

Lord Of The Sabbath; Lord Of It All

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[0 : 00] I came across the lyrics to a country song. I don't know if we have any country music fans.! I don't know if this was a hit ever.

I don't get the impression it was. So this was just a local band that had a song. And the lyrics to the chorus of the song went something like this.

Maybe you can relate. You done stomped on my heart and squashed that sucker flat. You just kind of, sort of stomped on my aorta.

It's pretty impressive that you can come up with a rhyme for aorta. That's not what we're going to do today.

But perhaps you have heard the expression of either the Bible or Jesus or the preacher stepped on my toes.

[1 : 21] Right? It happens to me quite often. And I'm the preacher. So, you know, a lot of times when I'm preaching, I'm preaching to right here because I'm the one who needs it.

And today we're going to see Jesus stepping on the toes of a group of guys known as the Pharisees. Now, if you're familiar with the Gospels at all, you know that he does this pretty much throughout the Gospels.

He's pretty harsh on them at times and deservedly so. And we're going to see that today. So what I want to do is I want to start with our text. We're in Luke chapter 6.

We're going to be looking at verses 1 through 11. And I just want to read the first four verses to start with. And then we're going to stop because Luke makes some assumptions as he tells these two stories.

They're two stories, but they have a familiar theme to them. So we tied them together. And he assumes some things that we know. And so I want to make sure that we are all on the same page and we understand what he is assuming that we know before we go forward.

[2 : 35] So Luke chapter 6, verse 1. And on a Sabbath, while he was going through the grain fields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.

But some of the Pharisees said, Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath? And Jesus answered them, Have you not read 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 bread of the presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him.

And so there are some things here that Luke assumes we know. Luke is assuming that his audience at least is familiar with three things in here.

And you have these on your notes. The first is that we would understand David's story. Because he mentions something about what happened with David.

[3 : 45] And so we have to kind of make sure that we understand because he assumes that we do. So David was the chosen king of Israel, but he wasn't yet king.

He had been anointed king, but Saul, the current king, was still in position as king. And so David understood that he needed to wait on God's timing. And in the meantime, he would honor the current king, Saul, until such time as God saw fit to raise him up to that place where he would assume the throne.

But Saul was very jealous. Saul was very suspicious. Saul was conflicted. And so Saul went from honoring David to wanting to kill David and trying to kill David.

And the story kind of commences in a time when Saul was trying to kill him. And so David was on the run. He was literally fleeing for his life.

He had to get away in such a quick fashion that he was not able to bring with him any weapons or any shield or armor or anything.

[4 : 56] He and a few of his closest allies basically had to hit the road and go. And as they were going, no provisions, no anything.

As they were going, they were gone for a couple days. They were extremely hungry. They were getting to the point where they needed nourishment of some sort. They came to the city of Nob or the village of Nob where the priests were that were in charge of the tabernacle.

And at this time, the temple had not yet been built. So the tabernacle was still basically a tent kind of a situation. And they would move it from place to place. And they were in Nob.

And there was a priest there, Ahimelech, who David approached and said, Hey, have you got some food for us? We're starving. We're on assignment.

We need to get some food. We had to go away so quickly we couldn't get any food or provisions with us. So David says to Ahimelech here, Now then, what do you have on hand?

[6 : 02] Give me five loaves of bread or whatever is here. And the priest answered David, I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread.

But that is an issue because the Old Testament law said there were some instructions dealing with this particular holy bread. And so now we've got to go back to the book of Leviticus and see what this instruction was with this particular bread that the priest was talking about.

In the law, it shall be for Aaron and his sons, the priesthood, that they shall eat it in a holy place.

Talking about this holy bread. Only the priests were allowed to eat this particular bread.

Since it is for him a most holy portion out of the Lord's food offerings, a perpetual due. In other words, this was a permanent rule in the tabernacle that the priests, once a week on the Sabbath, would bake 12 fresh loaves of this particular bread by particular recipe, and they would set it in the tabernacle, and that would be as an offering to God for that week.

And each week when they would go into the tabernacle to replace the bread that was there with this freshly baked bread, they were able to take the week-old bread and eat it of themselves.

[7 : 36] They were able to feed themselves with that bread. So that was the only bread that was available when David approached the priest in Nob. And look, guys, you can't have this bread because you're not part of the priesthood.

It is against the law for you to have this bread. And David basically is saying, well, me and my men are starving here, so please give us this bread.

And the priest relented and gave them the bread so that they could eat it. And apparently, we don't really even get the full story. We don't get the explanation of why it was okay for them to do this, even though the law said only the priests could eat this bread.

And now the priest in Nob was saying, okay, David, you can go ahead. Apparently, there's some sort of provision not written down anywhere, but kind of understood that if you're starving, go ahead and eat it.

