The Lord of the Sabbath

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang. Thank you for joining us.! Praise the Lord for that truth that His love is everlasting. That is our hope for sure.

Well, this has been, as Joey mentioned a moment ago, a great week for our church. That's really true all summer long as we've got specials. Special and unique things that are taking place. But there's so many things in our church I'm thankful for.
I just specifically to mention one of them today is the ministry that happens to our students. I love the ministry that happens here for our students of all ages.
Thankful for those who lead and make that possible. Our college students, starting with just our oldest group, they had 34 in college Sunday school.
Just an hour ago, which is an amazing thing. The Lord is at work in our college ministry there. And so thankful for that. Our middle school and high school students had Super Summer this past week.
[1:10] Had a big group go to Super Summer. And they've got middle school camp, high school camp coming up in the next couple of weeks. We're excited for what God is doing there.

And then, as was mentioned, Vacation Bible School. I think Joey estimated 8,000 kids who were here. I was going to say nine, but somewhere between eight and 9,000 felt like. So much fun.
We just love the week where we have so many students and children and adults that are here serving and being a part of what we do. And I'm so thankful for Kathy and Bandy.
And they have an incredible team of volunteers for their VBS leadership team that carries so much weight to make VBS what it is. And then all of the volunteers that help in so many different ways.
So thankful for those that serve in our children and preschool ministry. And they do an amazing job.
Our student ministry is an area from children through college that the Lord is really blessing.
[2:10] And we are very excited about that and grateful for how many people serve and pray and make that possible. And also, for those of you who just week after week and in a faithful, non-heroic way pray for our church and give to our church.

When I say non-heroic, I just mean that you're doing it over and over and over again. It's good to give to something major. It's good to pray in some crisis.
But there is something very sweet about the people in the church that just give faithfully and just pray faithfully. When things are just normal, regular things, we want to pray for those regular things need provided for.
And VBS and Super Summer and high school camp and middle school camp and kids camp and all of those things that happen normally cannot happen unless we give regularly and unless we pray faithfully.
And so those of you who pray and those of you who give know that you have a direct hand in all the ministry that takes place here. And we are so thankful for that.
[3:21] In the summer, because of our schedule during the first hour, I get a chance to walk around and be in different Sunday school classes. And it was just such a thrill to see the body of Christ serving and teaching.

And hundreds, literally hundreds of people who are part of teaching God's Word on a Sunday morning, using their gifts to build up the church. It's a very, very precious thing to watch the body of Christ in action.
So thank you for being a part of that. And as a congregation a few moments ago, we sang a song that we sing from time to time around here that's got such great theology, sovereign ruler of the skies.

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That arrangement done by our friends, the Photo Sisters, who are down right here. And I don't want to break any news, but I'll just say God is using that both here and in great ways.
And we're excited for how the Lord has used that song in our own church and excited for how the Lord has used you guys. Turn with me to Mark chapter 2.
[4:36] Mark chapter 2. Mark chapter 2.

I'm just kidding. Stay with me, though, because what we're looking at today is extremely important. But you've got to think a little bit. All right?
We've got to do some digging today. We're going to have to go back and understand the Old Testament. We need to understand the law that God gave. We need to understand the perversion of that law that was prevalent in Jesus' day.
So, if you've come today ready to think and ready to study and ready to hear something to hopefully help you see in a more clear way what Christ was doing, this is the day.
So, stay with me on this. All right? All right. I was also… I told Mark, I'm kind of torn between if this is two sermons or one.
[5:56] And I think it's going to be one. You draw your own conclusion what that means. All right? But stay with me. We are in Mark chapter 2.

And we left off last week with this picture of the garment patch and the old wineskins. It ends there in verse 22.
We pick up today looking at verse 23 down to chapter 3 verse 6 about how Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath. Now, between verse 22 and verse 23, some time has passed.
Mark is… None of the gospel writers are trying to record every single thing that Jesus did. So, between verse 22 and verse 23, several months have passed.
All right? Now, we know from the other gospels a little bit of what took place during that time. Keep Mark 2.
[6:56] Marked there in your Bible. But turn with me for just a minute, if you would, to John 5. And I want to show you just very briefly at least one event that's taken place between Mark 2.22 and Mark 2.23.

