

St Thomas Home Group Study

Making our way through Mark

1. Lord of the Sabbath



This week, we begin making our way through Mark's Gospel, following in the Way of Christ. Our lectionary reading this week looks at the theme of Sabbath. On my very first business trip to Israel, the experience of Shabbat came as a real culture shock.

Q. Looking closely at the above image, what do you think is happening here, and why?

Read Mark 2.23-28

One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴ And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: ²⁶ how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" ²⁷ And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

Discussion Questions:

- Q1. What are your early memories of Sunday as a day of rest?
- Q2. Are there any aspects of a Sabbath Day you have either maintained or disregarded?
- Q3. In v.23 the disciples are *making their way* through the harvest fields, taking what is permitted (See Deut 23:25). What is the objection of the Pharisees?
- Q4. Jesus responds, but by talking about David (See 1 Sam 21). What are the similarities and dissimilarities of this example?
- Q5. Sabbath, Holy Bread, Presence... what theological allusions are occurring here, and what are the implications (v.26)?
- Q6. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (v.27). Does this mean it is ours to do with as we choose?
- Q7. "So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath." There is a recurring phrase "The Son of Man came [...]". Can you recall some of the phrases? *
- Q8. How might these "Son of Man came" sayings cast light on what is permissible on the Sabbath?

*Why must the gate be narrow?
Because you cannot pass beyond it burdened.
To come in among these trees
you must leave behind
the six days' world, all of it,
all of its plans and hopes.
You must come without weapon or tool, alone,
expecting nothing, remembering nothing,
into the ease of sight,
the brotherhood [and sisterhood!]
of eye and leaf..*

"1985, V" by Wendell Berry

Blessings,

Lee