You don't have to starve to death. You don't have to go hungry. If you don't have any food, you can eat this bread. And so that's the first part that Luke assumes that we know what he's talking about here in Luke 6.

[8 : 54] So you know the story of David eating this bread that was meant only for the priests. And apparently, we're not even expressly told that God approved of David and his men eating it.

But because they went on and there was no punishment, there wasn't any indication that God was upset with them or angry with them or carried out some sort of evil against them, you know, this was something kind of an exception to the law.

Okay? So that's the first part of it, David's story. The second part of it is that we would understand the Sabbath, and we really have no clue. We have a little bit of a clue of the Sabbath and what the Sabbath is all about.

The Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments from Exodus chapter 20 and some other places.

The commandment as expressed in the Ten Commandments goes this way.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all of your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

[10 : 07] Now, the word Sabbath translated is the word rest. Okay? Sabbath simply means to rest. We have it in our English translations kind of as a title, a Sabbath day, a rest day.

So the seventh day was prescribed in the law as to be a day of rest, a day away from your regular labors, not only for you but all those in your household, whether you had servants, whether you had farmhands, whoever worked for you, whoever was visiting from a foreign country, didn't matter. Everyone on the seventh day would rest from their labor. Now, what happened throughout Israel's history is the priesthood and the religious leaders began to add some extra laws to the one simple law of keeping the Sabbath day.

So on the Sabbath day, they started making lists of things that you could or could not do on the Sabbath day, things that were appropriate that you could carry out and do and things that were inappropriate, things that were wrong, things that God would be upset with you if you did them. And some of these rules, some of these extra laws that were created and written down in what's called the Mishnah became quite ludicrous, quite crazy.

[11:42] You could travel on the Sabbath day, but you could only go so far. That's why you read in the Gospels talking about someone traveling a Sabbath day's journey.

I don't even remember what the number was, but you could only go so many feet. And once you went that far, you could go no further without sinning against God because of this law.

If your neighbor was hungry and you had an extra loaf of bread, you were forbidden on the Sabbath to take that loaf of bread over to your neighbor.

That was against the law, and he could not come over to your house to pick up that loaf of bread. However, if your houses were close enough together and you had windows facing each other in between the two houses, it was lawful for you to take that loaf of bread and throw it out of your window into their window.

Now, I don't know how many attempts you got at this before you started to break the Sabbath. But this was kind of the kind of ridiculous kind of laws that they would come up with so that people would not break this command of keeping the Sabbath day holy.

[13:02] You were allowed to on the Sabbath day, for instance, if your donkey fell into a ditch on the Sabbath day, it was lawful for you to go and to take that donkey out of the ditch, to retrieve it, pull it out of the ditch.

But if you were some sort of a doctor and someone in the house got sick, it was against the law for you to practice medicine.

That person had to wait until sundown of that Sabbath day before any kind of medicine could be practiced on that person.

It was against the law to do that. So all of these in terms of what you could and couldn't do, you were allowed to, for instance, eat grain.

This is important to our story today. You were allowed to eat grain on the Sabbath day. But what you were not allowed to do was to pick the heads of grain off of the stalks growing in the fields and then put the grain, the husk and the grain, in between your hands and rub them together so as to do away with the shell or the husk of the grain and then eat, because that was considered harvesting.

[14:21] So I don't know how you were going to eat grain without husking the shell, but that was the law. You could eat something, apparently, if it was already husked or already shelled, but if it still was in the shell, you were not allowed to peel it or to crack it open or to rub it and remove the husk and eat that piece of grain.

That was against the law. So that's a part of the Sabbath. The thing that was going on with the Sabbath is that instead of the Sabbath being a gift that God had intended to give to Israel, instead of it being something that was a wonderful day of refreshment and re-energizing and rest, it became a burdensome day of obligation.

Because you had to mind all of your P's and Q's. You had to measure everything. You had to watch your step. You had to see who was watching you to see if, could you turn on the light?

Could you not turn on the light? Could you, you know, light a candle? Could you, all of these things had to be guarded. When God simply said, listen, on the seventh day, rest.

It's a gift for you. Trust me in this. Even during the harvest, if you will remember the Sabbath, I will make you just as productive whether you work six days a week or whether you work seven.

[15:59] Trust me in this. And so their resting on the seventh day, on the Sabbath day, was an expression of trusting in God that he would provide.

It just simply boils down to that simple message. And the Pharisees had turned it into this obnoxious, burdensome problem for them.

So much so, Mark chapter 2, verse 27, he said to them, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

In other words, the Sabbath was meant to be a blessing to us, not for us to serve the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was meant to serve us.

So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. We're going to see that phrase again in our text. And then the third thing that he assumes that they would understand, and hopefully that we would, was having to do with these guys known as the Pharisees.