And this will help you understand what we are about to study. John 5 records for us the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda.
And Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath. Look at verse 8. John 5 verse 8. Jesus said to him, get up, take up your bed and walk.
And at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and walked. Now, that day was the Sabbath. So, the Jews said to the man who had been healed, it is the Sabbath and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.
Now, I don't want to get too lost here in John 5, but just understand the situation. Jesus healed a man and the Jewish leaders do not rejoice in the power of God displayed.
[8:08] The Jewish leaders do not rejoice at the healing that's taken place. Their only concern is that somebody may be doing something that goes against their man-made rules and tradition.

Verse 11. He answered and said to them, the man who healed me, that man said to me, take up your bed and walk. In other words, the man says, look, somebody greater than me told me to do this.
Somebody with the authority to heal me and the authority to command me is the one who told me to do this. Verse 12. Well, they asked him, who is the man who said to you, take up your bed and walk?
The Jewish leaders have no concern about the glory of God, the power of God, or the mercy of God. Their only concern here is how dare somebody go against our tradition on the Sabbath.
This is at the pool of Bethesda here in John 5. Just see if I can give you a quick look here of what this looks like. So, this is in Bethesda.
[9:26] There's not a pool there today, but this is the exact location here. You can see a couple of places here. It's a great big area. When we go to Israel in February, we'll go here.

We'll see this. We were here a few years ago. This is a look down at where the pool was. So, this is the area. This is what it looked like.
You can see the stone there and where it was. And here a little closer in on more of the exact location where that pool was. So, that's what it looked like when Jesus is healing here in John 5 at the pool of Bethesda.

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If you go down to verse 16, it says this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus. So, just stop for a minute. We've been looking in Mark that there are these large crowds following Jesus.
But we've looked the last two Sundays that the tide's beginning to turn against Him. People are beginning to get upset with Him. The religious leaders in particular are turning against Jesus.
[10:29] Verse 16, this is why it was happening. Because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. He healed a man on the Sabbath.

And the Jewish leaders said, we don't want any part of this guy because he claims to have an authority greater than we do. And Jesus answered them in verse 17 and said, my father is working until now and I am working.
You take a break from work to rest on the Sabbath. Jesus says the power of God is still at work. The power of God never stops.
And the Jews hear that and say, are you making yourself to be God? If you've been with us the last several weeks, you know that Jesus continually is saying, that's exactly what I'm doing.
Go back to Mark 2. So, that event in John 5 has just taken place. In between verse 22 and verse 23 is that event in John 5.
[11:39] We now go to verse 23. And we're going to look at two events. Verses 23 to 28. And then chapter 3 verses 1 to 6. If you want to put a couple of headings down.

First of all, you can make note here that Jesus expresses His sovereignty. Jesus expresses His sovereignty. Let's take a look at it.
Now, just stop for a minute.
When you read through this at first, that this feels pretty innocent. It feels like this is insignificant. In reality, this one verse we've just read is anything but insignificant.
Remember that God has instituted the Sabbath to be a day of rest. It was a day to be a blessing. That people were to work hard for the six days.
[12:38] And then on Friday from sundown until Saturday at sundown, the Sabbath day, they were to take a break from their work. It was a day to pause and reflect and refresh and remember and to worship.

It was a time to recharge. The Sabbath was given to man to be a blessing to man. It wasn't about a bunch of rules and oppressive burdens.
It was given to man to say, one day a week, just rest from your labor. One day a week, we devote ourselves in a unique way to the Lord with worship and with reverence and with remembrance.
But as the religious leaders have taken the good gift God has given through the years, they've perverted that. And they've added to it, I think it was 39 categories that they made all these laws for of what you could not do on the Sabbath day.
Instead of it being a day of blessing, it became a barrage of burdens. And some of the rules they came up with were just mind-numbing.
[13:51] You couldn't carry something heavier than a dried fig because if you did, that would be considered working. You couldn't take a bath because if water spilt on the floor, that would be considered cleaning.

