

Several times in this chapter, Jesus has offended the religious Jews.

He has not broken the Law of the Lord, but He has violated the traditions of men.

They are upset with Jesus because He refuses to do the things they say people ought to do.

We have already seen them get upset because Jesus had the audacity to eat a meal in a sinner's home surrounded by other sinners, **2:15-16**.

There was **A Scandal Over Sinners**.

Then we saw their anger over the Lord's refusal to observe rituals and rules the Jewish leaders commanded all Jews to follow, **2:18**.

There was **A Scandal Over Sacraments**.

In this passage, we are confronted with another scandal.

For the Jews, this would be no ordinary scandal.

For this scandal would create such anger and hatred toward Jesus that the Jews would actually seek to kill the Lord, **Mark 3:6**.

In the passage that serves as our text today, we are going to consider **The Scandal Over The Sabbath**.

We are going to be given our Lord's opinion concerning the Sabbath Day and its observance.

There is much to consider here.

Some of it will not sit well with some folks, but that is just the way it is!

I am committed to preaching the Bible, not pleasing the people.

As we study this passage, I want you to listen with an open mind and an open heart.

Let the Lord speak truth to your soul today and let the Word of God have the final word in all matters of faith and practice.

Above all, don't miss the primary lesson of this passage.

The primary lesson taught here is that a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is far more important than keeping religious rules and rituals.

Let's dig into these verses and consider the thoughts contained here.

I want to preach, as the Lord gives liberty, on **The Scandal Over The Sabbath**.

## **To Know Him and Make Him Known**

### **1) JESUS AND THE IRRITATION—vs. 23-24**

- a) The Pharisees are upset again.
- b) It seems to me that their primary goal in life was to set themselves up as judge and jury on the lives of others.
- c) Every time you see these men in the Bible they are criticizing something.
- d) I will repeat what I said the other day: The meanest people in the world are people with religion!
- e) A person who has all the rules and no relationship with Jesus Christ is a hard person to deal with!
- f) These men are upset!
- g) They cannot believe what they see the disciples of Jesus doing.
- h) Let's look at why they are so displeased.
- i) v. 23 **The Conduct Of The Disciples** –
  - i) The Pharisees are upset because the disciples are eating “**corn**” in a field on the Sabbath Day.
  - ii) The word “**corn**” refers to “**grain**”.
  - iii) It was probably wheat that these men were eating as they walked through this field.
  - iv) There were very few roads, as we know them, in those days.
  - v) But, there were paths that ran alongside, and through, the fields of that time.
  - vi) As the travelers passed by, the grain would be within easy reach.
  - vii) Now, we would probably not like it if a person passed by our garden and just helped themselves.
  - viii) But, this was common practice in those days.
  - ix) In fact, the Law of Moses gave very clear instructions concerning this matter –
  - x) **Deut. 23:24-25---** “**When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, then you may eat grapes until you are fully satisfied, but you shall not put any in your basket. “When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain.**
  - xi) The disciples were well within their rights to pick the grain and eat it.
  - xii) Why were the Pharisees so torn up about it?
  - xiii) The disciples dared to do what the Law allowed, but they dared to do it on the Sabbath Day!
- j) v. 24 **The Criticism Of The Disciples** –
  - i) The Pharisees come to Jesus and attack Him because His men are picking grain and eating it on the Sabbath Day.
  - ii) They accuse the disciples of doing something “**unlawful**” on the Sabbath Day.
  - iii) The question that arises is this: was what the disciples were doing an unlawful activity?
  - iv) Did picking grain and eating it violate the Law?

- v) The answer is no, it did not violate the Law.
- vi) The Law was very clear in what it prohibited on the Sabbath, **Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12-15.**
- vii) The people were not allowed to **“work”** on the Sabbath Day.
- viii) The word **“work”** refers to **“their business”**.
- ix) The people of Israel were forbidden from labor that brought them a profit on that day.
- x) God was so serious about the children of Israel keeping the Sabbath that He made it clear that people who violated the Sabbath work ban were to be put to death, **Ex. 31:12-18.**
- xi) This is illustrated in **Num. 15:32-36.**
- xii) The disciples were not working; they were simply meeting a pressing need.
- xiii) They were hungry and they were simply doing what the Law gave them permission to do.
- xiv) Here’s the problem: The Pharisees were not judging these men according to the Law of Moses.
- xv) They were judging them according to the teachings of the rabbis and the elders.
- xvi) **The traditions and teaching of men had been placed on the same level with the written Word of God.**
- xvii) The disciples had not violated God’s Law; they had violated the traditions of men and the Pharisees are upset about it.
- xviii) For hundreds of years, the scribes, Pharisees and others had added regulation on top of regulation that went far beyond the original teachings of Scripture.
- xix) They had taken a day that had been given to man as a blessing and they, by their foolish rules and regulations, had turned that day into a burden.
- xx) The rules that people were required to follow made them work harder on the Sabbath than on any other day.
- xxi) They worked so hard trying to be sure that they did not violate the Sabbath regulations that they had no time to rest on that special day.
- xxii) A quick glance at some of the rules will tell you why the day had become such a burden to the Jews.
- xxiii) People were forbidden from traveling more than 3,000 feet from their homes on the Sabbath.
- xxiv) A Jew could not carry an object that weighed more than a dried fig.
- xxv) But, an object that weighed half that amount could be carried twice.
- xxvi) One could eat nothing larger than an olive.
- xxvii) You could not throw an object into the air with one hand and catch it with the other.
- xxviii) If the Sabbath came upon you as you were reaching out for some food, you would have to drop the food before you pulled your arm back, otherwise you would be guilty of carrying a burden on the Sabbath.
- xxix) Nothing could be bought or sold.
- xxx) Clothing could not be washed or dyed.
- xxxi) A letter could not be sent.
- xxxii) A fire could not be lit or extinguished.
- xxxiii) If you failed to light your lamps before the Sabbath, you had to sit in the dark until the next evening.

