lord of the Sabbath just look down at 2 verse 28 the key claim of Jesus in this section the son of man is the Lord even of the Sabbath now what does that mean

I'm guessing this is this title that Jesus takes on himself is less familiar to us less of a go-to title and yet it is just as important right at the beginning of Mark's gospel he puts this here Jesus' claim to be the Lord of the Sabbath I take it it is two claims in one firstly it is a claim to greatness and secondly it's a claim to goodness firstly it's a claim to greatness and to a degree of authority that was too much for them and we'll see that but secondly it's a claim to goodness that he is the one who has come to bring rest he is using his great authority to bring a great rest now there may just be someone here who wouldn't call yourself a Christian many people think that Jesus came to lay burdens on us religious rules that we must keep to get on the right side of God many people think that the reality is that he came to lift them off all of the burdens and to bring us rest now and forever that is at the heart of this claim so two points today a great Lord a gentle

Lord firstly a great Lord let's look at the text together verse 23 one Sabbath he's going through the cornfields and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck ears of corn and so there's a there's a Sabbath stroll in the cornfields with Jesus the disciples perhaps lunch wasn't what they thought it might have been carrot sticks and hummus or something like that they're a bit peckish and as they go along they pick these little ears of corn rub them in their fingers and pop them in their mouths the Pharisees are there watching Jesus to see if he's going to do what they think he should be doing on the Sabbath verse 24 they say look why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath the Sabbath commandment was and remains the high point and most important part of law keeping religion for the

Jews the original command that God gave in the Old Testament the Ten Commandments was thou shalt do no work put down your tools rest that was it the Pharisees had built a huge matrix of rules around that commandment that were not there actually in the original commandments they had 39 categories of work that you were not supposed to do one of them is reaping which includes cutting or plucking any growing thing and so according to their rules the disciples were breaking the Sabbath in fact the same 39 rules if you can look it up are still in place for Orthodox Jews when it comes to the Sabbath how did Jesus respond and this is a surprise he did not respond by saying you've misunderstood the

Sabbath command let's go back to what Moses said instead he responds by saying oh I'm greater than the Sabbath just look down at verse 25 he takes them back to something that David did have you never read what David did when he was in need and he was hungry he and those with him how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the bread of the presence which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat and gave it to those who were with him David was the king of God's people and why then does Jesus point back here the point he's making is that there was a time in King David's life when he was hungry and so were his men and went into the tabernacle and took the holy bread the bread of the presence and gave it to his men but

[10:02] Leviticus 24 had made it clear that that bread in the tabernacle was only for Aaron and his sons the priests David was not a priest and yet he not only ate it himself but gave it to his men people had died for the equivalent think of Nadab and Abihu those who know back in Leviticus they went into the tabernacle and brought in some extra incense to offer to God which they weren't authorised to offer it and they dropped down dead in the holy place remember Uzzah a bit later who put out his hand to stabilise the ark as it was going along he drops down dead David says oh we're hungry actually we'll have that if that's okay extraordinary why did

David not drop down dead and the priest who gave it to them the answer is that he was the anointed king and God was giving a foretaste in the Old Testament of the reality that his Messiah the son of David would be greater than the law actually Jesus takes a non Sabbath example it wasn't on the Sabbath this didn't happen on the Sabbath the point is bigger than the Sabbath that the Messiah that God was sending the king would be greater than the law he would stand above it he would stand outside it and so therefore all of this leads to the conclusion in verse 28 if David could do that well how much more the son of man is Lord over the Sabbath one greater than the Sabbath is here

Jesus says one greater than the law the law of Moses you know that the ten commandments all of that given on Mount Sinai Jesus is saying I'm greater than it and if he's greater than the law then who is he he can only be the one who gave the law in the first place and with that he claimed too much authority for those Jewish leaders too much authority for them than they were prepared to accept why it's hard for us to grasp the significance of this but if he's Lord of the Sabbath he's Lord of everything if he owns the law and stands above the law then he certainly owns them and he certainly owns us and has a claim on our lives why because he's the God who made us so can you actually see that this is a an implicit claim to divinity that Jesus is making

Jesus is far greater than they thought they thought if the Messiah ever comes he must stand under the law law Messiah Jesus says no actually it's the other way around I'm greater than the law so firstly he is a great Lord greater than the law and therefore who is he he's God secondly he's a gentle Lord bringing rest now and forever if he's greater than the law he can set the law aside and bring a new regime that's the point here the new regime that he's come to bring is the fulfillment of everything that that

Sabbath day in the law pointed forwards to and that is an eternal day of rest it seems that in the last 10 to 15 years there's been more and more talk about anxiety we've had this book the anxious generation come out and especially for the younger generation research all over the world seems to be suggesting that with the coming of the age of atheism has come the age of anxiety well with this claim Christ says that he is the one who can lift off our burdens and give us rest both now and forever that word Sabbath literally means rest and the day in the old law of Moses was a day of rest but Jesus did not mean anything so small as that he's come to bring a day of rest one in seven to think that

[15:32] I think would be to completely miss the point in fact it would be to make the mistake of thinking that he's come to tack himself on to the old the old covenants no rather it's clear that he's speaking of something much greater he's come to bring a new regime that is the fulfillment of what that day in the old testament was pointing to and that is rest with God forever so if you can think of a signpost pointing in two directions that one day in the old ten commandments in the law the sabbath day was a signpost pointing back to the seventh day of creation where God rested on that seventh day and that was meant to be an eternal sabbath day of rest that all his creation could enjoy that day was wrecked by the fall the Sabbath day in the Old Testament pointed back to that day but also was pointing forwards to the