And you weren't to clean. You couldn't look at a mirror because you may see a gray hair and be tempted to pluck it out. And that would be considered working. All kinds of strange things.
If somebody was sick, you could do enough for them to keep them from dying, but not give them medical treatment to help them get better. So, you've got these 39 categories that these people have come up with of things they could not do.
And each category has got all these different sub-layers of things they can and can't do. And so, the Sabbath for the people has gone from being a day of blessing to a day of burden.
And the religious leaders wanted this. And they would make it incredibly difficult for the people to be able to keep up. It was a way of keeping the people in shackles.
[14:59] And so, Jesus and His disciples are going to the grain fields, and they pluck heads of grain because they're hungry. You say, what's the big deal?

Verse 24. And the Pharisees were saying to Him, look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? Now, you've got to ask your… When you read the Bible, ask yourself good questions here.
Here's a good question. How do the Pharisees know this is happening? Because they're tracking Him.

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They obviously have a group of people they've sent to just be continual watch agents over everywhere Jesus goes.
Why? Because back in John 5, He healed a man on the Sabbath. And it enraged them. And they say, I wonder what else He does on the Sabbath that breaks our laws and traditions.
[16:02] So, they send a group of people, you track everywhere He goes. And notice that the question is, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? Now, let's go back to the Old Testament.

This is really important to understand. The Old Testament law of God actually gave a very specific teaching about this.
It's Deuteronomy 23, 24, and 25. Let me read it to you. If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your bag.
If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain. Here's what the law of God said.
Remember, in that day, you don't have streets like we have and property lines exactly like we have. When you're walking from person's house to person's house, from street to street, from town to town, village to village, you're going through these fields.
[17:08] So, God's law said, if you're walking through and you're hungry, you're in need, you can take some grapes, you can take some heads of grain, but you can't go take a sickle and just uproot it and steal it.

You don't take a bunch of grapes and put it in your bag to save you from having to prepare meals the next day. But if as you pass through, you're hungry, if as you pass through, you're in need, you can take what you need for that moment right then.
Right? Very clear. Very obvious. Very merciful. That was the law of God.
The Pharisees say, why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? They've not broken God's law at all. What they have done is broken the man-made tradition and the man-made law that the leaders have added to God's law.
See, what they said in that day was you weren't allowed to reap or thresh or winnow. But what they said was if you take a head of grain in your hands, they called that reaping.
[18:25] You would take that head of grain and you would rub your fingers together to be able to remove what you need to eat. And they would say, well, that was equal to threshing. You would then blow the chaff away so you would have what was left that you needed.

And they would say that was equal to winnowing. In other words, they've taken the law of God and added so much cumbersome rule to it that now kept you from doing what God in His mercy had already provided for.
And they say, how dare you do what is unlawful? Not because you're going against what God has said, but you're going against what we have said.
That gives you great insight into what the religious leader's mindset was in the day of Jesus. It was not about obeying the Word of God.
It was all about their power. How dare you do this? Verse 25, Jesus said to them, have you never read what David did?
[19:37] Now just stop and you got to understand the answer to this is of course they've read this. They prided themselves on reading the Old Testament.

Have you never read this? Have you never seen this? Do you not understand that the Old Testament is clear on this? And Jesus gives them an example. Have you never read what David did when he was in need and was hungry?
He and those who were with him. And he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the bread of the presence, which is not lawful for any but the priest to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him.
Now you read that and you think, what in the world is he talking about? Well, let me first point out to you, when Jesus is confronted with this issue, why are your people doing this?
Why are you behaving this way? Why aren't you following our man-made law? Why do you make the decisions you make? Understand what Jesus does is he says, let's go to the Word of God.
[20:51] This is such a helpful thing for those who have ears to hear this among us today. When people question what you believe, when people want to argue with you about theology, when people want to debate you about how things are or how things should be, you do not appeal to

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authority or tradition or man's opinion.