xxxiv) Jews could not take a bath on the Sabbath.

xxxv) If they did, some of the water might splash onto the floor and this would be considered “**washing it**”.

xxxvi) Chairs or other heavy objects could not be moved because dragging them might make a furrow in the ground, and that would be considered plowing.

xxxvii) A woman could not look into a looking glass because she might see a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out.

xxxviii) False teeth could not be worn because they exceeded the weight limits.

xxxix) A Jewish tailor could not carry a needle on the Sabbath lest he be tempted to mend a torn garment.

xl) It was against the law to tie or untie a knot; sew two stitches; or prepare food.

xli) If a Jew was injured on the Sabbath, it was unlawful to make him better.

xlii) You could only give him enough treatment to keep him alive.

xliii) The restrictions had even become dangerous.

xliv) On two occasions, the Jews were defeated by their enemies, and thousands of Jews died, because they refused to defend themselves on the Sabbath.

xlv) This is just a small sample of the thousands of senseless, foolish, man-made rules the Jews were forced to live by.

xlvi) The Sabbath, as a result, was a day filled with burdensome ritual and no rest at all.

xlvii) So, when the Pharisees saw the disciples picking and eating grain on the Sabbath Day, they considered what they were doing to be work.

xlviii) Picking grain was considered reaping.

xlix) Rolling the wheat to remove the husks was sifting.

l) Rubbing the heads of wheat was threshing.

li) Bruising the ears of wheat was grinding.

lii) And, tossing wheat up into the air was winnowing.

k) **Note:** The lesson for us is this: we must be very careful that the doctrines and traditions of men do not come to have the same authority in our lives as the Word of God.

l) The Bible is God’s final authority!

m) It is the only standard for our faith and practice.

n) It does not matter what you have been taught; what you believe, or what your favorite preacher said.

o) All that matters is what the Bible says!

p) When we stand before the Lord, we will not be judged by the words of the preacher or by the traditions of men.

q) We will be judged by the words written in the Bible,

r) **John 12:48—**“**He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.**”

## 2) JESUS AND THE ILLUSTRATION—vs. 25-26

a) When His men are attacked, Jesus neither condemns the disciples nor condones their actions.

b) Neither does He enter into an argument with the Pharisees.

c) Jesus did what we should do when people want to argue religion with us.

d) He pointed them to the Word of God.

e) He pointed them to the truth.

