**Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath**

Luke 6:1-11

Key Verse 5 Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

 Charlie Brown asks Linus, "What would you do if you felt that nobody likes you?" Linus responds "Well Charlie I guess I would take a real hard look at myself, ask if I am doing anything that turns people off, How can I improve myself? Do I need to change in some way? Yep that is my answer Charlie." Charlie Brown says, "I hate that answer." This passage shows Jesus’ truthful words that some of the Pharisees hated. But the man with a shriveled hand accepted Jesus’ word of command. When we accept Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath, he gives us true rest. Let's accept Jesus into our hearts as Lord of the Sabbath through this passage. There are two parts.

**I. Jesus defended his disciples (1-5)**

 In this part Jesus defended his disciples from the Pharisees and proclaimed himself as Lord of the Sabbath. Look at v 1. "One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels." Although Jesus’ disciples were blessed, it was not easy for them to follow Jesus. Jesus got up early in the morning to pray. Jesus worked hard all day long to serve others. There is no enough time to eat. They were often hungry. In Jesus’ day there were no fastfood chains like “In n Out” or “Chick fil A” to stop by to eat. They didn’t have many servants like we have who make a lunch after worship service. So Jesus like a shepherd would lead his disciples through grainfields to give them an opportunity to satisfy their hunger. Whatever food, they were thankful. As long as they were with Jesus they were happy. They simply grabbed a handful of grain, rubbing it with their hands, and eating the kernels. In fact this was allowed in the Jewish law. Travelers could eat freely as they walked through a field, as long as they did not harvest. (Dt 23:25) It’s a kind of Jewish drive-thru system.

As they were barely eating, suddenly some Pharisees appeared and said, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" The Pharisees interpreted the disciples' actions as unlawful. Again it was not because they were eating others' grain, but because they were doing it on the Sabbath. Exo 20:10 contains the phrase, "On it you shall not do any work..." To interpret this phrase, the Pharisees had defined what work is all about. According to them, picking heads of grain is harvesting on the Sabbath, rubbing the grain is threshing on the Sabbath, blowing the chaff on your hands is winnowing, and the disciples were preparing food on the Sabbath. At least they were in violation up to 4 counts of breaking the Sabbath law. This kind of strict approach to the Sabbath continues even today among observant Jews. One time tenants let 3 apartments in Israel burn to the ground while they asked a rabbi whether a phone call to the fire department on the Sabbath would violate Jewish law. Making a phone call on the Sabbath would break an electrical current, which is considered to be a form of work. In the half hour it took the rabbi to say “yes,” the fire spread to 2 neighboring apartments. To us, it sounds ridiculous. But to the disciples in such an atmosphere, it was a serious matter. They’re charged with violations of the Sabbath law by religious cops. They must’ve felt ashamed of their ignorance. They might’ve felt intimidated and become fearful of the consequences.

What did Jesus do for them? Look at v3-4. “Jesus answered them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? **4** He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” He asked them, "Have you never read..." Jesus reasoned that reading the word of God directly is the best way to know God's truth. Reading the Scriptures is more valuable to a person than knowing all the extra stuff. In Mk 7:8-9, Jesus says about them, “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” **9** And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!” Jesus referred specifically to an incident with David, a man after God's own heart. David went to the house of God and asked for bread. The priest had no ordinary bread, so he gave David holy bread-lawful only for priests to eat and David and his men ate it without guilt. It teaches us that it is permissible to break ceremonial law in order to feed the hungry, for God understands our practical needs. Our living God who is greater than the temple law is merciful. (Matt 12:7) Likewise Jesus' disciples were following God's heart by following Jesus. Jesus defended his disciples from their criticism. We can learn a lesson from Jesus. We must protect young Christians with the word of God as long as they want to follow Jesus. Criticism can be toxic to them for the devil attacks them through criticism. So we need to protect them so that they can grow well.

Look at v 5. “Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”” Here Jesus proclaims that as the Son of Man, he is Lord of the Sabbath and has authority to use it as he pleases. This is the 2nd time in Luke's gospel that Jesus referred to himself as "the Son of Man." In 5:24, Jesus said, "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." The Messianic title "the Son of Man," originated in Dan 7:13,14, “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” Going back to key v, when Jesus says that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, it means that as Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus is **the central figure** of the day. Keeping the Sabbath is not simply following rules, but worshiping and serving Jesus. Jesus has all authority as the Almighty creator. Jesus' teachings carry divine authority. Jesus declared his disciples blameless! Thus, Jesus defended them with his Messianic authority.