Here's your first question, what has God said? So much of the problems that even the church has today would be solved and settled if we could just do that.
When I say church, I don't mean here, I'm saying the church around the world. Because in so many churches, it's just not an issue of what does God's Word say, because so many churches are so caught up in who has the power and who has the authority and their traditions of that church, and those things become elevated at the neglect of Scripture, which is exactly what happened in Jesus' day.
Jesus says, what does God's Word say? And so He's going to take them back to Scripture.
If you want to make a note, He takes them specifically back to 1 Samuel 21. Just a quick word for those of this may interest, like four of you, maybe.
[22:33] Jesus says, don't you know the story of David from 1 Samuel 21? And Jesus says, in the time of Abiathar the high priest. And so you've got some who are critics of the Bible and say, ha-ha.

The Old Testament says it's not Abiathar who is the high priest. The Old Testament names Ahimelech as the high priest. You've got a contradiction between what Jesus says in Mark 2 and the Old Testament, 1 Samuel 21.
Well, understand that what we know is that in the Old Testament, Ahimelech is the high priest. His son is Abiathar. As Ahimelech is serving as the high priest, his son Abiathar would have been there, would have seen this.
And the high priest after Ahimelech will be his son Abiathar, who becomes the dominant high priest of that era. And so that whole time period becomes known as the days of Abiathar.
So, when you go to some college class and somebody wants to try to pretend to be smart and convince you the Bible's got these problems in it, just a little bit of research, a little bit of understanding goes a long way here.
[23:49] You need to have confidence in your Bible. Have confidence in your Bible. It was Ahimelech. It's also the era known as the days of Abiathar.

It's not that difficult to solve. And what Jesus does is he recounts this event in 1 Samuel 21. David is on the run from Saul.
He and his men are hungry, and so they are in need of food. Now, what would happen in 1 Samuel 21 is what would happen every single week.
You would have here, the place is in Nob, about a mile away from Jerusalem. And so what you would do is you would cook bread, and you would put it out, and it would be hot bread, and it would be there for the week, consecrated bread.
At the end of the week, you would take that bread that's now old, and only the Aaronic priests could eat it, and then you would put out new bread. That's part of what they would do. It was a picture that the 12 tribes of Israel were welcomed at the table of God.
[24:55] They had a relationship with God. It's what it was a picture of there in the tabernacle, that the people of God were his guests. They were welcome. They were a part of his family.

David comes through and says, My men are starving. And the high priest says, Well, all we have is this old bread that we're taking down. Have your men been kept holy and been kept pure?
And David says, Yes. And Ahimelech feeds David's men the bread because they are in need. David is the divine king, and he is just not yet being recognized by the people because of the hardness of heart in Saul.
And so the priest gives David's men the bread. And the lesson in 1 Samuel 21 is that mercy and compassion triumph over ceremony.
And Jesus says to the Pharisees, Have you not read 1 Samuel 21 when David's men were in need and they were provided for?
[26:06] And he draws that parallel between David and himself, David's men, and Jesus' followers, and says, My followers have not broken the law of God.

You have just elevated your tradition above the word of God. So the Pharisees have been stalking him.
They've got somebody assigned to him. You watch him. Where's he going? What's he doing? And they see that his disciples are feeding themselves the grain of the field, which the Old Testament law allowed them to do.

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The religious leaders added all these burdens and commands to say they couldn't do that. And Jesus says, What they're doing is no different than what happened in 1 Samuel 21.
And in 1 Samuel 21, Neither the high priest nor David nor his men were punished by God. This is why, by the way, Jesus says, Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.
[27:26] Come unto me, all of you who have been so caught in the abusive religious system seeking to exert man's power and you're trying to keep up with man's law and tradition and it's left you exhausted.

