

Once upon a time in the history of our great nation, a set of laws existed about what you could or could not do on Sundays that no man, woman, or child dared to disobey even though they wanted to. Some of you young bucks don't know anything about these laws because they were on the books long before your existence, in a galaxy that seems far, far away. But some of us do because we spent most Sundays wishing we could be somewhere we couldn't be specifically because these laws were in place. I'm not talking about the type of laws that say it's a crime to mispronounce the name Arkansas if you are a resident of Arkansas (a real one still on the books), nor am I talking about the laws on the books in Iowa that make it a crime punishable by up to 30 days in prison and a \$625 fine if you sell fake butter to someone without telling them it's fake (that one is real too). I'm talking about those Sunday bummer laws you and I knew as Blue Laws, laws that have absolutely nothing to do with blue. But they did have everything to do with promoting the observance of a Sabbath day of rest in nearly every state of the Union. A kid born in Two Egg, Florida that liked to hunt and fish had to learn at a very early age to do his hunting and fishing after school or on a Saturday. Because if he did so on a Sunday, he was going to spend the next week in a prison striped uniform breaking rocks in the hot sun because he fought the law and the law won. A kid walking into the convenience store on a Sunday in Possum Bluff, Florida, just to buy an RC Cola, had to look for the alternative cooler because the other ones were roped off with yellow police tape because they couldn't sell any of the devil's juices on a Sunday. And many adolescent female social butterflies spent their Sunday afternoons running up mom and dad's phone bill because they had to find some way other than telepathy to communicate with their friends because they sure couldn't go to the mall. It was closed on Sundays. And those dastardly suffocating, social distancing blue laws were to blame.

Those Blue Laws have now gone the way of the Ford Edsel and Lawn Darts. But the fact that those laws existed in our nation implies that it is possible to completely miss the point of why Jesus prescribed a Sabbath-Rest in the first place. The Pharisees sure did. They heard the word "Sabbath" and didn't just think of the 4th Command of the Decalogue. They also thought about the 613 other laws they came up with just so they wouldn't be guilty of violating it. And in so doing, they completely missed one of the most treasured spiritual concepts in the entire Bible. It is this: the rest of God. You see, people of God, it is possible to hear a command like "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" and completely miss the point of why God ordained a Sabbath rest in the first place, just like the Pharisees. The Pharisees heard the words "Sabbath" and "rest" and thought of banning hunting and fishing on a Sunday. That's because they operated under the assumption that they were made for the Sabbath. But Jesus' disciples heard the words "Sabbath" and "rest" and thought of a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light. That's because they knew God ordained the Sabbath rest for their benefit. So today, church, I want to talk to you about one of the most treasured spiritual concepts in the entire Bible: the rest of God. And I want to apply it to your life by telling you what the Lord of the Sabbath means when he tells you to rest in Him." To do that, please turn with me to 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."

What the Lord of the Sabbath Means When He Tells You to Rest in Him:

1. It's how His plans unfold (v23)

- **The Mississippi River:** (1) There is a natural wonder of God's creation that's truly amazing right here in the United States. It's the river that starts as trickle in Minnesota and flows 2,348 miles until it pours into the Gulf of Mexico. It's the Mississippi River. (2) The amazing thing about it is this: the Arkansas River, the Illinois River, the Missouri River, the Ohio River, and the Red River all flow into it and make it what it is. (3) The rest of God works like the Mighty Mississippi. There are numerous plans of God intersect. But they all flow from the river of God's rest.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** From the beginning of creation to the end of all things visible and invisible, every plan of God is and will be sustained by rest.
- **The Sabbath Rest of God in the Bible:** (1) The word "Sabbath" in v23 sets the whole passage up under that central theme. The word Sabbath means "rest." It's how God operates and how he chooses His plan for the world to unfold. (2) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and he rested on the seventh day. Creation was the crowning glory of His word and he rested to put it in place. (3) Jesus was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities and buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. God rested on the Sabbath even though the work was not complete. And then on the first day of the week, up from the grave he arose. The work of Jesus was the crowning glory of creation and between the Passion and Resurrection he rested to bring it about. (4) When we see His face, beside the River of Heaven as clear as crystal, we will rest in His presence.

