

Weaving the Word

Working on the Sabbath

Part 11 – September 7, 2014



Welcome to a place where **we're learning to distinguish the difference between religion and the good news.**

Today, we're weaving the Word! Jesus confronted a demon in Capernaum, healed Peter's mother-in-law, delivered an *entire town*, and then snuck away to pray.



The people were looking for him ... Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" ... and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But ... Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. ... he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ... That is why I have come." – Mark 1:35-38, Luke 4:42-43 NIV

Most people believe that if there is a God, you relate to God by being good. The world's religions are based on this principle, with a million variations. But, they all have the same logic: **The more fully I follow the rules, the more acceptable I am.**

The Good News of the Kingdom of God, the Gospel of Jesus, is not only different from that, it's diametrically opposed! I'm fully accepted in Christ; so, I gratefully follow Jesus. God's Word inspires us with the "life of love" we *desire* to live before a devoted Father who allowed His *own creation* to kill His *only uncreated Son*, to bring us back home to rest in the Garden.

So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. ... Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. ... And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. ... Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him. – Matthew 4:23-25, Mark 1:39, Luke 4:44 NIV

As a young believer, I used to try to define in detail what was required to be a good Christian. How many minutes of prayer? How many times per week, per *day*? Bible reading schedules. And, etc. I wasn't so much self-righteous as just ... *anxious* ... *religious*.



Jesus offers *rest*; religion, *rest'less'ness*.

So, do *you* have the emotional security to handle a Savior who uses broad strokes to paint a life of love and obedience?

Or, do you narrow it down, list it out, and button it up, so *you* can feel good about *you* when *you* comply? Be honest, *you you*.



We all gravitate toward the restlessness of religious self-justification.

God instituted the *day off*, a weekly *day of rest*, the *Sabbath*.

He directed His people to relax, and they directly turned it into the most *religiously exhausting* day of the week!

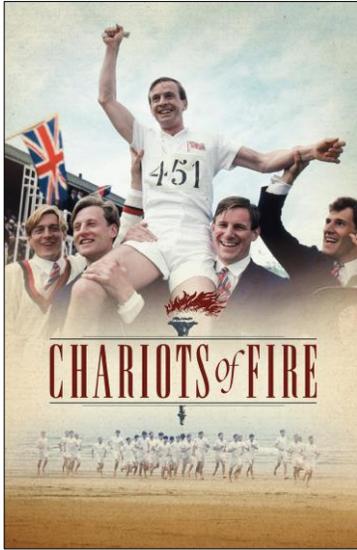
One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, ... At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. ... and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ... His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ... and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. ... When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." [The Day of Rest] ... The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ... Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ... He answered, ... Jesus answered them, ... "Haven't you read what David did ... "Have you never read what David did ... when he and his companions were hungry? ... when he and his companions were hungry and in need? [Fleeing for their lives from King Saul (page 289 of your Action Bible)] ... He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. ... In the days of Abiathar [uh-BYE-uh-thur] the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." ... he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. [God's Moral Law supersedes ceremonial regulation] Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day [by working as God commanded] and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. ... Then he said to them, ["That's not how it works; that's not how any of this works"] "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath ..." – Matthew 12:1-7, Mark 2:23-27, Luke 6:1-4 NIV



Religion turned rest into anxiety; Jesus turns anxiety into rest.

Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" ... For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." ... So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." – Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5 NIV

He's not saying He's Lord "over", like He's ruler of the rules, He says He's Lord "of"; He's the Master Creator of *peace itself*.



Jesus claims to be the sole soul source of the deep rest we seek.

The symbolic, religious, day of ceasing work was *foreshadowing the One who has come to free us from the work that's hiding under our work: the anxiety-ridden work of self-justification.*

In Chariots of Fire (a story of two runners in the 1924 Olympics), Abrahams, a sprinter, says, **"I've got ten seconds to justify my existence."** Whereas, at another point in the movie, His competitor, and better, Eric Liddell, says, **"God made me fast, and when I run I feel his pleasure."**

Abrahams was weary even when he rested, and Liddell was rested even when he ran. *Why?* Because of **the work that's under our work, the work that enslaves with religion, the work we truly need to be freed from (so we can rest from), can only come from the One.**



Most of us work and work to prove ourselves, to convince God, others, and us, that we're good enough.

That work is never over until we rest in the finished work of Jesus.



Even when the Pharisees stopped working they weren't resting. They were *earning*.

It's like trying to sleep the night *before* the most important exam of your life (getting fitful rest at best), and how you sleep the night *after* you ***nailed the test!***

Jesus took the test for you. ***Nailed it.***



On the cross He endured the restlessness of separation, so that all who choose may receive the peacefulness of rest'oration.

[That's why He said] "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take *my* yoke upon you and learn from *me*, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." – Matthew 11:28-29 NIV

The writer of Hebrews warns us to make every effort to receive it from Jesus as Savior, and to walk in it with Jesus as Lord.

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest **[the writer knows he's being funny]** ... – Hebrews 4:9-11a NIV

Making every effort includes *having* a regular rest, a reminder, a break to take our anxious eyes off the creation, to focus on our Creator and Sustainer ... *just don't be religious about it.*

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. – Romans 14:5-6a NIV

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to ... a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. – Colossians 2:16-18 NIV



In his book, *Jesus the King*, Tim Keller write that ...

At the end of His great act of creation the Lord said, “It is finished,” and He could rest.

On the cross at the end of His great act of redemption the Lord said, “It is finished” – and we can rest.



On the cross, Jesus was saying of the work underneath your work, the work of earning your keep and justifying yourself, the thing that makes you *so weary*, the need to prove your worth because you're *never good enough*, *THAT* is finished!

So, stop striving. *Rest*. Stop proving. *Rest*. Receive Him as the Lord of the Sabbath, the Lord of the Rest ... *of your life*.