Come unto me, he says, and I'll give you rest. And then he says in verse 27, he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
He says this whole idea of the Sabbath was God's way to be a blessing to man. It's not about burdens. It's not about a huge list of rules. It's not about trying to make your life convoluted and confusing.
It's about trying to be a blessing to you. It's not that the Sabbath exists and men serve the Sabbath. It's that God created and then he rested.
He ceased from his creation. He's established into the order of his people a day of rest for worship and for renewal to be a blessing to man.
[28:47] By the way, you may say now, but why would these religious leaders make up all these rules? Because doesn't it make their life difficult too? Just understand, the goal of making all these rules was in their system, you could do away with questions of the heart and motive and attitude and worship and you just reduce your religion to nothing more than law keeping because you can always feel that you're better than somebody else.

That has nothing to do with what the Bible teaches about salvation. And then Jesus says something that the people would have just almost as surely just been stopped dead in their tracks.
So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. I cannot convey to you adequately how offensive that sentence would be to those men.
And Jesus not only says it, he doubles up. He doesn't just say, I'm the Lord of the Sabbath. He says the Son of Man. We looked a couple weeks ago when Jesus calls himself the Son of Man, that's straight from Daniel 7 verse 13.
He is saying the messianic reference to the one who will come on the clouds in glory with all the power to rule, to reign, and to judge. That's me.
[30:26] And he says here, in case you forgot, let me remind you, I am the Son of Man. The Old Testament Scripture spoke of me and I am the Lord even of the Sabbath.

A literal rendering here, he says, Lord is the Son of Man, even the Sabbath. He claims that he's in charge of the Sabbath.
Now, who is it that first gave the Sabbath? It's not the Pharisees. It's not the scribes.
Who is the Sabbath from? From God. It's from God. And it's not only the fourth commandment. The Sabbath is a part of creation. For Jesus to say, I'm the Lord of the Sabbath is the same to say, I am the Lord of creation.
[31:39] Now the people are saying, you're telling me that you, you are creator? John's gospel says, nothing was made that was not made through him.

I am the Son of Man. When he says he's the Son of Man, he says, I'm the one who you will see in the end bringing judgment. And I am the Lord of the Sabbath, which is a creation event.
What Jesus is saying here is I am God from beginning to end. From creation to judgment. I am the Lord of the Sabbath.
They also would have understood Exodus 20 verse 11 that says, the Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it holy. Jesus says, that's me.
I'm the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus here expresses his sovereignty. Now this is happening right on the heels of John 5.
[32:53] He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath and enraged the religious leaders. So they start to follow him because they're trying to catch him in a trap.

And Jesus says, I see your trap and I'll walk right into it because it's no trap for me. He says, all you care about are your rules and your power and your authority.
And he says, let me just be clear on this. You have no ultimate authority. I have authority from beginning to end. I am the Lord of the Sabbath.

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He expresses his sovereignty in comparison to what they thought was their authority. Now you go from verse 28 to chapter 3 verse 1.
A little bit of time has passed. Probably just a week. Most likely we're just a week later. Again, he entered the synagogue and the man was there with a withered hand.
[34:03] So the first thing we saw is he expresses his sovereignty. Now, here's a second episode, chapter 3 verses 1 to 6. And if you want to make a note here, Jesus is going to expose their sin.

He's going to expose their sin. It's the synagogue. Jesus is there. And it says, there's a man there with a withered hand.
I don't think we can be dogmatic on this. My take on this is I think this is probably a setup. I think this guy is probably a plant. I mean, it's a real man with a real withered hand.
But my guess is that the Pharisees probably have brought this guy in the synagogue, made sure he sat where Jesus would see him and notice him, not because they care about this man.
They're just collecting evidence. He healed a man at the pool of Bethesda. He told his disciples they could eat grain. And we need one more piece of evidence here to make this an airtight, case-shut charge against him.
[35:09] So my guess is they take this man, make sure he's there, sit him where Christ would see him. And this is probably a plant, somebody with a real need.

