



Discernment-Part 7

Traditions & Authentic Rules

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I scooted out of town to one of our favorite little getaways in the desert. And the best time for me to do that is after my week and weekend of ministry; kids have to be out of school that week. And so on Sunday afternoon, we had planned to head out of town. I was so busy and the family went to the service on Saturday night. So Sunday morning, they were gracious enough to do all the work I normally do, which is packing the van all up full of our gear. And so it was great. By the time I was able to get out of the church and out of my office here, I made it home mid-afternoon on Sunday, and I pulled into the driveway and there was the van completely packed. I was so proud of my family. Even my two very capable, intelligent, strong, handsome teenage boys—they had taken it upon themselves to even put the, what we affectionately call the “silver bullet,” our cargo carrier, up on top of the van. And I was like, “Oh, these boys—wow. Awesome.” They packed the whole thing, put it on there, and I thought, “That’s fantastic.”

So I threw my bag that I had in the back of the van and we prayed, as we always do in our driveway before we go somewhere, and asked for God to get us there safely, give us a good little break and a little refreshment. And then, just about the time I was ready to say “Amen” for that prayer, a thought crossed my mind: I should probably check that cargo carrier, just to make sure everything’s okay. And as that thought was going through my head and I said “Amen,” it was actually my wife, I think, that articulated exactly what was running through my mind. And she said, “Honey, you really should check the cargo carrier up there.”

You know, trying to be a good dad and foster these boys turning into men, I made the fateful decision of saying, “No, I have responsible boys. Matter of fact, watch this, honey.” And I took the keys, I threw them to my 16-year-old son, and I said, “You’re going to drive us to the desert. I’m tired. I’m sitting in your seat in the back, going to recline—you take us on to the desert.”

We actually made it quite a ways. We were in Riverside when my eyes popped open from a rumbling sound up on the roof of our van that seemed to move to the rear of the van as I listened to the rumbling. And then I turned and I looked back to see a lot of familiar things being strewn about the freeway. You know, on Sunday afternoons you’d think the freeways wouldn’t be that crowded. A lot of big trucks—something with the trucks going on Sunday afternoon. A lot of diesel trucks just to run over your stuff.

Now, this wasn’t pool towels and swim trunks and, you know, clothes. What they had packed into the silver bullet that day was golf clubs, tennis rackets, baseball gloves, expensive golf shoes—all of which were now tumbling down the 91 freeway getting run over by big trucks. I thought it was my turn to drive at that point; we should pull over and kind of re-evaluate life. And I’m



embarrassed to tell you that I actually risked your pastor's life by running out into the road—just like the old Frogger game, remember that?—trying to find my way to retrieve these expensive things.

And if you want to see, by the way, what an entire bag of golf clubs looks like after they've been run over by a semi, you can come to my garage and see what that looks like. So—a day of kind of reevaluation of, well, some simple principles like “decisions have consequences.” And actually my mind went back to several Proverbs. I was thinking of Proverbs 21:5 that talks about the prudent—you know, the upright—they're always thinking and carefully planning their way, and the hasty come to poverty. I was thinking about that as I was adding up in my mind all the money that was on the 91 freeway. You still drive by there, you'll probably find pieces of our tennis rackets. I didn't even try to get our tennis rackets; they were in pieces. You can still see bits of those. I figured we don't play anyway, really. We just take them on vacation and pack them and never pull them out.

But later, by the way, in that passage, I think Proverbs 21:29, where the upright are always considering their way—they're careful; they think about it. And I thought, you know, this is important. Decisions have consequences. There are some things that are purposeless and some things that are necessary, and kind of checking and double-checking things—like your luggage rack before you go on a trip—those are essential safeguards so that you're very careful about what you do.

As I thought of those practical Proverbs as it relates to life, I realized, as I think this week about our Christian lives, that principle certainly applies, does it not? I think the old translation, for instance, of Ephesians 5:15 that uses the word “circumspect”—it says we are to walk circumspectly. ESV: we have to be careful; we have to be wise. We have to live wisely, not unwisely, because the days are evil, and there are a lot of consequences for bad decisions. I mean, you better be careful and thoughtful. I think of the last verse there where he says, “trying to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.” I want to please the Lord, right? I love Christ. I'm going to keep his commandments. John 15 says I love him, and I don't want to do the wrong things this week in my life. The Bible says if I sow to the flesh, I'll reap from the flesh corruption. I want to be careful. I want to be circumspect. I want to be thoughtful. I'm going to check and double-check that what I'm choosing to invest in is the right thing.