[17:09] And we've talked about these guys before. They were, again, a special group of guys. Theologically, doctrinally, they would have matched up with Jesus.

But in terms of the way they lived it out, it was just all work and no play, and it was just miserable. And so Jesus had something against them.

And we see that. Jesus said to the disciples, watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Now the Sadducees were another group of religious leaders, religious slash political leaders in Israel. The religious leaders were also political leaders.

The Sadducees were kind of more of a minor group. The Pharisees were the more popular, I don't know if that's the right word, but the more well-known group.

[18:06] The Sadducees would have been considered the liberals of their day. They didn't believe some of the scriptures, the basic teachings of the scriptures.

They denied. And so that's what made them kind of problematic and made it so that people didn't really like what they were teaching. But the leaven of the Pharisees, now when the disciples first heard this, they were thinking about bread.

That's not what Jesus was talking about. And so later on, verse 11, Jesus asks them, how is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread?

When I talked to you about the leaven of the Pharisees, I wasn't talking about bread, guys. It was a word picture. It was a metaphor. Okay? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He repeats it. And we come to understand verse 12. Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching.

[19:08] Jesus was saying that the teaching of the Pharisees was like leaven, and leaven was considered something that was evil.

It was sinful. So Jesus is saying, wow, whatever these guys are teaching, don't follow it. Don't listen to it. Don't give it the time of day because it's wrong.

So that's a pretty bold statement that Jesus is making about the Pharisees. So we understand all those at least a little bit now as we come back to our text and see what's happening here.

So on a Sabbath, while he was going through the grain fields, and we've already had some clues in earlier chapters about this, that the Sabbath kind of became a key thing for them.

Jesus was starting to do things on the Sabbath that they considered unlawful. So now they were like, they had their eye out for him. So every Sabbath day was coming around.

[20:16] They're like, okay, we got to pay special attention to Jesus on the Sabbath day so that we can catch him doing something wrong. Because if he's doing something wrong, he can't be the Messiah.

We can do away with him and go on with our lives, which is what they wanted to do. So on a Sabbath, while he was going through the grain fields, his disciples plucked and ate some of the heads of grain.

Now, that wasn't a problem, but what I've highlighted is rubbing them in their hands. The rubbing, the heads of grain in their hands served to kind of shuck the shell around that little piece of grain. I can't imagine walking through a field and thinking, oh, boy, that little piece of grain, that's going to fill me up. I mean, you got to eat quite a bit to do that.

But here they were. They were just walking through the fields. No big deal. Let's go, you know, eat them up, whatever. That's all they were doing. And the Pharisees were getting upset with them.

[21:25] Because, hey, that's considered harvesting, and you're not supposed to harvest on the Sabbath day, don't you know? So some of the Pharisees said, why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

Now, understand, there's nothing in the Bible that says they couldn't do this. But there was something written in the Mishnah that said, you can't take heads of grain and rub them in your

hand.

That's harvesting. You can't do that. So they're taking something that's extra biblical outside of the Bible, and they're making it, they're equating it with the very command of God, given in the Ten Commandments.

So that's kind of a concerning point going the other way. And Jesus answered them. It's like he doesn't even give them the time of day. He gives them an answer, but the answer is like, what? What? I mean, even when I read, you know, go back into 1 Samuel and read the story, it's like, what just happened here? I don't get this. Because there's no clear indication from God that he was fine with David eating these loaves of bread.

[22 : 38] And there was no indication at all that God was upset that David ate these loaves of bread. So Jesus answered them. And have you not read?

Which you got to understand, when Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, and he says, have you not read? Take that as a slap in the face. Okay?

Because the Pharisees were like the most read guys on the planet. They knew the Old Testament law backwards and forwards, inside and out.

They absolutely knew. So Jesus says, have you not read? And what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God, the tabernacle, and took and ate the bread of the presence.

This is what this special bread was known as, the bread of the presence. It's the presence of God in the tabernacle, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat.

[23 : 41] And also he gave it to those who were with him. Jesus isn't even, he doesn't even endorse the idea that it happened. Right?

He's not saying David was in the right to do it. He sort of is, but it's, again, it's just kind of ambiguous. It's not really clear. It's just, hey, do you guys remember this story about David who ate this bread that he wasn't supposed to eat, and he did it anyway?

And apparently he got away with it. And, so here we are. He doesn't address the specific subject. Is it okay for the disciples to take those pieces of grain and roll them around in their hands, suck them, to harvest on the Sabbath day?

He doesn't, he doesn't even address that at all. He just goes and tells them about David. And then he said to them, the son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. Great.

What does that mean? Well, it means that he is God who created the Sabbath day. He is the one who's in charge of the Sabbath day.