 Here let us review how the Sabbath came about, through the Bible. The word, ‘Sabbath’ stems from the Hebrew word ‘s*abat,’* which means "to rest or stop or cease from work." The origin of the Sabbath goes back to Creation. Gen 2:3 reads, “Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” Here “God rested from all his work” doesn’t mean that God was tired and needed a rest. So what does it mean that God rested on the seventh day? Simply He stopped what He was doing. He ceased from His labors. God used the example of His resting on the seventh day of Creation to establish the principle of the Sabbath day rest for men to be holy. God wants us to set apart from all the rest of his creation for a day of fellowship with Him. Exo 20:8 reads, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” When we stop our worldly occupations and go to God for a new filling of his love and strength by studying the Bible, praying, and by serving God and others. Exo 30:12-13 read, “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.” All these verses have something in common in that Sabbath has to do with “holiness.” Without holiness, no one will have fellowship with the Lord. The Sabbath was a sign of the covenant God established with Israel. It’s to be a sign that the Israelites were holy. When Israel obey to observe the Sabbath, they’re confirming their commitment to the Lord and acknowledging that they are set apart for the Lord.

 Also the various elements of the Sabbath in the Old testament symbolized the coming of the Messiah, who would provide a permanent rest for His people. Heb 10:14 reads, **“**For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” Because of what He did, we no longer have to "labor" in tedious law-keeping to be justified before God. Jesus was sent so that we might rest in and through him who is God’s pleasure and glory.

Sabbath has also a nickname, “the Lord’s day.” Rev 1:10 reads, **“**On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet” Among the people of the Roman Empire, the first day of each month was called “Emperor’s Day” in honor of the Roman Emperor. Perhaps Christians proclaimed their allegiance to the King of kings, Jesus by reminding the complete work of the Risen Jesus on the first day of the week. Despite many debates regarding “Sabbath,” “Saturday,” “Sunday,” or “the Lord’s day,” still what matters the most is the fact that Jesus is the very one being worthy of our worship and service. Jesus is the very One who has made the Sabbath Law and can interpret the Law correctly. He had an authority and power on the law of Sabbath. According to his preference and if he wants, he can amend it anytime. He says in Mk 2:27, man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man.

 As Jesus was accused by religious leaders, he must have thought to Himself, “Who do you think you are trying to tell me what is lawful on the Sabbath? I’m the Lord of the Sabbath!” Jesus declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus makes clear that it is He who determines what is lawful, and what is right or wrong. And he will set values and boundaries. There are plenty of things that may be legal, but that doesn’t make us right. They may be legal, but that doesn’t mean it could be good things for us as God’s holy children because it may be against Jesus and His absolute words. That’s why we encourage our children to be holy people of God.

 Billy Graham once said, "Jesus tells us it is ok to help our ox out of the ditch on the Sabbath. But, if your ox gets in the ditch every Sabbath, you need to either get rid of the ox or if you want to keep it, just fill up the ditch." I think that we can find a way to keep the ox from going there all the time. In our culture, Sunday is often seen as a sports game watching day or a family day. Busy dads, busy moms, and busy children all need a regular time to spend with each other. It sounds reasonable. *Have you ever made an excuse to skip Sunday worship service?* But I believe that nothing is more important than spending time with the Lord. Sunday should be the Lord's day, more than family day, sports day or anything else.

