

Preaching for Beginners

A Sample Sermon – Mark 2:23-3:6: Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath - Craig Loveday

- There are three questions to have in mind as we listen:
 1. What is good about the sermon?
 2. What was the Central Truth (Main Point) of the sermon?
 3. Did the sermon fail in anyway?

Talk Outline

Sabbath points to a person

Hardness Exposed

Freedom and Wholeness

Jesus is at the centre of the Sabbath, restoring people in freedom and wholeness

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Notes

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Questions:

What is good about the sermon?

What was the Central Truth of the sermon?

Did the sermon fail in anyway?

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Sermon Text

Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus is at the centre of the Sabbath, restoring people in freedom and wholeness

Pray: may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our rock and our redeemer.

In 2006 Trine and I celebrated our 10th Wedding anniversary:

So we organised a short holiday to enjoy some rest together (no kids)... 4 days hiking the Yurrebilla Trail together (Athelstone to Belair... along the Mt Lofty ranges, staying and B&B's and dining out at restaurants along the way). Unfortunately things didn't go as well as we'd hoped:

*In my mind: **What a great gift of rest**, being active outdoors in God's creation, hiking, exploring*

*In Trine's mind: **What a great gift of rest**, extra sleep, luxury of B&B's, slow & relaxing*
So when I woke Trine at 6am on the 1st morning, "Quick, Trine it's not quite dawn, it's going to be an excellent day... let's get on the trail" – can you imagine her response?

[You would have thought that after 10yrs marriage I would have known my wife better... I'm a slow learner, and thankfully Trine is a godly / patient wife!! Our 20th Anniversary was not a hike together... it was much more slow and relaxing]

When it comes to Sabbath resting: Trine and I don't always agree on what it's all about

Q - Have you ever been talking with another Christian and discovered that you've got *conflicting views on what Sabbath rest is all about?* For some:

Rest is passive (stopping & doing nothing)... other's rest is active (doing things)

Rest is on a set day each week and has to include certain activities

Rest follows creational rhythm of 1 in 6... but doesn't matter which one

Freedom as Christians, no longer required to set aside a day of rest

Important truth I want us to discover:

Jesus is at the centre of the Sabbath, restoring people in freedom and wholeness

And because of this, Jesus followers are people who regularly rest from their work.

Three things we're going to see 1. Sabbath points to a person 2. Hardness exposed 3. Freedom and wholeness

As we turn to Mark 2... J goes head to head with Pharisees: they have radically conflicting views on what the Sabbath is all about

- *4th conflict J faces in this section:* [2:1...] forgiving sins, [2:13] spending time with wrong people, [2:18] why his D's don't fast...
- Now 2:23 - What it means to keep the Sabbath

Jesus shows the Pharisees that **he is at the centre of the Sabbath**

In v23-28 he is the **Lord who restores Sabbath Freedom**... then

In 3:1-6 he is the **Lord who restores Sabbath Wholeness**

Sabbath points to a person

J restores Sabbath Freedom by showing that the Sabbath points to a person

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[v23-24] - Pharisees: conservative, devout religious people who had deep concern for obedience to God's law. Good that they honoured God's ways as holy...

Problem was... **Honour God's Law as Holy by protecting it** – added all their own extra laws, like building a fence God's Law - extra rules like a protective barrier *Sabbath Keeping* led to 39 different classes of work, each of them had to be avoided on Sabbath.

Judge people according to extra rules, J's D's not breaking God's law at all

Law keeping become a negative, oppressive and heavy burden that they expected everyone to follow.

Jesus' response is to point to kingly authority... [v25-26]

The reason why J re-tells this particular OT story is because the **Sabbath points to a person** – and the person at centre of the story J tells = King David

Let's turn to 1 Samuel 21: what's going on when this incident happens?

- **David**: anointed & promised to be king, not yet crowned, Saul, current king, is jealous and is hunting David down to kill him

Q – Do you notice any interesting parallels... between King David and J?

(J anointed as king, not yet crowned, current 'powerful people' are growing jealous)

- **David**: not just the everyday king... David was THE OT king, the one all the other kings were measured against.

God's great promise to his people was that another "anointed" King was coming. A king who, like D, ruled God's people in God's truth, a king from D's family line

Jesus is very deliberate recalling this account of King David

Because the **Sabbath points to a person**. Jesus wants Pharisees to know...

He is the one at centre of God's ongoing story. He is the promised anointed **King**

King among his people

This is our 2nd week, in "The king among his people." Booklet I handed out last week, please get a copy. In Mark 2-4 over and over we see J in his kingly greatness.

King J is at the centre of all God's saving purposes.

As so here, King J is showing the Pharisees that...

The Sabbath is about the freedom to enjoy God's goodness [v27]

Right from creation Sabbath has **always been about enjoying God**

Unlike the Pharisees, J has a positive view of the Law.

Sabbath Law is a good gift from God for his people to enjoy.

Blessing of the Sabbath rest:

- Ceasing: Time to rest, stop and enjoy the goodness of your gracious God
- Resting: Time away from a busy life of work and labor
- Embracing: Time to intentionally acknowledge the good gifts God gives us
- Feasting: Time for hungry people to be filled, so of course it's ok for his D's to grab a handful of grain, they're not harvesting.