[24 : 51] I think he can determine what's acceptable and what's not acceptable on the Sabbath day. Of course, that would have made them even more upset that he would say something, that he would make this kind of a claim.

And yet here he does. So that's, that's it. That's it. The whole first story is just these five verses and that's it. That's all it is. And all it is, is meant to, to alarm us that, okay, the Pharisees are catching Jesus doing these Sabbath things that he shouldn't be doing.

And here's another one. Verse six on another Sabbath. So this is a different Sabbath. It doesn't mean that it was the next successive Sabbath seven days later.

It just means that, Hey, there was another time. So it's not necessarily in chronological order here. On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching.

And a man was there whose right hand was withered. Now we don't know what that looks like. My guess is he had on a robe and long sleeves and he probably kind of kept it under the sleeves because, you know, if you, if you had a withered hand, you didn't want to necessarily expose that and make that the topic of conversation every time you met someone.

[26 : 06] So here he was in the Sabbath day. Jesus is there. And then the scribes and the Pharisees, what'd they do? They're watching. They're watching him.

They're keeping their eye out because, okay, we got Jesus in the house. All right. It's the Sabbath day. We're in the synagogue. Jesus is here. Oh, look, there's a guy over here with a withered hand. What's he going to do? What's he going to do? To see whether he would heal on the Sabbath so that they might find a reason to, here it is, to accuse him.

That's what, that's what their whole game was. But again, Jesus knew their thoughts. Just like in chapter five, when they're in the house and it's crowded and they lower the guy down through the roof.

And Jesus says, I forgive you of your sins. And they're like, Oh, how can he do that? That's blasphemy. Only God can do that. Jesus knew their thoughts, right? And answered them here again.

[27 : 05] Same thing. He knew their thoughts. And he said to the man with the withered hand, come and stand here. And he rose and he stood there. So the man with the withered hand, again, everyone knows the rumors.

He probably knows what's coming up. Jesus might be like, Hey, your sins are forgiven you first, but he'll eventually get to the point where he's going to heal my hand. Right? So Jesus said to them, particularly to the scribes and the Pharisees, it's the Pharisees and their scribes.

Um, but of the whole of the whole people in the synagogue, I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm?

Which one? Of course, there's an obvious answer here to do good is lawful on the Sabbath to save life or to destroy it.

If someone is about to die, obviously you can save their life on the Sabbath day. And after looking around at them, at them all, he said to him, to the man with the withered hand, stretch out your hand.

[28 : 18] And he did so and his hand was restored. His hand was healed. Now, now get this. They were filled with fury.

The Pharisees, the scribes, they were filled with fury because a man in the synagogue on the Sabbath day could heal a man's hand.

It made them not just bothered, not a little bit upset. They were filled with fury. They were so angry. And it's like, what in the world are you thinking that it would make you furious at Jesus? And now they begin to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

All right, we've got him. He's fallen into our trap. That's kind of how they think. And now the question starts to become, what are we going to do with this guy?

[29 : 27] We can't go. We can't let him go on claiming to be the Messiah. We can't let him go on, continue this ministry and create all of this ruckus. Rome is going to be upset. We're going to lose our authority.

We're going to lose our power. We're going to lose our position. We're going to lose our financial standing because of this guy. Rome's going to come and stomp this out. And we're going to be the ones caught up in all of this.

We can't have this happen. We got to figure out what to do with Jesus. He's the problem. And we leave the story here. And we spend the rest of our time doing a couple of things here.

One is trying to understand what's going on with the Pharisees. And the second thing is this thing about the Sabbath. What is that all about? So we're going to look at, understand, try to understand the Sabbath day and to get a theology of rest.

A theology of rest. Now, you may not have heard that there is a theology of rest, but there is. And so it's good for us to understand that theology.

[30 : 30] But the first thing that we're going to do is we're going to talk about these Pharisees, guys. How did the Pharisees, God's self-appointed defenders, that's what they did.

They appointed themselves as the defenders of God. We're the ones that have to watch out to make sure everybody's mining their P's and Q's and doing everything right. But how did they become such enemies of God, which is what they became?

So much so God was against everything that they stood for. So the first thing, the first couple of things that we're going to see here are actually kind of innocent.

Kind of things that you and I might would do in terms of the way that we avoid sin. Okay? For instance, the Pharisees built extra spiritual fences.

Part of their problem is they built so many of them. And they built these fences just in case to keep you from going to the point where you would commit the sin that God had commanded not to do.

[31 : 36] So, for instance, if there was a cliff over here, let's say that there's a cliff right here at this aisle. There's a cliff. And if I go over the cliff, I'm going to die because it's that far of a cliff.

And so to protect everybody, there's a fence. God puts up a fence right here to keep everybody from going over that cliff. And it's like, okay, God's going to protect us saying, don't go over this fence because if you do, there's going to be a drop off and you're going to die.