 Lastly I like to share one more story. At the 1924 Paris Olympics, Eric Liddell decided not to run the 200 meter dash. His coach try to convince him to change his mind. But they failed. He won't participate in the race simply because it falls on Sunday. He believes that to run on Sunday violates the 4th of the Ten Commandments to keep the Sabbath day holy. It would’ve been wrong for him to violate his conscience, so he didn’t run. I don't think it would necessarily be a sin to run a race on Sunday. But my point is that it is great to see someone who is willing to hold to his convictions no matter what it costs. It reminds me of my Bible teacher who had had a 10 hour trip every weekend from his workplace in order to attend Sunday worship service. Since then he had been serving God’s work sincerely for more than 40 years and been fruitful. So when I think about the clear stand that Eric is taking, it makes sense to me. He later became a missionary to China and devoted himself to the world mission. When he died at the age of 43 due to brain cancer, his last words was, “It was complete surrender,” in reference to how he’d given his life to God. In this way he set an example in that it’s not a matter of keeping a Sabbath or not, but a matter of his own commitment to his Lord God. May the Lord bless America to raise up missionaries like Eric to serve all nations with Jesus’ love.

**II. Jesus heals a man with a shriveled hand (6-11)**

 In this 2nd part we may think about how to participate in Sabbath rest in person. Look at v 6. “On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled.” Jesus went into the synagogue and taught the word of God to people. Heb 4:12-13 read, “the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” So the word of Jesus moved their hearts, bringing them to repentance. They then received sin forgiveness and healing in their souls. Their weariness subsided and they found rest. Instead of taking the people to a picnic to a park or a beach, Jesus taught the living words of God. It shows how Jesus devoted himself to teaching the word of God on Sabbath day as Lord of Sabbath to invite them to true rest.

Among those in the congregation was a man whose right hand was shriveled. This man must have enjoyed Jesus' message. However, his life was full of agony due to his shriveled hand. The right hand is the source of a man's strength. But this man had no strength in his right hand. He couldn’t play basketball. Because of his deformity, others would despise him and he must’ve felt ashamed. He might’ve kept his shriveled hand hidden in his pocket. He must have sat in the back quietly.

Look at v 7-8. “The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. **8** But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Get up and stand in front of everyone.” So he got up and stood there.” The Pharisees and teachers of the law wouldn’t pay attention to him. Rather they watched closely to see if Jesus would heal him. They wanted to catch Jesus in the act, charging him with healing on the Sabbath. Their only interest was to use him as bait in their trap. When Jesus saw this man, his heart went out to him. Knowing what is going on, Jesus first could’ve finished his message and told the man to come back the next day for healing. But this would’ve been yielding his divine lordship of the Sabbath to the legalistic criticism of the Pharisees. It would be sending away a needy person. For the glory of God, and to help the needy, Jesus decided to confront the Pharisees directly and also heal the man. Jesus said to the man, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." To the man, it could be a great challenge. He felt the eyes of everyone fixed on him. However, Jesus' words must’ve touched his heart. He must’ve been compelled by Jesus' authority. He trusted Jesus and found inner strength. So he got up and stood there by faith.

Look at v 9. "Then Jesus said to them, 'I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?'" Jesus not only helped the man with a shriveled hand but also corrected the religious leaders. Jesus taught them about the purpose of law on Sabbath. Jesus' question cut through their hearts. On the Sabbath, Jesus was doing good to please God. In contrast, they were doing evil to please their sinful natures. Jesus wanted to save life, but they wanted to destroy life. Jesus brought their evil intention to light and wanted them to repent. He must’ve looked right into their eyes one by one. Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." (10) When he obeyed, suddenly his right hand was strong and healthy. His hand was completely restored. The man could make a new beginning in life. His inner soul must have found rest too.

 Here through Jesus’ command to stretch out his hand, we can think about how to practically participate in God’s divine rest. Although we have the abundant words of God, we also need to bring our shameful problems to Jesus. James 5:16a says, “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” When we have a sin problem, the natural instinct is to hide it like this man with the shriveled hand. Then sin becomes a barrier between us and God and among us. But the truth is that the judgement day is coming and everything will be exposed. Mk 4:22 says “For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.” Whenever we are addicted to something in this life, we can come to Jesus and confess our weaknesses to him. It’s a blessing for 1Jn 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Honestly when I put more value on money, I have no rest in me. If I believe that is the path to security, my faith is misplaced and my life becomes both restrictive and destructive. Restrictive because it may keep me from living in the freedom for which I was created, and destructive because it places not only my life but also the lives of others at risk. So I better change my focus, devotion, and worship to Jesus. May the Lord help me to repent of my sin and worship Jesus only and I would receive deep rest in Him.