Now here's the problem: we can't be intuitive about this—I mean, not totally. At least I know the Spirit of God and our conscience certainly guide us. But we've got to be careful, because there are so many forces and so many voices, and so many things that are trying to tell us, “This is the right thing,” and, “That's the wrong thing,” and, “Don't be so uptight about that,” “You shouldn't worry about that,” “You should always do these things.” I mean, these voices are not only coming from the world—which clearly they do, and we're kind of defensive about that and we're careful and we screen that pretty well, I suppose, as good Christians—but a lot of those voices come from within the church. I mean, the religious voices of our day will say, “That's not important. Don't get uptight



about that. You should do this. Don't do that." And those sometimes make it really hard to discern what is really what God wants and expects and calls us to do.

We need discernment, which is what our series has been about here in Luke 5 and 6. As we finally make it to the first few verses here of Luke 6, we see Jesus dealing with that cacophony of opinion, if you will, coming not from the world, but from the religious people who had expectations and say, "If you want to please God, you better do this." And Jesus, of course, knows exactly what it takes to please the Father, and he's not dissuaded. But it certainly is a lesson for us. Not only that, he exposes some of the faulty thinking in the way he responds, which I think is really helpful for us so that we don't get, you know, kind of swept into thinking like a lot of people do, in not clearly understanding what it is to live for Christ. We want to live for Christ circumspectly, wisely, carefully, giving thought to our ways.

So I want to learn from these two scenes. Now, I suppose with more time to think it through, I would take these two scenes and separate them into two sermons. But what I planned to do a long time ago—and I think we can do it if you're with me and ready, and I'll try not to talk too quickly—is we'll make real quick progress through these two scenes.

In verses 1 through 5, if you've opened to it, you can glance through that—there is one scene about Jesus on the Sabbath. And then in the second scene, verses 6 through 11, there's another scene where he's running into problems with the opinions of the day regarding the Sabbath. Now, the Sabbath ties them together, so I wanted to deal with them in one sermon. And what we can do, if we're careful about it, is we can glean not only the christological insights from verses 1 through 5 about Christ in his ministry, in his authority, but we can also glean a pastoral lesson from that, and then a second lesson from the second scene on the Sabbath, verses 6 through 11.

Now, there are two great, I think, insights and a lot to learn from that and to take home, and it'll be worth getting out of bed and coming to church today. But in between these two—because the theme is the Sabbath—what I want to do, if you've pulled out your worksheet, is spend a little time not just straining your eyes on the very small chart that I put together for you, but dealing with the topic of the Sabbath. Because here is Jesus dealing with the expectations of the day regarding the Sabbath and interacting with what the law of God says regarding the Sabbath. And as we try to live out our Christian life in this era, I want to make sure I rightly understand how to file the Sabbath in my thinking. So we need to do a little bit of that work. It looks more complicated, I think, than it will be, but we'll take a little extended excursus, a little sidebar there, and we'll call that a point and say, "Okay, let's take a break between these two scenes and talk about the Sabbath as a theological concept."

So let's start in verses 1 through 5. Actually, let's read the whole thing—both of these scenes—and then we'll go back to verses 1 through 5 and try to make sense of what's happening here.