Well, to kind of help God out, the Pharisees would then start to build some extra fences. And they would say, if you go over this fence, you're getting awfully close to that fence. And if you go over that fence, you're going to die. Well, let's build another fence so that you don't get close to the fence that's close to the fence, that if you go over that fence, you'll certainly die. And then over time, they would keep building extra fences to the point where they would say, okay, now if you go over this fence, I know it's five fences from the one that if you go over the one with the cliff, you see how silly this is becoming?

[32 : 45] But eventually, these other fences became just as important and just as sinful for you to go over. Okay? So, now listen, we do these kinds of things today.

We do. We build fences to keep from committing the sin that God absolutely does not want us to commit. Let me give you a fence that, for instance, in our house we built to protect Sherry and I and to protect our children in particular.

For instance, in our house we built an extra fence that said we won't go to any R-rated movies. Is it a sin? Does God say anywhere that going to an R-rated movie is a sinful thing to do?

No. That's an extra biblical fence that Sherry and I erected for our family. As a rule, as a regulation, as a family law, so that we wouldn't come over here and what would be the sin that we were fearful of committing over here?

This would be the real sin. Would be filling our minds with pornographic images, with images of violence, with images of language that would be abusive to God.

[34 : 12] Those kinds of things that we knew that if we get to the point where we're participating in this and reveling in this, that is sin that God speaks against.

And so we would come over here and erect the fence. Now, granted, there are some movies that are PG that are just as bad because they could be promoting things that are completely ungodly, but because they don't violate what the stipulations are for an R-rating, hey, we can go to this movie.

Okay? So is it legalistic for us to have this rule? It can be. If the rule becomes you can't go to an R-rated movie because if you go to an R-rated movie, you're committing sin against God. That's something that I'm saying. What's that worth? Nothing. So we have to be careful about what we do with these extra rules that we have.

Some of you may have rules around how you handle things like alcohol or what you will read or not read or what you will look at on the Internet or not look at on the Internet.

[35 : 30] And to protect yourself, you build extra fences. For instance, on the highway, you don't want to speed. So you set a cruise control to keep you from going over that limit.

Now, that's a whole different kind of a thing because there's nothing in the Bible that says thou must go 70 miles an hour or whatever the speed limit might be.

But you get the idea of how we can build fences to keep us from breaking the law in one way or another. So the idea of fences may not be a bad thing.

I hope that with you and your family, you have some fences that you have built with your children. These fences are very healthy. But you also have to present them as mom and dad's fences, not God's law.

The moment you start to equate them, now you're going to get into all kinds of trouble and all kinds of legalisms and you become pharisaical in the way that you try to carry out your relationship with God.

[36 : 41] So here's the deal here. Colossians chapter 2. Now, this is from the New Living Translation. It helps us to kind of maybe understand some of the language a little better.

You have died with Christ and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world such as don't handle, don't taste, don't touch?

So, for instance, they're walking through the fields and they're eating the grain and they're, you know, rolling it in their hands. And Jesus would say, well, wait a minute. Those are extra biblical. Those are the world's rules that you've made up. Those are not God's rules. What are you doing with that? Why are you going in that direction with these extra rules?

These rules, verse 23, may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline.

[37 : 43] We think that if I restrict myself with these extra rules, that's going to make me more spiritual. Uh-uh. Don't you dare go there.

Although I can, and maybe some of you who have been around Christianity for a number of years can remember some churches and some places where you would go and you would hear sermons about things that you should not do, things that you should do.

And if you don't do the things you're not supposed to do and you do do the things that you are supposed to do, that makes you spiritual. And you can be the pastor of a church.

You can be the deacon of a church. You can teach a Sunday school class in a church as long as you keep my list of do's and don'ts. And that becomes the measure of a person's spirituality.

Whew! Whew! Is that a dangerous place to go? Because it has nothing to do with a person's relationship with God.

[38 : 46] And that has proven itself out over the years. Strong devotion, pious self-denial, severe bodily discipline, but they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

And we've heard stories of people in ministry who promoted these kinds of rules, and then when their sin was exposed, it's like, what good did the rules do them?

Nothing. It was just a game. One of the most, the one that is kind of highlights in my mind more than anyone else is a fellow by the name of Jack Hiles.

I don't know if any of you have ever heard of Jack Hiles. This goes back into the 60s and early 70s. In Hammond, Indiana, the church that he pastored there was probably the largest church in the country at the time.

Massive church, massive ministry. And they thought everyone else was lost but them because they had all of these rules about how you want to live your Christian life.

[40 : 06] And those rules included such things as, ladies, you cannot wear pants. Pants are wicked and evil. You can't dress like a man.

And so, ladies, if you're wearing pants or slacks or whatever, you're... I heard one preacher say, the problem with America today is pastors' wives who wear pants.