- f) I am probably going to say some things before this message concludes that some in this room will disagree with.
- g) That's fine!
- h) But, before you attack me over what I have to say, go to your Bible and bring me book, chapter and verse.
- i) When you do that, we will have a place to begin a discussion.
- j) Unless we have Bible for what we say we believe we have nothing but our opinions and what we have been taught.
- k) Neither of those will stand in the presence of the Lord.
- l) All that will matter when we face Him is what He has said in the Word of God.
- m) v. 25 **The Lord's Confrontation** –
  - i) As I said, Jesus did not argue with these men; He merely pointed them back to the Word of God.
  - ii) He looks at these men who pride themselves on their knowledge of the Word and He says, **“Have ye not read...?”**
  - iii) The Lord used a little sarcasm to get these men to understand that their argument was not based on a proper understanding of what the Bible says about such matters.
  - iv) **Note:** It is easy to get off balance in this area.
  - v) It is easy to ride your favorite hobbyhorse and fail to see what else the Bible has to say.
  - vi) It is so easy to get hung up on how people dress; where people eat; where they shop; and things of that nature.
  - vii) Yet, many fail to see that the Bible is bigger than just a few of their pet issues!
  - viii) It is easy to yell **“Amen”** when a preacher is preaching on issues and not even realize that what he is saying has no foundation in the Word of God.
  - ix) I have heard preachers preach against men wearing mustaches and beards.
  - x) People actually said **“amen”**! I have heard them preach against men wearing tie chains and wire rimmed glasses.
  - xi) People actually said **“amen”**! I have heard men preach about all kinds of foolishness that did not have one bit of scriptural support.
  - xii) That is sad!
  - xiii) What may be even sadder is the fact that the people in the pew are so biblically illiterate that they don't even know the junk the preacher is spewing is just his opinion or the traditions of men! In the end, it will not matter what I say; it will not matter what I believe; all that will matter is what the Bible says!
  - xiv) Many times our problem is the same problem the Pharisees had, we haven't taken the time to read it for ourselves and we swallow the slop we are fed and call it good.
  - xv) Shame on us!
- n) v. 26 **The Lord's Clarification** –
  - i) Jesus proceeds to remind them of an incident that occurred during the life of David.
  - ii) When he was fleeing from Saul, he and his men needed food.
  - iii) In **1 Sam. 21:1-6**, David and his men come to the priest and ask for food.
  - iv) The priest tells David there is no bread there but the **“shewbread”**.
  - v) The shewbread was twelve loaves of bread that were baked fresh every Sabbath Day.
  - vi) These twelve loaves were placed on a table in the holy place in the Tabernacle.
  - vii) The twelve loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel.

- viii) They reminded Israel of the Lord's presence among his people of their dependence upon Him for their physical needs.
- ix) It was also called the **"Bread of the Presence"**.
- x) The shewbread was changed every Sabbath Day and the old bread was eaten by the priests in the holy place.
- xi) This bread was not to be eaten by non-priests, according to the Law, but it was given to David and His men.
- xii) The clear teaching here is that there are times when human needs are more important than a legalistic keeping of the Law.
- xiii) Jesus made this same point in other places,
- xiv) **Luke 13:11-17—" And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him? "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.**
- xv) **Luke 14:1-6—" And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him? "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.**

### 3) **JESUS AND THE ILLUMINATION—vs. 27-28**

- a) These next two verses give us a lot of insight into the Sabbath, the reasons for its observance and the place it holds in our lives today.
- b) **v. 27 The Reason For The Sabbath –**
  - i) Jesus tells these men, and us, that the Sabbath Day was given to man.
  - ii) The Sabbath does not exist to be served, it exists to serve.
  - iii) The Sabbath, which means **"rest, cessation, inactivity"** was first observed by God in **Gen. 2:1-3**.

- iv) When the Lord had finished the work of creation, He ceased from his work.
- v) The Sabbath was given to man out of the grace of God.
- vi) God gave man one day out of seven in which he did not have to work for a living.
- vii) Man was to take that one day per week and he was to rest from his physical labors.  
Like the Lord, man was to use that day for reflection on what the Lord had done for him the other six day.
- viii) Man was to use that time to rest his body; reflect on the blessings of the Lord and refresh his spirit by worshiping the Lord.
- ix) That was the original intent of the Sabbath.
- x) By the time Jesus came to this world, the Jews had perverted the day and had so regulated it that it was no longer a day of rest, reflection and refreshment.
- xi) The Sabbath has become a day of endless rules, regulations and burdens.
- xii) The Sabbath, as God intended it, had ceased to exist!
- xiii) While we are on this matter of the Sabbath, this would be a good time to get a clear understanding of what it is and what it isn't.
- xiv) This is also a good time to clear up some of the questions and misunderstandings that swirl around the Sabbath Day and its observance.
- xv) The Sabbath Day was given as a shadow of Jesus Christ.
- xvi) It pictures the rest His people find in a relationship with Him,
- xvii) **Col. 2:16-17—" Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.**
- xviii) When the real thing has come, there is no more need for the shadow.
- xix) Those who are saved have entered into the Lord's rest, **Heb. 4.**
- xx) We are not laboring to be accepted of the Lord.
- xxi) We are **"accepted in the Beloved", Eph. 1:6**, and every day is a Sabbath Day of rest in our souls!
- xxii) The Sabbath was the sign to Israel of the Mosaic Covenant,
- xxiii) **Ex. 31:16-17—" 'So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.' 'It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.'**
- xxiv) **Eze. 20:12—" 'Also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.**
- xxv) **Neh. 9:14—" 'So You made known to them Your holy sabbath, And laid down for them commandments, statutes and law, Through Your servant Moses.**
- xxvi) We are not Israel, and the Sabbath is not for us.
- xxvii) Christians are never commanded to keep the Sabbath Day, not in the Gospels and not in the epistles.
- xxviii) It is the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not reaffirmed in the New Testament.
- xxix) Why?
- xxx) It is ceremonial in nature, while the other nine commandments are moral in nature.
- xxxi) Jesus and the Apostles upheld the other nine commandments; the teaching of the Sabbath belongs under the old covenant.