Messiah who would one day come to bring back that lost day of eternal rest that was back in creation and that was meant to be so come back just to chapter 2 verse 21 and 22 Jesus says no one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment if he does the patch tears away from it the new from the old and a worse tear is made no one puts new wine into old wine skins if he does the wine will burst the skins and the wine will be destroyed and so are the skins but new wine is for fresh wine skins what's he talking about he's talking about complete regime change Jesus did not come and this is something that people may not have realized Jesus did not come to restate the ten commandments rather he came to bring an end to the regime of the law of

Moses the old wine the old skins and to bring a new regime of grace of Sabbath rest the apostle Paul puts it like this he says the Christian is no longer under law but under grace what he's saying there is exactly what the Lord Jesus is saying here he's come as the Lord of the Sabbath he is a gentle Lord who has come to bring rest what then is this rest well I think that that is the context we see the context of the whole gospel you want to know what this rest is that Jesus has come to bring look at the context of the whole gospel what's he doing he's come to forgive sinners he's come to bring life that's the rest that he's come to bring rest now and rest forever it's a spiritual rest now and one day a resurrection rest in his eternal kingdom

I just want to bring to your attention a quote from a guy called Jason Armstrong who actually grew up in this part of London or near this part of London he's just written a book called Last on God's list I was meant to bring it in but I forgot imagine I'm holding that book up he had lived a bad life there was lots and lots of fighting lots of blood lots of drugs much of it was caused by him he describes his coming to faith in Jesus at the end of many years of that peace of peace of mind is the best thing there are ups and downs but you'll never get peace like being a

Christian you can drink and take as many drugs as you like speaking from vast personal experience but you're not going to find that peace you find once it's all out in the open with Jesus well what's Jason talking about he's talking about the gentle lord of the Sabbath the one that he has found in Jesus who rather than condemning him or laying rules and burdens on him has simply forgiven him restored him and now provides for him and has laid a great hope before him he is the lord who brings rest for the soul not condemnation for the sinner that was what the law did the law was good but it can only condemn us Jesus the lord of the sabbath has come to bring healing for sinners no more futile struggle to please

[21 : 11] God to live up to his perfect standards no more need to justify ourselves before God through religious works but rather the rest in the arms of a savior who has died for us so if we were to summarize what the rest now means that Jesus brings it is a peace of heart it's a peace of heart that we begin to experience as we come to Jesus that is what it means to begin to experience to breathe the air if you like of the sabbath day the peace of heart that every Christian will know oh it's not perfect now this peace of heart one day it will be perfected in his kingdom just want to pause on something else because his rule is gentle in more than one way right he lifts the condemnation of the law off us he lifts our sin off us but he also lifts legalistic religion off us and

I think we see that particularly here in this section as he provided for his disciples when they were hungry what would the Pharisees law have done stifled them Jesus lifted off them his rule is characterized by generous provision rather than the stifling demands of religious rules that these Pharisees were laying down on the people Jesus lifts them off and provides for his people right I just want to speak to the Christian who is feeling stressed and anything but at rest at the moment which is probably most of us how much of that is because you're seeking we're seeking to meet demands imposed on us by others and not living only to please Jesus these demands of the

Pharisees were the demands of man and not of Christ and as we know living to please man is a world of anxiety and fear living simply to please Jesus well we find that his rule is gentle and full of joy and peace when he fails when we fail what does he do he forgives us and picks us up when we're in need he provides he never asks of us more than he gives us strength to do in contrast to our human bosses and even in contrast to the burdens we lay on ourselves so it's worth asking that thing I'm stressed about is it actually a demand that Jesus makes of me or have I placed that on myself sometimes

Christianity can become pharisaical some of us have experience of that I've talked to you and you've told me you've had experience of a very legalistic brand of Christianity now it's possible to fall away from the gospel of grace in two directions imagine here's the gospel of grace and it's like a ridge you can fall off into liberalism and that's oh we don't take the bible seriously at all do whatever we decide is best liberalism you you you can you fall into legalism on the other side probably legalism is our greater danger at grace church dulwich well meaning expectations can be loaded onto christians that the lord does not load on you must be at that meeting every week you must pray every day for an hour you must read your bible at this time of the day you must always have a family bible time every day you must you must you must you put them all together a massive burden now these may be good things but take care brothers and sisters that they don't become the 39 rules that you must keep to be a true

Christian Jesus doesn't load them on you Jesus his rule is gentle well spiritual rest now and resurrection rest in the future and that is the rest that will last forever in the kingdom of God and so Jesus is a great lord we've seen that he is God how does he use his authority to lay down his life to die as the lord of the sabbath to take our burden off us and onto himself so that we might have rest in him I was thinking I was speaking to someone about this and she said something very helpful she said Jesus is the sabbath Jesus is the sabbath you want to keep the sabbath put your faith in Jesus it's a great joy to be a Christian even today and of course there's nowhere else we can find the true rest that our hearts long for except in the lord of the sabbath well there are many things to think about in light of that I think why don't we pause and pray we'll have a short silence as perhaps we can pause and just reflect and respond to the lord

[27 : 15] Jesus in our hearts and it may be that there's someone here for whom the time has come to repent to turn away from that life of sin and to come to Jesus for rest and so after a few moments silence I'm going to pray a prayer that anyone in that position can echo in your hearts and come and put your faith in Jesus now so let's take a few moments of silence and then I will pray that prayer let's pray dear God I know that I'm a sinner who has not lived as I should and I'm guilty before you I'm sorry and I need your forgiveness thank you for sending your son Jesus who died on the cross and rose again to give me rest and eternal life I believe that this is who he is and what he's done please forgive me and change me so that I may live from now on with Jesus as my

Lord and my Saviour Amen