So, everybody check Sherry. Where's Lisa? You guys wearing pants today? It's right there. See, it's my point. How silly.

But the thing about Jack Hiles is that he carried on an affair with his secretary for over 40 years.

And it wasn't exposed until he died. Can you imagine being a part of a ministry like that and buying all of that garbage that they were shoveling?

[41 : 08] Wire-rimmed glasses were the devil. Were of the devil. Do you know why, Kim? You got wire-rimmed glasses on? I'm picking on you. John Lennon wore wire-rimmed glasses, don't you know?

And he is of the devil, so... Open-toed shoes, ladies. Not the time of year for open-toed shoes yet, but... Don't you be there wearing open-toed shoes.

Playing cards. Can't use playing cards. Can't go to the theater, period. Can't, can't, can't, can't, can't. Everything in their life was about can't.

Things that you can't do, things that you can do. And the measure of spirituality was based on how you're doing with the list of do's and don'ts. Just like the Pharisees.

And they think they're being the protectors of the faith. No, you're not.

[42 : 11] Because having all of these outside rules does nothing to tame the evil desires that are going on within. Even to the point of today, there are pastors being exposed because of relationships that they were a part of either years before or currently.

That should not have been happening. And part of it is this, this kind of a thing. Secondly, they turned helpful spiritual tools into rigid religious rules.

You guys remember Chuck E. Cheese? I don't know.

Do they exist anymore? I don't know if there's one around here. But when my kids were growing up, one time on their birthday, for one of their birthdays, we took them and some friends to Chuck E.

Cheese in Muskegon.

And one of those years, my mother found out. And she was upset with us because she thought that Chuck E. Cheese was the precursor to gambling.

[43 : 37] Interesting. Interesting. I mean, there's another can of worms we could open. What about gambling? What about going to the casino?

No. Again, the scriptures don't address it. So what are your rules about that? I can tell you what my rules are, but my rules, should you listen to Rich's rules?

No. So I got to tell you this story. I was in a church. I was pastoring a church in West Virginia.

And this was a church that had taught many of these kind of legalistic things. And there was a young lady, married, a couple kids, but she was an avid runner. She would compete in local races and was a runner. And so one of the first Sunday school classes I was teaching there, she asked me the question, is it okay, pastor, for me to wear shorts when I go running?

[44 : 39] How do you answer that question? I know some of you are like, well, duh.

But I didn't handle it that way. I handled it by saying, I've got to change her name for the sake of, let's call her Betsy.

Betsy. I said, well, Betsy, I'm not going to tell you. Because I'm not your priest. You get your approval from God.

Whether you think it's appropriate to wear shorts when you go running. I'll give you one biblical principle. And that principle had to do around the idea of modesty.

But you determine what is modest in your own eyes. And you make that decision between you and God. I don't have an answer for you. Now, all that was within me was wanting to say, well, of course you can wear shorts, silly.

[45 : 48] But I don't know that that was the appropriate answer given that circumstance. In that circumstance, the people in the church were looking to the pastor to answer all their questions.

What's right and what's wrong? What's on the list? What's not on the list? And we've got to get away from that. Each one of us, we believe in the priesthood of the believer.

You are a priest before God as a believer in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is between you and the Lord to determine what is right and what is wrong. Other than what God has given us is clear, black and white, right and wrong in the scriptures.

I can't decide, well, I'm going to go murder my neighbor because I don't like the way he's mowing his lawn. I don't have priesthood over that issue because God has given me that answer.

But whether or not I see a particular movie, whether or not I enjoy a particular drink, is between you and the Lord. And don't let anybody else try to dictate to you what is right and what is wrong.

[46 : 56] Now, if somebody has an argument that makes sense to you, you can apply that. Eventually, and we mentioned this before, they're extra biblical.

They're outside of the Bible rules and traditions became more important to them than God's actual biblical commands and priorities.

So you have an instance like this, Mark chapter 7, very similar incident to what we've read in Luke chapter 6 today.

And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? The tradition of the elders is like Bible to them, maybe even more so.

But they eat with defiled hands. What is that? They came up with all these rules about washing before a meal or washing before a particular event or whatever it was.

[48 : 05] And so they had to go through their whole ritual of washing their pots and pans and stuff like that. And they turned it into religious rules.

And Jesus replied to them, Well, well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites? And this is, once again, Jesus stepping on their toes, maybe stomping on their toes.

Or maybe it was just sort of stomping on their aorta. I don't know. As it is written, These people, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Jesus calls them right out. He says, Guys, your commandments are nothing.

They're just commandments of men. They have nothing to do with what God has ordained, what God has put in place. And then finally, these guys became arrogant, judgmental, and harsh.

