

A DEVOTIONAL SERIES ON THE GOSPEL ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

GOD MADE THE SABBATH FOR MAN

Mark 2:17 “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

The Pharisees expected godly Jews to obey 39 different laws and regulations they had created regarding the proper observance of the Sabbath. Examples of these laws include: 1) Regulating the number of steps a law-abiding Jew could take on the Sabbath; 2) Any activity associated with the making of bread (planting wheat, harvesting wheat, grinding wheat into flour, etc.) was prohibited; 3) When eating they forbid picking bones out of fish.

Jesus said to the Pharisees who criticized Him for permitting His disciples to pick grain and eat it, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” In giving the third commandment God in His heart had the best interest of man. First, through this command God was concerned about the physical need of the body for rest. Thus, God said no physical, manual labor on the Sabbath. Second, God was concerned about the spiritual need of man. This commandment included God’s directive that the Sabbath was a day for worship. (See Exodus 35:2 and Leviticus 23:3)

The Pharisees changed God’s concern for the benefit of man into a work-righteous command. Their teaching was one of rigid obedience to their 39 laws. Doing so, they believed, would earn God’s approval. Jesus rebuff’s their teaching. The Gospel, He proclaimed, was for man to have a good and holy relationship with their heavenly Father.

The way God chose to create this right relationship with Him was sending His Son Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath. (verse 28) As previous devotions based on the Gospel according to Mark said, God sent Jesus with authority. Using His authority, He drove demons out of those they had possessed. He healed the sick. He taught the Gospel. Jesus simply said, “I say” and it was so.

God has created the Sabbath for you. It is a day to rest from worldly cares and concerns. It is a day for you to hear God’s word, to receive the sacraments and

fellowship with fellow believers. It is a day set apart by God to bless you through the hearing of His word.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, lead me set apart time in my weekly schedule, as God intends, for rest and worship where He speaks to me through His Word and ministers to my soul through the Sacraments.

Come Thou almighty King, Help us Thy name to sing;
Help us to praise; Father all-glorious, O'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.

Come, Thou incarnate Word, Gird on Thy mighty sword;
Our prayer attend. Come and Thy people bless, And give Thy word success,
And let Thy righteousness On us descend.

Come, holy Comforter, Thy sacred witness bear In this glad hour!
Thou, who almighty art, Now rule in ev'ry heart,
And ne'er from us depart, Spirit of pow'r.

To Thee, great One in Three, Eternal praises be Hence evermore!
Thy sov'reign majesty May we in glory see,
And to eternity Love and adore.
(LSB 905)