

# “Sabbath Breakers?”

Luke 6:1-5; Matthew 12:1-8

East Berlin Community Church

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## Introduction

- Jesus’ relationship with the old covenant laws?
  - 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. And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” 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: 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?” And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”*
- Experience with legalistic church
- The Pharisees’ attempt to create a “hedge” around the Torah. These interpretations of the Law became traditions passed on to subsequent generations.
- Pharisees’ progressivism verses Sadducees’ conservatism
- The Pharisees attempted to “fill in the gaps”. In 200 AD, the Pharisaical Jews recorded all their traditions in the document known as the Mishnah. Part of the Mishnah became known as the “Halacha” or “walking”, for *“This is how you are to walk and live if you want to please God.”*
- Pharisees’ “Old Wine” verses Jesus’ “New Wine”

## “Sabbath Breakers?”

### A. The “LAW”

#### 1. The Point of Conflict: Eating out on the Sabbath.

- Luke 6:1-- *“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.”*

#### 2. Provision under the Law concerning eating from another’s field

- Deuteronomy 23:24-25-- *“When you come into your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container. When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain.”*

#### 3. Laws concerning working on the Sabbath day.

- Exodus 20:8-11-- *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.”*
- Exodus 34:21-- *“Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.”*

a. Big question: *What constitutes “work”?*

b. **The law gives only a few examples of what might constitute work.**

- 1) Kindling a fire and gathering firewood. (Exodus 35:3; Numbers 15:32-33) To do so was punishable by death (Exodus 31:16)
- 2) Manna was to be collected on six day, but not on the Sabbath.

3) Travel restrictions (Numbers 35:5)

- Exodus 16:29-- *"See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."*

## B. The Pharisaical "Elaboration" on the Law

1. 39 general tasks forbidden with 6 minor categories under each
2. One act of "labor" may be divided into steps—each step involving sin and punishment.
3. Disciples guilty of at least three or more infractions

## C. Jesus' Interpretation of the Law

### 1. Survival over strict compliance

- Luke 6:3-4-- *"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: 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?'"*
- a. **Only the priests and High priest are to eat the "showbread"**
    - Leviticus 24:9-- *"shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."*
  - b. **Case: David eating the showbread**—1 Samuel 21
  - c. Rabbinic View: **"Danger to life supersedes the Sabbath laws and all other obligations."**
    - Leviticus 18:5-- *"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD."*

### 2. Serving God over Sabbath rest

- Matthew 12:1-6-- *"At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, 'Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!' But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.'"*
- a. **Case: The Priests work on the Sabbath** (Numbers 28:9-10)
  - b. **Rabbinic rule: Sabbath rules did not apply to the priests.**
  - c. **Both David and Jesus' disciples are on a "special mission" in service of the Lord—and thus held blameless**
  - d. **Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath takes in the whole of Scripture, the rules with the exceptions noted.**

3. **“Spirit” of the Law over the “letter”**

- Matthew 12:7-- *“But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.”*
- a. **Jesus’ assignment: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”**
  - Matthew 9:13-- *“Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’”*
- b. **The Pharisees miss the BIG PICTURE**
  - Matthew 23:23-24-- *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.”*
- c. **Jesus’ teaching centers on the BIG PICTURE. Loving God; Loving one another**

4. **Sovereign Lord over the Sabbath**

- Luke 6:5-- *“And He said to them, ‘The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.’”*
- a. **Question of Jesus’ authority, not his actions**
- b. **The “Yoke” of the Pharisees contrasted with the “Yoke” of Christ”**
  - Matthew 23:2-3 -- *“The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”*
  - Matthew 11:28-30-- *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*
- c. **Following Jesus...**
  - 1) Is open to all. The invitation is to those who are “weary and heavy laden”
  - 2) Leads to abundant, joyful living or “rest”
  - 3) Involves taking on His “yoke” which is “easy” and “light”