 Also our unbelief and disobedience are stumbling blocks to come to Jesus. Heb 4:11 says, “Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.” This verse shows that the Israelites could not enter their promised land of rest because of their unbelief and disobedience. But when we obey and trust in Jesus, Jesus gives us rest for our souls. Jesus said in Mat 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." We may become weary and burdened due to our disobedience and unbelief. So we cannot find true rest by alternative ways; choosing to sleep longer, drink beer, take drugs, play video games, or watch sports all day long because these things do not solve our deep seated problems in our souls, but aggravate them further. There was a news. A California teen, Kyle Nolan dropped out of college and on internet he discovered a bizarre name, “ayahuasca.” But he was fascinated by it and came to believe that it would treat him from any stress and anxiety and he would achieve spiritual transformation. Despite his mom’s endeavor to discourage him, he made a trip to a remote corner of the Peruvian Amazon jungle. But he didn’t return and was later found dead.

 Through attending parent’s sessions in Downey lately, I had also met troubled kids and their parents. Now I had better understanding about what’s going on in the real world. I realized that it’s not a distant story but anytime anywhere anything can happen to anyone. I heard that a handsome teen took pain pills as well as flu medication to relieve his tattoo pain. Since then he never woke up. What a loss! Some children want to be accepted by their peers and end up drinking alcohol as well as doing drugs. It was mainly because of their low self-esteem and restless situation, mainly from the broken relationship in their family. In the long haul this can send their lives in painful and miserable directions. When the young people was driven by wrong way constantly, on top of these substance abuses, bullying, gang activity, rape, murder and school shootings keep increasing. Unfortunately such stories are endless. We are alarmed and overwhelmed by the symptoms of restless wanderers in our times like Cain in Genesis without repentance.

 However let’s listen to the father of Rachel Scott, who was killed in the Columbine High School shooting in 1999. He spoke out before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee: “Your laws ignore our deepest needs, Your words are empty air, You've stripped away our heritage, You've outlawed simple prayer, Now gunshots fill our class -rooms, And precious children die, You seek for answers everywhere, "Why"? And yet you fail to understand that God is what we need.” This grieving father’s insightful diagnosis was still largely ignored. It seemed that we are living in hopeless and helpless times.

 But thank God! We still have the good news that our Lord Jesus has power and authority to forgive our sins to save all our restless souls as Lord of the Sabbath rest. To do so, Jesus himself went to the cross and shed his holy blood for us. Jesus said, “It is finished.” When we accept Jesus' blood by faith, it cleanses us from all kinds of sins. We as Bible teachers can influence our young people through personal mentoring to have them come to Jesus in person, holding His living words, and being cleansed through His holy blood. We then help them to sustain their lives with Jesus’ powerful, life giving words. (Heb 1:3b) This is our holy duty given by our Lord Jesus Christ like His handful humble disciples who did not know that much about Sabbath laws. I believe that it is the silver lining for our times. Then we will see people reconcile with God. Then the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and reminds us of God's good will and purpose, even in hard times. The Holy Spirit fills our souls with joy and gives us absolute meaning of life. The Holy Spirit provides wisdom and strength so that we can carry out our world mission, bearing much fruit for God’s glory. He also assures us of final victory in our life of faith. This gives our souls rest as well as conviction that the Sabbath ultimately points to a future everlasting rest in Christ's kingdom. Then, all the evil powers will be destroyed. Jesus will wipe out every tear from our eyes. There will be no more sin, death, or pain. We will dwell in Jesus' glorious kingdom forever.

 Look at v 11, the religious leaders were still furious. Instead of repenting, they became so angry and gathered among themselves and began to plot what they might do to Jesus. This led to Jesus' crucifixion. However from God’s eternal perspective, in order to give us true rest, Jesus gave his life for us. In conclusion, today we learned that Jesus paid a high cost to give him rest. Our rest has to do with what He has done for us, not with what we can do for Him. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. St Augustine said that Jesus Christ is not valued at all until He is valued above all. Jesus deserves our focus, worship, and honor. When we trust Him with our whole heart throughout our lifetime, Jesus alone gives true rest to our souls. Let's come to Jesus for real rest so that we can serve him joyfully. America may be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation by raising up disciples and missionaries. Amen. **One word: Lord of the Sabbath**