- **App:** There is a calmness of the soul in the rest of God. It tells us that our lives may be or will be difficult. There are many things left unfinished. There are many left to do. Some of which may be exceedingly difficult and taxing. But he reveals His Presence to us in the mighty river of the calmness of rest.
2. **It's how the Christian Life operates (v23-24)**
- **The Most Foolish Barnyard Challenge:** (1) For those that grew up on a farm, you know what little spare time you had you get creative with your free time. (2) And one of the most foolish creative free time activities is to try to catch a rooster. (3) He will wear you out and leave you breathless. (4) We view the Christian life at times like trying to catch the rooster. However, we should view it as what we do after we try to catch the rooster and failed: we rest drinking living water.
 - **Main Idea of the Point:** Everything about the Christian life flows through a channel of rest.
 - **How the Christian Life Works and How the Disciples Were Acting:** (1) Here are the disciples plucking grain to eat while the Pharisees are tied up into a tizzy. There is a reason for those two different actions. (a) The Pharisees didn't understand how spiritual realities work. (b) The disciples didn't yet, but they soon would. (2) We enter covenant relationship with Jesus on the basis of rest. ²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matt 11:28-30). (2) We walk with Jesus in the present on the basis of rest. "He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside quiet waters." (Psalm 23:2). (3) We will walk with Jesus in heaven in the future on the basis of rest. – "But there remains (in the future) a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9)
 - **App:** Our Christian life isn't striving. It's surrender. It isn't about giving in. It's about giving up. It's not about holding on. It's about letting go. It's not about resisting. It's about resting.
3. **It's how He eases burdens (v25-27)**
- **Coming Home from the Grocery Store:** (1) Everyone has done this: you come home with 70 bags of groceries in the back seat of your car. And you know you have the option of making more than one trip to the car. But for some reason only known to God, you want to carry as many bags as possible. If you can't carry them, you call for help at the top of your lungs for teenagers to come and help you. But you hear crickets. (2) The Sabbath Day of Rest was the teenager who walked out the door to help ease the burden of the weight of the week's groceries.
 - **Main Idea of the Point:** Everything about the Sabbath day of rest was designed to help people, not burden them. That's why man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man. The people of God rested because they found their rest in him.
 - **Sabbath That Was Intended Vs Sabbath That It Turned Into:** (1) Jesus uses an example here from the life of David to show what the Sabbath was intended for: easing burdens, not adding to them. (2) While in Egypt, the Israelites worked grueling days as slaves in Egypt. After they left, God said in my Promised Land you will rest on the Sabbath. (3) The Pharisees, however, took the Sabbath and added restrictions, making it a burden. (4) Here, they consider the act of picking a head of grain and eating it while the disciples walked in a field as "harvesting" on the Sabbath." (5) They had not broken God's law to rest. They only violated the Pharisee's interpretation of it.
 - **App:** It's hard to walk as a Christian in our world right now. Don't make it harder by adding to something that is good – like rest – and making it harder.
4. **It's how we demonstrate where our trust really lies (v.28)**
- **Thomas Chisholm:** (1) There once lived a man born in a Kentucky log cabin by the name of Thomas Chisholm. (2) He was born in poverty and squaller. He had no formal education and poor health. (3) But with all the odds stacked against him, he managed in between bouts of chronic illness to read and write. Then he managed in between bouts of chronic illness to become a schoolteacher. Then a minister, then a poet, then a hymn writer. (4) How was it possible? One verse: "the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies are new every morning. For Great is Thy Faithfulness, Lord unto me".
 - **Main Idea of the Point:** Being anxious for everything reveals a heart not at rest; one that lacks trust. Being anxious for nothing reveals a heart resting in the Lord of the Sabbath; one full of trust in every way.
 - **The Lord of the Sabbath:** (1) This is one of the most unique titles for Jesus in the New Testament; (2) Lord = Kyrios = "master" it's the same as the Hebrew word "Adonai." The idea is that Jesus is the Lord God in human form, creator of the Sabbath. (2) That means he wrote the law and has oversight in how it was to be enforced. (3) And the Lord of the Sabbath said, "come to me and I will give you rest."
 - **App:** And finding our rest in Him is to trust Him. It's to trade anxiousness, worry, striving, fear and every negative emotion imaginable for resting in the Lord of the Sabbath.

