

## LORD OF THE SABBATH

Luke 6:1–5

Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them*, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. <sup>2</sup> And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” <sup>3</sup> But Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?” <sup>5</sup> And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

### MAIN POINT

Jesus, as the Lord of the Sabbath, is our rest in Whom we can place our trust.

#### I. The Confrontation (vv. 1–2)

- A. The Sabbath day was a significant holy day in the Jewish religion. Jewish people took the command to keep the Sabbath day holy seriously (e.g., Gen. 2:1–3; Exod. 20:8–11).
- B. The Pharisees, in their zeal to honor the Lord on the Sabbath began to introduce extra laws which they imposed on the people—laws which did not originate from the Lord but instead the traditions of the Pharisees.
- C. The disciples, as they passed through a grain field, plucked some heads of grain and began to eat them. This was provided for in the Torah (Deut. 23:24–25).
- D. The Pharisees’ claim that the disciples were doing what is “not lawful on the Sabbath” was patently untrue. They were not reaping, they were eating what was sufficient for them during that meal.
- E. *The Pharisees imposed upon the Law of God rules which were foreign to what God had actually stipulated.*
  1. *This was because they had a faulty view of the Law and themselves: they believed themselves to be righteous and therefore by their strict adherence to the Law would earn their righteous standing before God.*
  2. *They did not recognize that the Law was not intended to confirm their inherent righteousness; instead, it served as a schoolmaster to point them to their need of the Messiah and the fact that they are thoroughly bankrupt spiritually speaking.*

#### II. The Illustration (vv. 3–4)

- A. Jesus answers for his disciples, drawing the Pharisees’ attention to an old testament passage: 1 Samuel 21:1–6.

1. David and his men ate the consecrated bread in the house of God. The bread was strictly for the priests (Lev. 24:1–9).
2. They ate the bread in a state of ritual cleanness—but it was nevertheless still a violation of the instructions from Leviticus.
3. The priest permitted David to eat the bread for the welfare of David and his men.

B. Why does Jesus bring this story up to the Pharisees?

1. Because the Pharisees claimed to know the Scriptures better than anyone else.
2. *Because it demonstrated that “if God makes allowances for His own law to be broken under certain circumstances for the welfare of His people...He surely permits purposeless and foolish man-made traditions to be broken for that purpose” (John MacArthur).*

### III. The Truth (v. 5)

A. Jesus makes the bold claim that he is Lord of the Sabbath.

1. Jesus claimed to have *authority*. He has authority over the Law of the Sabbath.
2. Jesus claimed to have *identity*. He *is* the Lord of the Sabbath. He *is* God.

B. Jesus demonstrated his care and concern for the well-being of his people. The Law, summarized by Jesus as “loving God and loving others,” was intended to be for the wellbeing of his people. This did not appear to be at the heart of the Pharisees and their scrupulous man-made laws add to the Law.

C. *For those of us on this side of the cross: the Law stipulated Sabbath observance to acknowledge the rest found only in Holy God. Such rest is found ultimately in Christ (cf. Heb. 4:1–11).*