Sabbath rest: stop work to acknowledge that God gives us so many good things. At the centre of all this is the Gracious Lord who brings people into relationship with himself.

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J now clearly states what he's been building up to – **He is Lord of the Sabbath** [v28]

- This is a bold thing for him to declare...

"The king is here, I am the Lord, I am at the centre of God's plans for his people"

Sabbath points to me! True Sabbath rest only makes sense in me

Q - Do we appreciate how offensive this is? See how direct J is in saying this?

"I am Lord, and I'm telling you ... You've missed the point when it comes to Sabbath.

But don't worry, I'll set you straight... It's all about me!"

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath: *he is at the centre or he is nowhere*

Application: As J disciples today, how does this apply to us? Are you hungry for rest?

Sabbath Freedom means

1st Rest in Christ (Matt 11:28) come to **me**, receive rest from **me**

You will find no other true rest except in J the saviour! True Sabbath rest is found in relationship with the Lord of the Sabbath, King J

2nd Adore King Jesus in your rest:

As we rest in Christ we have freedom to enjoy rest in different ways...

- Active or passive rest, set day or no day [Rom 14:5-6a]

Yes sleep, yes holiday, yes stop from your work 1 day a week, yes exercise... these are all good gifts. *Receive each of these gifts with thankfulness*

- Each of these gifts are *only fully enjoyed* as we set our hearts to adore Christ
Blessed in our fellowship... people call me to slow down so I can adore Christ

Sharing the good news: J followers are attractational by being restful, not restless

Jesus is at the centre of the Sabbath, restoring people in freedom, and J also restores Sabbath wholeness to broken people

Which is what we see in 3:1-6. At the same time though, this is where the Pharisees

Hardness is exposed [3:1-6]

In this passage there's an interplay between what's hidden and open

Hidden: (v1) shriveled hand – keep it tucked away

(v2) Pharisees watching him closely – hidden motive to catch him out

Open: Jesus blows it wide open...

(v3) Stand up (can you imagine how embarrassing this would be)

(v4) Q to open up the real issue... Sabbath is the perfect day to restore wholeness

J real Q, *"Will you receive me as God's gift to save life... or will you reject me and kill me? Will you kill the one who offers you Sabbath wholeness?"*

(v5) Exposes stubborn hearts as the real issue...

healing = open hand restored to wholeness

Hidden: (v6) go out and make secret make plans to destroy him – but even in their hidden plans Mark is letting us know where the story line is heading

Tragedy for Pharisees: they'd already made up their minds, see in [v2] J was offensive, they would not tolerate his ways... he had to go.

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J exposed their hard and stubborn hearts which is something that had been building up over time...

1st Yr Uni – PE teaching, Social Dance: elite rower, she had rough & hardened hands, my soft and delicate hands... not just from 1 day rowing, hour after hour of chaffing, slowly build up a toughness, hard resistance

That's the picture here: these stubborn hearts were calloused and unresponsive. This toughness had been building up over time. Here is the climax of 4 conflicts, each time they were hardened against Jesus.

What is their problem?

- Over time the Pharisee had taken a good thing – God's Law... and made it into a God thing!
- Observing God's Law had become for them all that life was about. But in doing this they rejected that God's Law points to being in relationship with God.

The Sabbath points to a person... it points to King Jesus

So the more that they pursued moral obedience to God's Law... without pursuing a relationship with God, the more hardened they became against J.

I think this is where we also need to be careful not to miss the point and become hardened against God.

Jesus is at the centre of the Sabbath

Some of us will tend toward moralism (like the Pharisees) – you must keep the Sabbath law of rest... and over time we'll subtly reject God in preference to his good law.

Some of us will tend toward rebellion (lawlessness) – just ignore God's Sabbath law and do what you like... and over time we'll subtly reject God in preference to the good gifts – holidays, family, movies...

And the core of both is turning good things into God things.

But J is at the centre of the Sabbath – true rest is all about being in relationship with him

Freedom and Wholeness

And the good news for us is the remarkable way that J brings freedom and wholeness...

You see the way that we, who find ourselves worn out, entangled in sin are set free is Jesus who was free became enslaved, so that we who are slaves are set free.

J is arrested, bound like a criminal and killed on a cross

This is not a terrible accident – this is King J deliberately giving up his freedom so that we who are entangled by slavery to sin can be set free.

And the way that we, who are broken and empty are made whole again...

Jesus who was the perfect human became empty and broken, so that we are made complete.

As Jesus hung there dying on the cross – he takes on all of our brokenness... our warped and scarred lives and makes us new.

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Jesus was broken... so that we would be made whole to enjoy God's Lordship over our lives. So that we are free in our relationship with God.

Jesus makes the same bold claim over each us this morning...

"The Son of Man is Lord, even of your Sabbath"

J says: I am at the centre of your freedom and wholeness...

- today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts

Prayer: Holy Spirit bring the wonder of J my king to bear each day afresh in my heart.

- Joyfully receiving his Lordship over my life
- Receiving his gift of Sabbath freedom and wholeness
- Receiving the good gift of God's holy law with a delight to obey his ways