The Pharisees could care less about his need. They just need Jesus to have to deal with this and make a decision what he's going to do. A man was there with a withered hand.
We don't know what's wrong with the hand, the language. If you study the language here, it could refer to something he was born with, this malady. It could be a disease.
It could be an accident. But his hand is dried up. It doesn't work. He can't move it. He has no strength in it. And they watched Jesus, I'm in verse 2, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him.
This is why I take it that the man has been brought in. This is all part of their plan. This is quite fascinating.
[36:17] The Jewish leaders bring this man in on the Sabbath. Now think about it. Because they know Jesus has the power to heal him.

That's fascinating. None of them could do that. None of them could take a man with a withered hand and heal him.
None of them could say to the paralytic, rise and walk. None of them could say to the man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5, rise and walk. None of them could say to the man with a withered hand, use your hand.
They know Jesus has a power they've never seen before. This is how deep their hardened hearts are steeped in sin.
It's because they know not only the power of Jesus to heal, but they also know that Christ is compassionate. Because they've seen it over and over and over.
[37:16] this man Jesus who has the power over demons and over disease. He's got power even over nature.

And he's got compassion. And he cares for those who are hurting. And he's already told you he himself is the son of God.
Why not worship this man? Because he was a threat to their power. The system was all set up and rigged where they were at the top of the pyramid scheme.
And if people begin to submit to Jesus, Jesus is going to take the people away from the man-made tradition and take them back to the Word of God.
And it's a threat to their power. And they loved their power so much they were willing to ignore every piece of evidence given right to them.
[38:37] This man claims to be God. He's already cast out demons. He's healed all kinds of people. They've seen it. They've watched him do miracles. And the people say, we don't want to consider the truth.

We don't care about what he's preaching. We don't care about the consequences. We just want to defend our turf. So, they say, you know what? Last week, you know what he did with the disciples? I bet we could catch him one more time. Somebody go get that guy that lives down the road with the withered hand. Let's make sure he's at synagogue today.

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I bet if he's there, Jesus will heal him because Jesus has that kind of power and that kind of compassion. no thought of worship, no thought of belief, just trying to protect their own power.
Verse 3, Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, come here. And what I love about this is Jesus initiates this. The people thought if Jesus sees this man or maybe this man will go up to him, maybe the man will say, would you heal me?
[39:52] Jesus isn't even concerned with waiting to see what happens. He just initiates it himself. He says, come here. By the way, Luke chapter 6, verse 8, records this account and he adds, Jesus knew their thoughts.

You bet he did. He knew exactly what was going on. And you might think, well, if Jesus knows they're trying to trap him, shouldn't he just stay quiet and avoid?
And the answer is no because when you yourself are the son of God, you're not worried about the pathetic strategies of sinful man. Jesus said, come here.
Verse 4, and he said to them, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm? to save life or to kill?
What's Jesus saying? He's saying, let's go to the Word of God. What does God's Word say about the Sabbath?
[41:04] And the idea is, if these religious leaders say it's okay to heal him, then they're going to lose their power because that's going to tear down everything they've been trying to build up in these 39 different categories, what you can and can't do.

If they say you can't heal him, then they're afraid that they're going to look to be just completely heartless, which they are. So Jesus says, you tell me, it's the Sabbath day.
Are we to do good or are we to do harm? Are we to save or are we to kill? But they were silent.
Of course they were because they don't care about this man. And they don't care about truth. And they don't care about worship.
They just care about themselves. Verse 5, this is a very helpful verse for us in our world today. And Jesus looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.
[42:25] I want you to notice two emotions Jesus feels here. anger and grief. You need to understand it is okay and in fact fitting for you to look at the sin around you in the world and feel anger and grief.