- xxxii) When the church was formed the Christians met for worship on the first day of the week.
- xxxiii) They met on this day to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead,
- xxxiv) **Acts 20:7—" On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.**
- xxxv) **1 Cor. 16:2—" On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.**
- xxxvi) The Sabbath Day was the seventh day of the week, or Saturday.
- xxxvii) Sunday, for the early Christians was just the first day of the week, they met for worship after they had finished their work for the day.
- xxxviii) Christians do not observe the Sabbath and Sunday is not the Sabbath.
- xxxix) In fact, Paul rebuked the Galatians for forcing the observance of certain days,
- xl) **Gal. 4:10-11—" You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.**
- xli) Now, I realize that many believers who do not believe in buying or selling on Sunday.
- xl ii) Some believers don't go out to eat, go to Wal-mart, etc on Sunday.
- xl iii) I know a lot of preachers who preach against doing those kind of things on Sunday.
- xl iv) On the other hand, there are other Christians who see nothing wrong with those things on Sunday.
- xl v) Who is right and who is wrong?
- xl vi) Does the Bible give any clear instructions in this area?
- xl vii) Yes it does!
- xl viii) **Rom. 14:1-12** tells us that we are not to judge others in matters like these.
- xlix) Some people in the early church, namely those saved out of Judaism, were judging Gentile believers because they didn't keep the Sabbath.
- l) Paul says that we are not to judge one another in respect to holy day observances,
- li) **Col. 2:16-17—" Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.**
- lii) One of our problems is that we judge people for what they do and we fail to look at what we do.
- liii) For instance, some people judge others because they go out on Sunday; but the person doing the judging thinks nothing about going five miles over the speed limit.
- liv) They judge one person because they violate the traditions of men, while they violate a clear command of Scripture.
- lv) The Bible says nothing about what you can and cannot do on Sunday, but it clearly tells you to obey the law of the land.
- lvi) These are matters of the conscience.
- lvii) The Bible nowhere says that it is wrong to eat out or buy something on Sunday.
- lviii) But, it never says it is right either.
- lix) According to **Rom. 14:14**, you need to listen to your heart!
- lx) If you think that buying a tank of gas on Sunday is wrong, then it is wrong for you.
- lxi) If you have no problem with it, then help yourself.



- lxii) Now wait, before you leave here all excited and go do something crazy let me remind you of one important truth.
- lxiii) If what you do offends a weaker brother, you are to stop doing it so their faith won't be injured, **Rom. 14:15-23**.
- lxiv) In other words, if a fellow believer sees you doing something that offends them and they come to you in sincerity and tell you that your actions are causing them to have spiritual problems; you are to give up your liberty so that they may continue to grow in the Lord.
- lxv) The best thing we can all do is be obedient to what the Lord tells us to do.
- lxvi) Do not sin against your conscience.
- c) v. 28 **The Reality Of The Sabbath** –
  - i) Jesus sums it all up by telling the Pharisees that He is “**Lord of the Sabbath**”.
  - ii) In other words, it is far more important to know Him through a personal relationship than it is to keep rules and rituals.
  - iii) Jesus is greater than the Sabbath!
  - iv) Rules and rituals cannot save the soul, Jesus can!
  - v) You can keep the Sabbath, honor the dietary laws, do all the things people think you are supposed to do and still die and go to Hell.
  - vi) But, if you know Jesus as your Savior, you are destined for Heaven, whether you keep the Sabbath or not!
  - vii) Here is how the Bible says it, “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (plus nothing, minus nothing), and thou shalt be saved!**” (Acts 16:31)

**Conc:** Let me clarify things just a bit before we leave.

I think Sunday is a very special day.

It is the Lord's Day. It is the day when the church gathers to celebrate our Lord's resurrection from the dead.

It is a day set aside to honor Him.

Personally, I do not believe in doing physical work on Sunday.

I think the best course of action is to avoid buying, selling, eating out, etc. on that day.

Like the Jewish priests, **Matt. 12:5; Num. 28:9-10**, I work harder on Sunday than I do any other day of the week!

Sunday is not a day of rest for me!

Still, I refuse to stand in judgment of those who refrain from certain Sunday activities.

Nor do I judge those people who feel that they have the liberty to go to the store, or eat out on Sunday.

This whole thing comes down to personal opinion.

It is a matter of conscience.

What is the Lord telling you to do?

When He does, then you know what to do!

But, whatever you do, be sure that you honor the Lord, not just on Sunday, but seven days per week.

Every day is our Sabbath Day because we are in Jesus the place of Rest.

On Sunday, you need to get yourself to the house of God for worship,

**Heb. 10:25—" not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

That should be your first priority!

Everything else is secondary to worship!

Beyond that, what you do on that day is between you and the Lord.

You need to strive to see that all your activities honor Him!