

Sabbath Rest Comes from Jesus – As a Gift!

- Today in Gospel, Mk 2, Jesus is preaching/teaching kingdom of God throughout Galilee. Got many followers; also many enemies – Phars watching like hawk. This day happens to be a Sat, Sabb, day on which God commanded no work to be done. Sabb was day of rest, physical & spiritual; in fact, word Sabb = Hebrew, rest. Well, on this particular Sabb, Jesus & discs walking by grainfield. Discs hungry, so picked some heads grain, rubbed between fingers, blew away chaff, ate kernels as snack.
- Phars: big problem; vs. 24. Problem: not with what, but when. What doing, perfectly fine. Actually passage in Dt 23, specifically, **“If you enter your neighbor’s grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hand, but you must not put a sickle to their standing grain” (:25)**. So can’t steal armfuls of grain; but can pick little kernels. What ruffled Phars’ feathers: Sabb Day.
- Here’s something need know re Phars: really big into Sabb rules. God: no work on Sabb (1st Lesson). How interpret; what constitutes as work? Phars thought lot re that, came up with long list of their own Sabb rules – things they said people should not do on Sabb. Called rabbinic (of rabbis) tradition. Acc to their traditions: picking grain w/ fingers = harvesting = work = work on Sabb wrong. “So therefore, Jesus, you’re breaking law. Some rabbi you are, letting your discs break rabbinic tradition, and work on Sabb! How dare you!?”
- What Phars did not understand, what God wants us understand: *TITLE*. Think re how Sabb got started anyway: at creation, when God created 6 days, rested 7th. But really think needed rest, as if Almighty was tuckered out from all hard work? No: God established Sabb and rested on 7th as pattern for his people to follow, so they could have rest, bec knows we need rest. And think this (with any coms): does God somehow benefit from our obeying his coms? Take Sabb for instance: God said don’t work on Sabb; but does God benefit or gain anything if we obey him and do rest on Sabb? No – doesn’t gain a thing! God’s coms meant to benefit, bless us!
- That’s why says vs. 27. *TITLE*, to benefit us – not to burden us! Man was not created in order to be burdened by the Sabb. To illustrate (as answers Phars), brings up somewhat obscure OT reference. Vs. 25-26. Takes place in 1 Sam 21; you could look up sometime on own. But basically, this when David running from King Saul; comes to tabernacle, looking for food. Even though David & men not priests (so technically, shouldn’t be eating this special tabernacle bread), high priest gave them bread anyway, because, again: God’s law is not meant to burden his people, but to benefit/bless them. And here in grainfields, as discs have little snack, Jesus says same thing: Sabb law is not meant to burden God’s people but to benefit/bless them. Vs. 27. *TITLE*.
- What this all mean for us today, that *TITLE*? Still have 3rd Com (Remem...holy). Heard in 1st Lesson, Dt 5. But also have Col 2, 2nd Lesson: **“Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration, or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (2:16-17)**. In NT, things are diff, bec Jesus has fulfilled Sabb. Sabb Day pointed ahead to Jesus, taught OT people to look forward to the true rest that coming Messiah would bring. And since Messiah Jesus has now come, we find our Sabb rest in him.
- That’s why in NT, it’s okay to work on Sat, or even Sun. Jesus fulfilled the Sabb! We’re not obligated by God’s law to take certain day off from work, or have stores closed on Suns. Our Sabb rest doesn’t come from any day of week; comes from Jesus. That’s why Jesus: vs. 28. Jesus is Lord who not only instituted Sabb; also fulfilled. **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest ...rest for your souls” (Mt 11:28-29)**. True *TITLE*, through his death on cross, res from dead. Reason Jesus gave life and rose from dead for us: was to forgive all our sins, restore peace with God, and give us eternal life in heaven. And that gives us true spiritual rest for our souls. That is the Sabb rest that we have, right now, by faith in Jesus.

- So now, as NT Xians, when hear God say “Remem...holy,” way we keep that 3rd Com is by setting aside special time in our week (every week) to worship God and hear his Word. Think Luther’s Cat – 3rd Com & Expl. Most natural way for us to hear/learn God’s Word is to come to church. When you come church, hear Scriptures, listen sermon, take Communion, pray to Jesus: find rest for your soul. *TITLE*. Fact that you can come to church, hear gospel, is gift from God to you, to strength your faith and give you spiritual rest.
- Problem for us is: we don’t always appreciate that gift; instead, often take Sabb rest for granted. Think about it: if we skip church, just because don’t feel like going; or if we let other things in life take priority over worshipping God at church (baseball games, sports tournaments, vacations, whatever) – that not only breaks 3rd Com and is a sin; that also says to God, “I’m not very interested in your spiritual rest; don’t really need it right now; maybe later.” And of course, who am I talking to right now: people who came to church today. But there’s a lot from our cong missing. And if we’re honest, there’s little voice in all us that says, “Oh great! Another Sun AM (Mon PM); I don’t really wanna go.” But if we want to stay close to Jesus, remain well-rested in his Gospel, we need come church regularly. It’s the 3rd Com. And we’re all guilty of breaking 3rd Com.
- But Jesus kept Sabb Day holy, always, for us, and he forgives us when we despise preaching and his word. And he continues to give us Sabb rest, because he loves us. That day in grainfields, what Phars couldn’t wrap minds around: you don’t get Sabb rest from rabbinic tradition; you get it from Jesus. His grace, gospel, love – that’s true spiritual rest. We should never take that rest for granted, but thank God for it, regard it as holy, and gladly hear and learn it. Only then will we understand that *TITLE*.

Mark 2:23-28

²³ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

²⁵ He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶ In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”

²⁷ Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”