“Verse 1, On a Sabbath”—no distinction here; it's not a definite article. We're not sure which one it is, but on a given Sabbath—“Jesus happened to be going through the grainfields, and while he was, his disciples plucked some and ate some of the heads of grain, and they would rub them together in their hands,” which I suppose, as I've learned, is the way you do that—take the husk off of them—and then pop them in their mouths, and they were eating them. “Verse 2, But some of the Pharisees said, ‘Why are you doing?’”—and here's the phrase to underline—“‘what is not lawful,’ what's not lawful on the Sabbath?” Clearly, they look at what Christ and his disciples are doing and say, “You're breaking God's law.” They're concerned about that. I mean, they're critical about that—not that they have compassion for Christ—but they're saying, “You're breaking the law.” “And Jesus answers them with a bit of a curious response. I wouldn't expect this. But look what he does—quoting now from 1 Samuel.” He asks them a rhetorical question, because of course they're Pharisees; they've read the whole Testament. He says, “Haven't you read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him; how he entered the house of God, took the bread of the Presence,” which you may be familiar with as the showbread—it's also called—that was the 12 loaves they baked and put out there in the Holy Place where they would represent, as I've taught in the past, the provision of God for the people of Israel. They would be part of the symbolic worship there in the tabernacle—which is before we've got the temple built; actually, not even in Jerusalem. They were in a town called Nob. And if you know the historic situation—if you're a Sunday School graduate—David is running from Saul. He's already been anointed, and he's really on the run for his life with his little posse of people. He comes to Nob, he lies about why he's there, he says he's on official business, and he's hungry: ‘Do you have anything to eat?’ And they've got nothing. It's the Sabbath day—we assume, not because it's critical to the story here, but because that's the day they replace the bread. They weren't giving the bread on display, but they would take that bread, and as it says, it's only lawful for the priests to eat. It would feed the priest's family, among other things, like the sacrifices, and they would eat it—but only the priests could eat it. Well, he comes in when it's not yet eaten. So I assume it's Saturday, or it's early in the week. And he says, ‘Do you have any bread?’ They said, ‘We've got this,’ and they gave it to him, and he ate it. And he gave it to his posse. ‘Verse 5, And he said to them,’ Jesus does, ‘The Son of Man’—you remember that phrase; we've already dealt with it in Luke; it comes from Daniel 7, and if that's not in your margin in your reference Bible, it should be—that very important phrase, which is his claim to his messiahship, his deity—that he comes, as Daniel 7 says, with all authority from the Ancient of Days, possessing all dominion over all the kingdoms of all of you—‘Hey, the Son of Man,’ speaking of himself, ‘is Lord of the Sabbath.’”

More on that in a minute. “On another Sabbath he entered the synagogue, and he was teaching”—I don't know which day it was; I don't know what synagogue it was. But he's in Galilee, maybe in Capernaum, where he was frequently. No matter where it was, a man comes up whose right hand was withered. “And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him,” that is, Christ, “to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. ‘Look, he's gonna break the Sabbath; we're gonna watch for that.’ But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, ‘Come and stand here,’ and he rose and stood there. And Jesus said to them, ‘I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?’ And after



looking around at all of them, he said to him, ‘Stretch out your hand,’ and he did so, and his hand was restored. They were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.”

Okay—two scenes, two Sabbath situations. The one, he’s walking through the grainfields, and he is eating with his disciples the heads of grain by rubbing the husks off in their hands and eating them. They said, as we’ve read in verse number one, as they do this, they describe how—and in verse 2—“You’re doing something that’s not lawful.” Let’s talk about that for a quick second.

Review in your mind for a minute what we’ve learned about Jesus so far in the Gospel of Luke. Chapter 2: we learned that he is circumcised on the eighth day, as Luke is careful to point out, according to the law of Moses. He brings the redemption sacrifice—or at least his family does—and it is done according to the law of the Lord. We saw last week, as we went back to it there in that section of Luke 5, as he heals the leper, in verse 14 he tells him to go back, bring the sacrifice to the Levites, and do it according to the law of Moses. I mean, Jesus is participating in the festivals. He’s doing all of the required sacrifices. He’s telling people to do what’s in the law of Moses.

The question would be, just generally before we even look at the scene: Do you think he’s going to violate the law of Moses, that according to Galatians he came to live under? As he says elsewhere, in Matthew, “I came to fulfill it.” Do you think he’s really violating the law of Moses? I think our tendency would say, “Probably not.” Well, some people would say in common: “Well, yeah, I guess so, because at the end he says he’s the Lord of the Sabbath—like he’s got the exemption and the right to break it.” But is that really what’s going on here?

Jot these references down if you would, as I read them for you. Let’s start in Exodus 16:23. This is the scene when they’re out in the wilderness. We’ve already gotten the command to rest on the seventh day. By the way, that’s what the word “Sabbath” means: it means to rest, to cease from activity, to pause—Sabbath. He’s already given the command—God has, through Moses—that they’re supposed to rest on the seventh day, Saturday. And then some of the details of how to deal with things like, I don’t know, cooking. Now, in this time, they were being fed by God through the manna outside the camp, and they had to go and collect it and bring it in and cook it every day—bake it, boil it, whatever they did to it. And in this text it says, okay, you’re on Friday now, and tomorrow—Exodus 16:23—“is a solemn rest,” and he recites what that means: a holy Sabbath, solemn rest to the Lord. “So bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay it aside to be kept until morning.” And the next verse says, that’s what you’ll eat tomorrow.