[49 : 19] And the way that they looked down on everybody, the way that they treated other people who weren't like them. And this is what makes it worse. They thought God wanted them to be that way.

They thought God was smiling on them because they were acting like terrible, rotten, judgmental, arrogant. Somebody's.

Look, you want to understand what God cares about. Take a look. Take a look at this. Micah chapter 6, verse 6. With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old, and sacrifice? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of ram, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? No, here's what God cares about. He has told you, O man, what is good.

[50 : 20] And what does the Lord require of you? What does the Lord require of us? He requires that we would do justice. That we would love mercy or kindness.

That we would walk humbly with our God. That's what God cares about. You want to know the kinds of sin that God cares about?

I'll show you. There are a couple places in the scriptures that give you a list. Shall we look at a list that actually comes from God? It's part of his inspired word of God.

Here's what God cares about. There are six that is from Proverbs chapter 6. There are six things that the Lord hates. Seven that are an abomination to him. All right, so we got a counter.

Here we go. Number one, haughty eyes. What are haughty eyes? Pride, right? Pride and arrogance. God doesn't like that. Matter of fact, he considers it an abomination.

[51 : 24] A lying tongue. You want to carry out deceit? God doesn't like that. Hands that shed innocent blood. Oh boy. Abortion.

A heart that devises wicked plans. Okay? Feet that make haste to run to evil. A false witness who breathes out lies.

And seven. And don't you know lying gets two of the seven? One who sows discord among the brothers.

By the way, that is why when we were raising our kids, and I know some of you do this the same way. When you're raising your kids, when they do something wrong, it's one thing.

But if they lie about it, ooh, that's crossing a different line. Right? Right? And it's always good. You could try, and you could say it until you're blue in the face.

[52 : 27] It's always going to be worse for you if you lie about it. What do they do the next time? The human heart is wicked. It is deceitful. And if you have kids, you understand that.

This is what God cares about. Okay? Notice what's not on here. You went to see an R-rated movie. God thinks that's an abomination.

Or you had a beer. God thinks that's an abomination. Or you just fill in the blank with all of these things, these religious things that sometimes people get caught up in as rights or wrongs.

God has made it clear. So let's talk about rest. Because that's frustrating what we just talked about. Listening to those guys. But a theology of rest.

And what I've done here is I have taken the word rest, the English word rest, and I looked it up. This is, you see on your notes, from Merriam-Webster.

[53 : 33] Merriam-Webster Dictionary. And there's all sorts of different kinds of definitions of the word rest. The four that we're going to look at are all found here. This is directly from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

The first one in the Merriam-Webster has to do with sleep. So we're not going to talk about that because that's not what the Sabbath is about. But these next four do refer to a definition for Sabbath rest.

The word Sabbath. So the first is to cease from action or to stop your motion. To refrain from labor or exertion. Okay, we get that, right?

We understand that rest is not, you know, I'm going to mow my lawn. Or it could be, depending on how you view mowing your lawn.

Rest, to be free from anxiety or disturbance. How much rest is there for the person whose mind is filled with anxiety? So rest, a part of that definition means to be free from anxiety.

[54 : 51] To sit or lie fixed. To be supported. Something else is holding you up. Or in our case, someone else is holding you up.

As a column rests on its pedestal. It's being supported. It's not holding itself up. And then finally, to remain confident or to trust.

In other words, the word rest is synonymous with the word trust. So when you say, oh, I am a Christian because I am trusting in the Lord.

You could then also say very accurately. And it carries with the picture. Because trust is somewhat of an intangible word.

It's hard for us to see what that looks like for someone to trust. Right? You can't see it. You can't wrap your arms around it. But if I say I am a Christian, I am resting in the Lord.

[56 : 02] There's a picture associated with that. All the things that we just talked about. Okay? I'm ceasing from my labor. I am supported by something that's holding me up.

I am not filled with anxiety. I am trusting in him. To be based. That's kind of a current term these days, right?

If someone is based, what does that mean? If I say, Doug, you're based, man. What do I mean by that? What does that mean? What is it?

That's not the current vernacular. Based. It's like, it's like, I don't even know.

I just know it's a good thing that Doug is based. Solid. But in me, if... I'm not a popular guy, so I don't know.

[57 : 15] To remain confident, to trust, to be based, or founded, or rooted. Colossians chapter 2. Your foundation is in Christ.

That's what's going on there. That's what it means to rest. Now, you put this into the command. By the way, the command, the fourth commandment, the fourth of the Ten Commandments, is the only one that is not mentioned for us to obey in the New Testament.

The other nine are. It's why, for instance, we don't live according to the Old Testament law anymore. We don't follow. We are not under the Old Testament law anymore.

And I would say all of it, even the Ten Commandments. And you would say, well, Rich, nine of those Ten Commandments, you would say we have to obey.