We live in a day where people who aren't believers, don't believe the Bible, want to tell you as a Christian how you should feel and how you should act. It always amazes me when people who say they don't believe the Bible want to then tell us how a Christian should act.
And one of the things the world says today is aren't you supposed to be a Christian? You should be a person of love. How dare you tell me what I can and can't do? How dare you tell me I'm wrong? How dare you be judgmental? You're supposed to be people of love. Of course we are. But never a people who love sin.
Never a people who love sin. Are our hearts supposed to break for those who are caught in sin?
[43:46] Absolutely. We grieve over their condition. Does the church join in in celebrating sin? God forbid.

Look no further than the month of June in the United States of America. America. If you don't feel grief grief over those caught and trapped and stuck in sin, you need to.
You need to. And if you don't feel anger when a nation shakes its fist and mocks the word of God, you need to.
Do not fall for this lie that as believers we can either grieve over sinners and have compassion on them or we can have anger at sin.
It is both. What's our example? Christ is our example. Jesus looks at their sin and he is filled with anger yet grieves at their condition.
[45:12] sin. So let me just shoot straight with you this morning. If you are caught stuck in a sinful lifestyle, if you find yourself today embracing a sinful lifestyle, involved in a sexual lifestyle that is an offense to God, let me be very clear with you.

Our church cares for you. We want to minister to you. We want to help you.
We want to see you get freedom from that sin and be set free to live the life you were designed and created by God to live.
Let me also be clear. We are not afraid to call sin what God calls sin.

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and what makes Christ angry as his people makes us angry. And yet what grieves his heart grieves our heart.
[46:53] We hate that we live in a culture where people not only tolerate what God abhors.

They celebrate it. And they don't merely celebrate it. They want to force you to celebrate it. And that sin makes God angry.
And not or and we grieve at the sinful condition of people blinded by sin because we love them and we care for them.
And this is not hypothetical. There are no doubt people in this room right now who struggle with sexual sin.
And I want to say if that's you that our hearts grieve for anybody caught up in sin.
[48:15] And what we would want for you is that you would see the glory of the gospel in the beauty of Christ and cry out to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation and let the God of all power set you free.

And for the believers in this room when the world wants to conform you into their image and say how dare you tell us right and wrong.
Listen here's what we say as Christians just as Jesus said what does the Bible say? And if you don't know what the Bible says you should and if you do know and you're ashamed of it at least be honest and just tell the world I'm ashamed to call myself a Christian and let those who are truly converted speak for God.
now if we have anger at sin and no grief and compassion for those who are caught up in sin we have not been faithful.
We are to do both. Yes we are angry at sin and yes we grieve over the people caught up in sin.
[49:43] don't let the world tell you that this is not compatible this is exactly what Christ is feeling here. He looked around them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart.

Now I want you to notice what Jesus says. Jesus said to the man stretch out your hand. Now just stop and let me help you with this.
The man can't do that. He has a withered hand. His hand is completely paralyzed. He has no ability to do this.
His hand does not work. He can no more stretch out his own hand than the paralyzed man brought in the mat on his own can rise and walk.
He cannot do that unless Christ performs the miracle. When Jesus said to the paralyzed man in the house rise and walk if Jesus does not give power to that command that man can hear it but his legs are going nowhere.
[51:04] If Jesus says to the man with the withered hand stretch out your hand and Christ doesn't provide the power the man can hear it that arm is not moving why?

Because he can't do it. And what you actually see here in Mark 3 is a physical demonstration of the exact reality of your salvation.
God is sovereign and unless he provides the power unless he does the miracle nothing's going to happen. Yet when Jesus commanded the man to rise and walk did the man lay there?
He did not. He caught up and he walked. Why? Because that's what conversion does. God provides the command God provides the power and those who receive it absolutely obey the command.
Which is why Martin Luther said so many years ago God command whatever you will and then grant whatever you command. Command is to do whatever you want but you're going to have to give us the power to do what it is you command.
[52:20] So Jesus says stretch out your hand. Well if God does not sovereignly heal him it's not going to happen and yet where God's sovereign powers put on display man is absolutely responsible!