Now think this through: he said no work on the seventh day—Saturday, don’t work. So, okay, we’re going to shut down, whether it’s harvest time or not—we’re not going to work. So we’ve got the picture here: kids don’t do their chores, Dad’s not out there doing the work in the fields and all



of that. And if you want to be domestic about this, then Mom's not in the kitchen cooking meals. We're not firing up the ovens, if you will; we're not cooking meals; we're not gathering—going to the store to get it—and we're not bringing it back and cooking it, which may be exactly what's going on there in Exodus 35:3, when, after saying no activity on the Sabbath as it relates to work—even the kindling of a fire in your home, which was for the cooking of the meals.

I think any reasonable reading of the law of Moses leads you to this conclusion: you can't go gather, harvest, bring together, cook up a meal. If you want a modern equivalent, you can't go shopping at Costco, buying a bunch of ingredients, bringing it home, firing up your ovens, mixing it all up, putting it in the oven, baking it—doing all the work. No cook gets the day off. We're eating leftovers on Saturday. That's the picture.

Now, if you want a modern equivalent to what Jesus is doing in verse number one—going through the grainfields as he's walking through there, plucking them and eating some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands—that's like you stopping by the little stand on the road by your house and buying a Snickers bar. I mean, there's really nothing to this, but there's some food—pop it in your mouth. Oh yeah, take the wrapper off. Now, I don't even think you have to look at the spirit of the law—which clearly is not in the direction of eating something that takes the wrapper, you know, that requires the wrapper being taken off—but certainly the letter of the law: what the law says is you can't go out, get your stuff, cook it up, and serve it because the cook gets the day off. This has nothing to do with the cook getting the day off. These are guys walking through the field, which they have the right to do according to Deuteronomy on the edge of the field; they can't put a sickle to the grain, but they can go and pick what they want and eat it. And that's exactly what they're doing.

Here's my contention—though not every commentator will tell you this: Jesus is not violating the Sabbath according to the law. And you're going to ask, "But wait a minute. Look what he says. His response to them is David breaking the law." And you're right—verse 3, follow me now: "And Jesus answered them. He says, 'Oh, you think I'm doing something unlawful on the Sabbath? Let me talk about David. Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and he and those who were with him; how he entered the house of God, took and ate the bread of the Presence—the showbread, which isn't lawful for any to eat but the priests—and he gave it to those who were with him?'"

Now let's just look at that example in your mind's eye. Jesus even says it: it was not lawful for anyone but the Levites to eat this. The priests could eat it; David couldn't eat it. Now why would he bring that up? Because you're telling me he's not breaking the law, and here he's saying David is breaking the law.



Let me make this super clear: the correspondence between the story of David and what Jesus is doing was made by Jesus not because there's a correspondence to the infraction of the law—don't agree with that for a second. He's enlisting it because what the rabbis of the first century taught about what David did when he got into the tabernacle there at Nob and ate the showbread—the rabbis, if you read what they wrote, believed David was exempt. He was exempt. He did break the law—there's no way around that—but he is not guilty because he is David.

Now, I've got a problem with that, because not only am I looking at this as objectively as I can and recognizing that the whole story is a series of errors—you do understand what happened to the priests at Nob when David went in and lied and said he was on official business, a secret mission from Saul? Saul's men ended up coming and killing them all. He cost seminary graduates their lives because of this scene in the tabernacle. There's no good commentary from God on him breaking the law. And this, by the way, is not Jesus's approval that David did what he did—"while he was on the run, he might as well eat the bread on the table." That's not it at all.

The correspondence that's being made is what he's wanting them to do with their knowledge of Christ. That's why he enlists this. Verse 5: "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." In other words, you're giving David a pass because he's a man after God's own heart and the greatest king of Old Testament Israel. I am the Son of Man. That's the claim he's already made in the Gospel of Luke. And again, if you haven't jotted down Daniel 7, you've got to look that passage up—just to quote a little bit of it—that says when this one "like a son of man" comes to the Ancient of Days and presents himself to him, he was given all dominion, glory, kingdom, so that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. Everything is for him. In the words of Colossians: all things were made by him and for him.

