

Replacing a Sabbath Substitute Mark 2:23-3:6

Introduction: Devotion to cheap imitations

A. The Ark of the Covenant (rumored to be in numerous places throughout the world)
- Many still devote themselves to the “Ark’s” protection. But the reality is that the Ark is now simply an artifact and offers no actual power.

B. The Sabbath: As we will see in our text today, a similar imitation can be found in the “Sabbath” upheld by people in Jesus’ day. While it was viewed with great respect and devotion, the fact was that the Sabbath had become something far different than what it originally was. Because of that, it held no true power and failed to point to Christ as its true fulfillment.

I. The Sabbath Imitation (Mark 2:23-24)

A. Sabbath Origins: God’s Gift (Exodus 20:8-11, Deut. 5:14-15, etc)

i. The Rule: Don’t work!

ii. The Gift: Rest!

iii. The Picture:

1) Creation (Ex. 20:8-11)

- The Sabbath was intended to remind God’s people the story of Creation and their ongoing dependence on the Creator.

2) Redemption (Deut. 5:14-15)

- Furthermore, the Sabbath was intended to be a reminder of God’s people time in slavery and their story of redemption.

Point: In the beginning, the Sabbath was, in fact, extremely important – it was clear Law. But it was also an incredible gift and intended to cause us to see the bigger picture (creation & redemption).

B. Sabbath Decline: Man’s Law (tradition) (Ex. 34:21)

i. Necessary Distinctions (What qualifies as work?) (originally made sense)

- Certain distinctions were necessary. At various points throughout the Old Testament you see a few examples of clarifications given to help God’s people understand exactly what could be done.

ii. Unnecessary Restrictions

- Only in cases involving life threatening danger could “work” be done...

Point: Over time, that broad picture was lost and the focus was eventually incredibly narrow (concerned only with taking every precaution possible)

C. Sabbath Result (Pharisees)

i. No Rest

ii. No Holiness

iii. No Purpose (at least, as it was intended)

Transition: This is the Sabbath by the time Jesus sets foot in Capernaum: a restrictive practice void of any picture of redemption and empty of all rest...

II. The Sabbath Correction (2:25-28)

A. Law Explained (I Sam. 21)

i. The Story

- David with small band of followers fleeing from Saul comes upon a High Priest. When questioned why he was there, David lies, requests food, and accepts the Bread of Presence (something clearly against the Law)

ii. The Point:

- Exceptions exists (specifically for individuals in unique roles of authority)

* In telling this story, Jesus is telling the Pharisees that they are proving their own inability to understand/explain the Law.

B. Sabbath Explained (Ex. 31:13-14)

i. The Law: The Sabbath is for Man...

Rabbinic Tradition: "The Sabbath was delivered unto you, but you are not delivered unto the Sabbath."

ii. The Point: Sabbath is for Man...it is a gift...intended to point to something much greater...

Transition: Jesus, then, clearly shows that the Pharisees had misunderstood what it mean to uphold the Sabbath. But this isn't the only concern of Christ. The greater concern isn't that the way Jews practiced the Sabbath was misunderstood. Rather, it is that the ultimate message of the Sabbath was also being ignored...

C. Christ's Identity Explained (Mark 2:28)

i. Son of Man = Authoritative Messiah (Mark 2:10)

ii. Lord of Sabbath = God

Summary: Jesus is greater than David...greater than the priests...greater than all...because Jesus is the Son of God. He was the one to bring fulfillment of the Sabbath...so how dare you question what the Sabbath Fulfillment practices on the Sabbath!

Transition: Still...what does it look like to be the Lord of the Sabbath? What exactly did he come to do?

III. The Sabbath Fulfilled (partially) (Mark 3:1-6)

A. The "Challenge": Man w/ Paralyzed Hand

* All disease/injury is tied to an understanding of life in a Fallen World

Picture: Here, before the Lord of the Sabbath, on the Sabbath, in the Synagogue stood a walking image of the Fall and what would one day be restored...

B. Christ's Response

i. His Question: "Is this lawful?"
- By standards of Pharisees, yes!

ii. His Response:
1) Anger over religious leaders
2) Open Healing (in front of everyone)

C. The Results

i. Sabbath Rest Fulfilled (in part)
* Note language of Restoration (Acts 1:6)

ii. Sinful Rejection
* How is this possible?
- Because they had come to prefer the cheap imitation...

IV. Conclusion/Application

A. Unbelievers: Compare and contrast

i. Examine your current limitations
ii. See the freedom offered by Christ
ii. Repent/Believe

B. Believers:

i. Break away from cheap imitations
ii. Cling to Christ
iii. Rejoice