again don't make this more complicated than it is man can't rise and walk he can't unless God heals him but as soon as God heals him that man is responsible to rise and walk you are spiritually dead if you're not a believer you can't save yourself you can't will yourself to salvation you can't earn your way to heaven you are spiritually dead you must be made alive it's the sovereign work of God and yet when God calls you to come for those who are in Christ they rise and follow you see it right here in Mark 3 stretch out your hand look at the very next sentence he stretched it out how did he do that because

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God is sovereign and because God is sovereign he does what he's been told to do and the man obeyed he's responsible don't separate those things if Jesus has stretched out your hand the man is just stuck he can't do it if God doesn't provide it he can't do it but God does what God sovereignly can do and now that man is absolutely responsible and his response is to obey just as yours must be he stretched it out and his hand was restored how do you here's what the
Pharisees do in verse six the Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians don't look any further look up for just a minute who are the Herodians we don't know much about them they're people who are sympathetic to the Herodian dynasty they're not religious people they're political people they're not people the Pharisees like or respect at all and the Pharisees say we've seen what Jesus is doing we will go to our enemies why look at the end of verse six to see how to destroy him how to destroy him
Luke six verse eleven in recording this says that the Pharisees were filled with fury it's an interesting word the Greek word fury comes from the word noiel which means to reason or to understand you add a one letter in front of it to negate it so in the English language if someone's a theist they believe in a god if they don't believe in god you add an a in front of it and instead of a theist you get what atheist an atheist who does not believe in god mark says that the pharisees were filled with fury noieo you add the letter in front of it to negate it meaning they were filled filled with this emotion where they had no reasoning no understanding no logic they were making decisions that made no sense at all they have seen his power they have heard his teaching they have witnessed his authority they have seen his compassion and now because he is such a threat to their power they will go team up with the
[57:35] Herodians and do things that have no sense at all do you ever look at our world today and wonder how do intelligent people do such stupid things there it is when your heart is so filled with sin that you refuse to repent you lose your mind if you want to understand what's happening in our nation today just read Mark 3 just read Luke 6 it's people who value power over truth and refuse to acknowledge who

Christ is and they've lost all reason so the Pharisees say how dare you heal a man on the Sabbath but they have no trouble meeting in their huddle over here to say how can we destroy and kill this man I'll give you two conclusions and we're done number one sin leads you to a hopeless place it always does it leads you to a hopeless place it's true for the
Pharisees it's true for some of you in this room you've lived in sin you've fallen for the world's lies you've turned your back on the things of God and your sins led you to a hopeless place but can I say secondly grace leads you home not rules not tradition not man-made religion grace leads you home some of you grew up singing the great hymn amazing grace was grace that taught my heart to fear grace my fears relieved grace taught me to be afraid of my condition and then grace relieved my fears was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved how precious did that grace appear the hour
I first believed this world cannot save you man's traditions cannot save you religion cannot save you the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ alone can lead you home he says to you today through his word repent and believe would you today repent and believe this world will always lead you to a hopeless place God's grace will lead you home Lord we thank you for your word today thank you for these biblical encounters preserved for us and I pray Lord that you would make our hearts to understand all the depth that we have looked at today and cause us to trust in you in Jesus name amen amen if we can help you if we can serve you if we can pray for you if we can help you understand how to know
Christ we want to do that we stand ready to help you in any way that we can if you would take your connection card let us know how to pray for you what your need is what your spiritual question is on your way out if you drop that card in one of our giving boxes we would love to follow up and respond this week and sit down with an open Bible with you and see how we can help you I want to say as we dismiss today I don't know if there's been a Sunday I've preached here where I feel like the congregation has been more alert and in tune have paid closer attention I know it's not easy it's not easy to sit down for a long time and listen you have been an amazing amazing congregation today and I appreciate that and for parents of little ones that are teaching and training them you jump into the deep end I know when you bring your little ones in here I get it you're doing an amazing job and
[63:18] I love and appreciate you so much God what's what's what we like or what k or what canie or what are there as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as

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