Question: Does Jesus really need to get circumcised on the eighth day? Does he really need to bring sacrifices? Does he really need to submit to the festivals? Does he really need to keep the Sabbath? No. Why? Because if he is the Son of Man—the Ancient of Days has put all dominion on him—then all those things are really symbolic of him; all of those things should serve him.

It's reminiscent of that day when they said, "Hey, it's time to pay the temple tax." Remember this story, Sunday School graduates? And Jesus tells a parable to Peter. He says, "Well, listen, in the kingdom, how does it work? Do the sons of the king pay taxes, or is it the subjects?" Well, the sons of the king are exempt from taxes. "Oh really? Well, that's how it really is with me. I am the king. I'm exempt from this." But what does he do? He doesn't say, "So we're not paying it." No—"We're not going to offend them. As a matter of fact, we're going to do what is expected of us right now, and we're going to pay our temple tax." Now they didn't have it, so God sent a fish to swallow some and get it caught in Peter's net, and they bring it up, and here's this miraculous provision of the temple tax—he pays it.



Here's another statement like that: when it comes down to it, Jesus is above this ceremonial law, because he's the whole purpose of the ceremonial law. But just like everything we've learned about Jesus, he's going to keep the law. That's what he's going to do because he's there to fulfill all righteousness. He needed to be baptized by John—what did we say when we studied that passage? John was right, saying, “Oh, I need to be baptized by you.” But he says, “No—baptize me; permit it now, so that we might fulfill all righteousness.”

This is a statement that he's above the Sabbath—I get that. But he's not breaking the Sabbath there. Why is he enlisting this? Because they gave David a pass, but they wouldn't even see Jesus for who he really was, and they weren't willing to cut him any slack at all—when in reality David did break the law and shouldn't have, and Jesus—he wasn't breaking the law, but he could, and he had all authority. You follow that logic? That's the employment—at least my contention as to why Jesus enlists the story. And I would submit to you he wasn't breaking the Sabbath rules. What he was breaking—and here's my pastoral point—is what the Pharisees expected of him.

The Pharisees, in their mind, thought that he was displeasing the Father because they had expectations. And all you've got to do is hear any sermon on this or read any book or any commentary, and they immediately start quoting what all the Pharisees required of people when it came to the Sabbath day. The Bible—oh, it has regulations about the Sabbath, and it doesn't take long for us to read them and say, “You can't do this; you can't do that.” The Sabbath is the day of ceasing from work, and God has to go and say, “Listen, you can't work the servant; you can't even work your animals. Everybody rests, including the cook. Everybody rests.” And it's a symbol—and a solemn ceremony, actually—that is in honor of God; it is a sign, as the Bible says, between Israel and their God; but it's about ceasing from work.

Now, when it comes to this, the Pharisees said, “Well, we've got to answer a lot of questions about what's okay and what's not okay, and what is work and what isn't work.” And there was, in the Talmud—which basically was the codification of all these Pharisees taught about the Sabbath—there are over, like, 24 chapters in the Talmud about the instructions of what you can and can't do. As one irreverent commentator put it, “One way to go raving crazy is to study the Talmud and the book of the Sabbath with all of its rules and regulations.” This is what's permissible on the Sabbath and what isn't. In which you will read, if you read through it, all kinds of crazy things—like if you find some kind of insect on your clothing, you can't kill it—that's work. Can't kill that. What do you do then? “I don't want that insect.” You can scoop it up, and you can take it outside, and you can put it out of your house. Now when I get called in for Dad duty to kill a spider, it's a lot easier for me to squash it than to try and scoop up that little, you know, spider and take him down the hall and downstairs and outside. Tell me which one's more work. This is how crazy the Pharisees were.

You couldn't tie a knot—that was too much work. You couldn't look in a mirror—think this through—especially directed toward ladies, because you might be tempted to go to work on what you see. Can't even look in a mirror on the Sabbath. And no one can bathe either—that's too much



work—kind of gross. And that got me thinking about another topic that I ran into reading the Talmud this week. I thought about sex. (That’s the bad soundbite.) But I thought, what’s the deal with that? So I looked it up. Could you have sex—was that work? Don’t think about this too long. Is that work—to have sex with your wife on the Sabbath day? The Pharisees would allow it; it wasn’t work. But there were eight pages of regulations about how exactly this is done without it being work. Look at you thinking about things. It was crazy. Certainly was not what was intended when God said, “Everybody takes a break on the Sabbath; we honor Yahweh. We remember the covenant between God and the people Israel—stop working.” But they had added to it. And then they said, “If you do what we think is wrong on the Sabbath—you know what?—we don’t think you’re godly. We think you’re doing what is unlawful.”