[58 : 18] And I would say, yes, I agree with you. Because they're all repeated in the New Testament. As part of the New Testament law that we're called to obey. But that fourth one, to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, is not repeated in the New Testament.

Matter of fact, where it becomes finished is at the cross. When Jesus said the words, it is finished, all the Old Testament law had been paid for, not done away with, but paid for, fulfilled in what Jesus did for us.

And even, I want to share with you a different way of reading that sentence. So understanding this command of Exodus 20, verse 8.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it, what's the word? Holy. And when we see the word holy, what are we thinking?

I heard someone over here say church? Religious, right? Holy is like this. Sanctimonious.

[59 : 39] Holy. Stop it. The first thing is the first word.

Remember the rest day. Sabbath day. If the word Sabbath is translated, we wouldn't know it as the Sabbath day. Now, I think it's appropriate for us to keep the word Sabbath because that's the title of it.

But if you translate that word, it means rest day. Remember the rest day. The day of rest that God has given us for our own needs, our own restoration, our own...

And then the second part of this, to keep it separate. We take the word holy and we make it religious.

We make it, you know, dress it up in some sort of priestly robes and... Oh, holy. And God is holy. Oh. What does that mean? It means that God is different than.

[60 : 47] It means that he is separate from everything else that we could ever understand. God is above and beyond and different than.

And what's different about him is that there's no sin. It is... He is completely pure and righteous and holy, separate from.

So if we remember the rest day to keep it separate from the other six... All the other activity that you do on the six days...

The seventh day now, this Sabbath day, this day of rest that God has designated... Keep it separate from the other six. That's what he's telling us to do. That it's going to look different.

It's going to feel different. What you do want it is going to be different. Everything about it is going to be different. Because it's going to be separate from the other six. Now, one more passage of scripture.

[61 : 51] I'm going to read through this really quick. This is from Hebrews chapter 4, talking about a theology of rest. Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands.

And he's talking about the Old Testament. The Israel coming up out of Egypt, going through the Red Sea, coming into the precipice of the promised land. And they refused to go in.

Because they refused to believe God's promise. And so God rejected them. For 40 years, they wandered in the wilderness. And that whole generation died off before the next generation went into the promised land.

So they refused to enter that rest. But for us, New Testament believers, while the promise of entering his rest still stands. You and I have this promise given to us.

Let us fear. Lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. What are you doing, writer of Hebrews?

[62 : 49] Good news? You're telling us to fear something? Yeah. Actually, here's what you're supposed to fear. For good news came to us, just as to them.

But the message they heard did not benefit them. Why? They didn't believe it. And they died in the desert. Because they were not united by faith with those who listened. So fear unbelief.

Fear your lack of faith. Absolutely. Now, in other places, we're told, well, Hebrews 3.19, the end of the previous chapter, they were unable to enter because of their unbelief.

They didn't have faith. For we who have believed. Another way of understanding this is we who believe. It's a past, something that happens in the past but has a current reality.

It's still true. So, for instance, if I were to ask you, are you saved? Are you a Christian? What makes you say that?

[63 : 54] Well, because I trusted in Christ back in 1981. Wrong answer. The answer is because I am trusting in Christ, period.

It's past reality. It has present tense control over my life. It's not something that I've done in my past and have forgotten.

If my faith, if my Christianity is all based on some day back in 1981, who, boy, maybe I should be fearful. Because is my faith genuine?

My faith today helps me to know I'm saved. I have trusted Christ. I am trusting Christ as my Savior. It goes on, verse 8. If Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on for us.

[65 : 00] So then there remains a Sabbath rest. Now, the word in the Greek here is just the word Sabbath. It's just the Greek translation of the Hebrew into the Greek, and it's just Sabbath.

The word rest is redundant. The English translators added the word rest just to make us to understand that it's rest. There remains there a Sabbath for the people of God, a rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest.

Different word than Sabbath. Still means the word rest. Whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works.

I can't earn it. I can't work for it. It's simply resting in Christ. Let us, therefore, strive. If we're going to strive for anything, it's to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

So, last truth when we come to understand the theology of rest. Fear unbelief in what God has promised. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. Even though God has told us many times, do not fear for I am with you.

[66 : 16] Isaiah 41. God gave us a spirit not of fear. Yes, that is true. But if you are struggling with unbelief, if you do have unbelief, if you do not have faith, appropriate to fear.

So, let us fear. Lest any of you should seem to have fallen in it. As long as you are resting or trusting in Christ, you can be utterly fearless in the face of anything, even death, even God.

All right. Band, come on up. We're going to sing a song called Abide.

The word abide, it's a synonym for the word rest. So, someone's phone is active today.

The word abide and the word rest are also synonyms. So, resting, trusting in Christ, abiding in Christ, that's what this song is about.