

## Unmistaken Identity

Sometimes we do great things and we want people to know who we are. And then there are other times when, quite frankly, we don't want our identity revealed.

Jesus was not afraid to let the Pharisees know who he really was.

### Jesus - Lord of the Sabbath – Mark 2:23-28

#### **1) Jesus identifies himself to the Pharisees as Lord of the Sabbath. Mark 2:28**

- a) This would be considered incredible, audacious, blasphemy by the Pharisees.
  - i) The Sabbath was first demonstrated by God. Gen. 2:2 “..so on the seventh day He rested.”
  - ii) It was God who had ordained and blessed the day. Gen. 2:3
  - iii) It was God who engraved the command into a stone tablet and gave it to Moses. Ex. 20:8-11
  
- b) Since the Sabbath was conceived and established by God Himself, to claim to be “Lord of the Sabbath”, was the same as claiming to be God. This was clear to the Pharisees.
  - i) This means Jesus was either God, or a blasphemer of the highest order. The Pharisees decided it must be the latter.
  
- c) Sabbath had essentially become the focal point of the Pharisees works based religion.
  - i) Since the Pharisees lived for outward exhibitions of their great devotion to God, Sabbath offered the perfect opportunity for displaying self-righteous works. The more you deprived yourself the more righteous you became.
  - ii) Jesus intentionally attacks the very center of the Pharisaic religion.
  - iii) They thought it was their strong point but Jesus knew it was a weakness and a complete sham.
  
- d) But what was the original command given to Moses by God? Ex. 20:8-11 (<sup>8</sup> **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.** <sup>9</sup> **Six days you shall labor and do all your work,** <sup>10</sup> **but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.**)
  - i) It was really quite simple, “you shall not do any work”. That’s it. No additional rules, no further restrictions, just take a break from whatever it is you do for a living.
  - ii) Sabbath was meant to be an enjoyable day, a happy day. A day of rest and a chance to take a healthy break from a busy week. It had become the worst day of the week. A huge burden.
  - iii) The main idea of Sabbath was to be holy, set apart, separate, unique.
  - iv) Jesus tells us in our text that the Sabbath was made for man’s benefit, not man for the Sabbath.
  - v) The Pharisees had polluted the original intent and over the centuries had added man-made rules, in an attempt to clarify what should be defined as “work”. **Examples.**
  - vi) Jesus shows nothing but disdain for the traditions of men and purposely, deliberately, takes the Sabbath conflict head on.

#### **2) Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, because he created it.**

- i) The Sabbath conflict first begins in John 5. Here we see Jesus healing a man by the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath.
- ii) The Pharisees are more concerned with this man breaking their Sabbath, than they were happy for his recovery. They neglected the more important matters of the law, justice and mercy.
- iii) In this text Jesus clearly claims to be God. John 5:18
- iv) If it was God who had established the Sabbath, and Jesus was God, then he is justified in calling himself Lord of the Sabbath. He instituted the day from the beginning of the law.

### 3) Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, because he controls the standards of behavior.

- i) In John 5:17 Jesus tells the Pharisees **“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.”** He’s teaching them that God may have rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, but his work never stops. God is always at work.
- ii) In Mark 2:25-28 Jesus reminds them about David’s hunger. The point here is a life is more important than a ceremony. Compassion and mercy are more important than ritual.
- iii) In Mark 3:1-6 Jesus asks them a question. **“Which is lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?”** This should have been an easy answer. By the standard Jesus taught, they were guilty of murder already because of their hatred for him. He’s asking who is acting more godly, me or you?

### 4) Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, because he completed and fulfilled it.

- i) Jesus said he had not come to destroy the Law (Old Testament) but to fulfill it. The theme of the entire Old Testament was Jesus.
- ii) 5 times in the New Testament Jesus tells us the story of the OT is about him:
  - Heb. 10:7 – “..it is written about me in the scroll.”
  - John 5:39 – “These are the scriptures that testify about me.”
  - Matt. 5:17 – “I have come to fulfill them.” (You can’t if they’re not about you)
  - Luke 24:27 – “explained to them what was said in all the scriptures about himself.”
  - Luke 24:44 – “..that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”
- iii) It was all about him, including the Sabbath. The Law, the sacrifices, and Sabbath were a picture of what was to come. The idea of Sabbath was holiness, which now comes to us through Christ’s death at Calvary.
- iv) In Heb. 3:7-4:11 Sabbath changes from a symbol into a relationship. In the Law of Moses the Israelites had a picture, in Christ we have the reality. Our rest is now in him, all day, everyday. Sabbath observance is never mentioned in the New Testament, because Christ fulfilled it.  
**Col. 2:16-17 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a Religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.**  
As Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus alone had the power to abolish it.

### REMINDERS TO TAKE HOME:

1. Jesus made many claims to be God, Lord of the Sabbath was just one of them. The Pharisees had no problem getting the message, and neither should we.
2. The entire bible is about Jesus. He is the message from cover to cover, and the entire Old Testament speaks of him. It’s truly amazing.
3. Jesus never missed an opportunity to confront false teaching. He was kind to the humble but extremely tough on the proud. Don’t back down when you come across false teaching.
4. Like the Pharisees, we too can have a tendency to justify ourselves when we do good works. Their sin of pride and self-justification continues on and is a temptation to all men.