Now the question is, was it? No. It was their laws; it was their traditions that they made out to be laws.

One passage on this—that’s all—let me drive this home to a church that I hope doesn’t need it: Mark chapter 7. And I say that because if you turn to Mark 7, you’re in a pretty, I don’t know, iconic, classic, non-traditional church. I mean, not that we are super contemporary or anything—we’re not—but, you know, I’m not here in a robe, and I don’t even wear a tie. (Unless you die—then I’ll throw one on. Sorry.) But, I mean, the traditions in this church are pretty minimalistic. I like it that way. And if you’re here and you’re checking out Compass Bible Church, you’re probably fine with that too. We’re not highly traditional. We’re not the high church; we don’t have all the rigmarole; we don’t have all the symbols and all that—and “you’ve got to do this,” “you’ve got to do that.” And that’s refreshing.

But don’t think because we’re not a high church or traditional church that we’re exempt from taking things that we do that are not specifically told that we have to do in the Bible, and making that the standard of measure for someone else’s godliness. We can do that. And we’re all about the Bible—the Bible says we need to be all about the Bible, meditate on it; we’ve got to study it; we’ve got to do that. And some people think, well, the expression of it in my family is this family devotional time or this particular kind of Bible study or whatever. And if you don’t do that, then something’s wrong with your godliness. Don’t start applying your traditions and turning them into God’s law.

As a matter of fact, if you’ve found Mark 7, now’s the time to finally fill in the first point: Number one, don’t think your traditions are God’s laws. They’re not. They may be good, and they may help you, but it doesn’t mean that God requires that of everybody around you—not what you think is proper worship form; not what you think is what you should wear, or where you should go, or what you should or shouldn’t do. Some of those things are clearly in the Bible, and if they’re in the Bible, then yeah—the principle is absolutely clear that we build on those principles.

Here, at least in Mark 7, the Pharisees are smart enough in this case to say, “Well, we’re not talking about God’s law; we’re talking about our traditions.” And that’s what happens. Verse 1: “Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, to Christ, some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate,” it says, “with hands that were ‘defiled,’ that is, unwashed.” Now parenthetically, verse 3: “For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly”—and this was not for hygiene’s sake—“holding to the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they don’t eat then—might have even touched anything—unless they wash, because they’re defiled, walking through the Gentile marketplace or even the Jewish marketplace.” “And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches. And the Pharisees call Christ and his disciples on this, and they say, ‘Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? They eat with defiled hands.’ And Jesus responds this way: he said to them,” verse 6, “‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites’”—and of course Isaiah is talking to the people of his day, but he’s saying, “Man, the shoe fits here. You are hypocrites”—“as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me’—more on that in a minute—‘in vain do they worship me.’”

Now here’s the part I want you to catch—underline this: “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Teaching as doctrines—that means the teaching of God, the requirements of God, the rules of God—they’re teaching on that level these traditions and commandments of men. That’s all they are. Don’t call me lawless if I’m not doing what you do or what your tradition says. We need to measure everything by the Word of God. And he’s saying, “What you’ve done is taken this whole body of tradition and raised it to a level that makes it binding on yourself and other people, and you’re foolishly trying to put your opinion on level with God’s Word.”

Now, I hope I don’t need to camp on this for a church like ours, but I don’t want anybody to bind you to their traditions, and I certainly don’t want you trying to bind people to your expression of certain aspects of godliness that God requires in the way that you do them. We need to be very careful about this.

There’s a second lesson here in verses 6 through 11 that may be more—I don’t know—more poignant for our lives, and so we need to think this through. But before we do, I want to take the time-out, because what I’ve done both in verses 1 through 5—and I’ll do it again here in verses 6 through 11—is I’ve looked at how Jesus masterfully responded to the expectation of others, and it creates a template for us to follow. The problem is that template is on the ceremonial law of God, and we are living now post-cross in the church age. And as last week, as we talked about, we’re not under those ceremonies. So you’re trying to get me to look at the way we respond to people’s expectation regarding what the law says, regarding New Testament precepts—“If you love me, you’ll keep my commandments.” We’re not talking about the same commandments as the Old Covenant. And before we use that template and slide it over without justifying why we’re not talking about the things that he was obeying, we better be clear. And since these are both about the Sabbath, I want to take a little respite here from the flow of this passage, step out of it, and say, “Let’s talk about the Sabbath.” Because if God wants us on the seventh day—which, if you missed



it, was yesterday—to cease from all your stuff as a ceremonial expression of your devotion to Yahweh—see, then we’d better do it. It’s what Jesus did. You want to live like Jesus? I guess we should do that. Is that right?

Before you dismiss it and start cooking up your big meals on Saturday or any other work, we better make sure that’s not applicable to us. Turn to Hebrews 4, and let’s talk about it.

Once you get to Hebrews 4—jot this down; it’s a long point, I realize that, I’m sorry—but I think I need every word of this second point. In Hebrews 4, what we’re going to look at is how Christ’s death fulfilled the Old Testament ceremonies. Now we’ve made that point before, but I’m going to make it as it relates to the Sabbath here, and I’m going to talk it through in chapter 4 of Hebrews—how Christ’s death fulfilled the Old Testament ceremonies.

And again, we need to take the whole of Hebrews, and we were in it last week looking at the punchline when we got to the end of chapter 9—we used the word that I wanted you to get into your thinking and your vocabulary when it comes to the old forms of the Old Covenant. He said they have been made “obsolete” by the New Covenant. Obsolete. That’s our thinking. And then in chapter 10 he calls them “shadows”—they’re not the realities. And the whole book—now follow me if you can—the whole book is about those shadows that were made obsolete.

Working backwards: he has just gotten done, by the time we read chapter 9, talking about the sacrifices; he’ll go on to talk about it in the rest of chapter 10 before he gets to chapter 11, which is all about the core of New Testament Christianity, and that is our faith in Christ, which changes our relationship to those obsolete ceremonies. Working backwards, he talked about the ordinances of the Old Covenant—he gets into that, chapter 8. Before that, he’s been talking about the priesthood, saying the old priesthood—the Levites—is obsolete; Christ is our high priest. Working backwards, he talks about the temple and all the fixtures in the temple. Working back even further, now he gets to the idea of the Sabbath—which is where he started this discussion in chapter 3—saying all of these things were looking to something else, and the something else is now here.

I know this is a bit convoluted—and I say that not because the Scripture is convoluted, but because if we don’t have the historical background, sometimes we can read this and think, “Man, I don’t know where he’s going, what he’s talking about.” So what I propose we do right now is I will read, and you follow along, verses 1 through 11. Let’s just read it. And then we’re going to read it again and fill in this little micro-chart that I put in the middle of point number two. But first, let’s just read this.



And I already told you this, but the Hebrew word that we transliterate—and from which we get the word “Sabbath”—is the word “to cease,” “to pause,” “to rest.” Every time you see the word “rest” in this text, as you’ll see contextually, we’re talking about the Sabbath. And we’re not talking about one—we’re actually talking about—and you could name the chart this—seven of them. “Seven rests.” You want to title the chart there on your worksheet, call it “The Seven Rests,” and we’re going to untangle them in a minute.

But let’s just first read it and get the overview:

“Verse 1: Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.” That sounds like a category, not a day, doesn’t it? And he’s saying we’ve got to enter it—again: “Every seven days I enter the Sabbath.” Yeah, but this is not that Sabbath. This is something else.

“Verse 2: For good news”—not the gospel, but the good news of this national rest that they were going to get in the land—“came to them just as to us, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

“Verse 3: For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, ‘As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest,’ although his works”—you want to talk about “my rest”—“were finished from the foundation of the world.

“Verse 4: For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.’

“Verse 5: And again in this passage he said, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’

“Verse 6: Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience,

“Verse 7: Again he appoints a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.’



“Verse 8: For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.

“Verse 9: So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,

“Verse 10: for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

“Verse 11: Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.”

Read it once. Let’s read it a second time and fill in this chart. One word will go in each box. We will not fill them in in order, but on the timeline, obviously, they’re chronological.

Let’s start with Box B. I don’t have a passage for this because that’s clearly the context of his audience. He’s writing to the Hebrews. The Hebrews, every seven days, they rest. Box B—what kind of rest is it? Ceremonial rest. It’s the whole thing about not working, honoring God in their day, going to the synagogue, worshiping, bringing sacrifices to the temple. That was the ceremonial day of rest, which was, according to many passages, that whole picture of covenant between Israel and God. That was the seventh day. And this is what he’s addressing—but he’s redefining it.

Verse 3—let’s start in verse 3: “For we who have believed enter that rest.” What rest? Well, the rest that was symbolized by the ceremony. What was that all about? It was the kind of rest that you can have when you trust in Christ. That’s how the appeal starts; that’s how the appeal ends. What box are we talking about here? Box F—go all the way to Box F, right after the cross. Because here are these apostles, post-Christ’s life, saying, “You can enter the rest,” and if you’ve trusted in Christ, you’ve entered the rest. You’re in the Sabbath—the Sabbath that the Sabbath day of the ceremony in Exodus was symbolizing. You’re in it; you’re living in the Sabbath if you’ve entered by belief.

Middle of verse 3—keep reading: “As he has said, ‘As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.’” Now remember, David in Psalm 95 is quoting what God said in Moses’ day. What kind of rest was that? Was it spiritual rest? No. What kind of rest was it? It was the rest of the nation—put this, if you will, now in Box C. Here is the offer for them to go into what we call national rest, as a nation into a land flowing with milk and honey, and they refused to do it. And God said, “Fine. You don’t want to enter my rest? You’re going to die off in the wilderness.” Was he talking about



spiritual salvation? No—we're not talking about spiritual rest. Did we get Box F already? That's spiritual rest.

Bottom of verse 3: when he uses the word in the middle of verse 3, "my rest," he's now going to explain—"although his works were finished from the foundation of the world." Once he built the world and founded the world, on the seventh day he rested. "For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.'" Quoting Genesis 2:2—that's Box A. Fill that one in. What rest is that? God's rest. Now, is it hard to speak a word and create stuff? No—it's not hard for God. This, as the Bible says, was a template of work and rest. Now that's not the ceremonial side; that's the practical side of it. And the practical side is: give your workers a rest. Everybody takes a day off every week. And not only that, every seven years we take a big rest—the land lies fallow; it takes rest. And every seventh, seven years—after the 49th year—we have the Year of Jubilee, and all the debts are relieved, and there's rest in the whole society economically and in every other way—rest. There was in that pattern of God resting not only the ceremonial commitment of this covenant before God, but there is now this pattern of work and rest, and that was based on God's rest on the seventh day.

Again, verse 5 says—in this passage, quoting Psalm 95—"They shall not enter my rest." That's back to Box C, and what do we call that? National rest.

So we know that he's not letting them in in Moses' day into the national rest of conquering the promised land. Verse 6: "Since therefore it remains for some to enter it"—now "the it" is not the rest of the national rest of Moses' day. "It" that can be entered into now has got to be what? Box F. That's the whole sermon—"I want you to enter into rest with God by trusting in Christ." It remains that people can enter into it—not the national rest—but what the national rest points to: the spiritual rest offered by Christ and the apostles on the basis of the work of Christ.

Bottom of verse 6: "And those who formerly received the good news"—what was that? Not the good news of salvation, but of the promised land—"failed to enter because of disobedience." That's another reference to Box C.

Verse 7: "Again he appoints a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.'" Now think about this—David, in the middle monarchy of Israel, is telling his contemporaries, "Don't harden your hearts like they did then and failed to enter the rest—enter the rest. Trust in God. Don't let sin become a barrier between you and God. Trust in him." For what kind of rest? Spiritual rest. Was it after the cross? No—it was before the cross. This was the prophecy that had reality in relationship with God, but it was before Christ. That's Box E. What is it? Spiritual rest—the same rest that

we're now experiencing here, only it's pre-cross, and it has not been paid for by Christ. He hadn't said "It is finished" yet.

"Verse 8: For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on." Joshua—now think about that. Moses' generation failed at Kadesh-barnea to enter the rest, but Joshua, the next generation, led them into the promised land—the land flowing with milk and honey—and gave them national rest. That's Box D. And it was accomplished—only you know it didn't last very long. By the book of Judges we had all kinds of problems, and by 586 BC the Babylonians had wiped them out completely and put them into Babylon as exiles. What's the point? Well, he gave them rest, but it's not the real rest God is ultimately concerned with. God wouldn't have spoken of another day if he had really done all the resting and bringing people into the rest he wanted to bring them into—that was all symbolized by the ceremony of the Sabbath.

"Verse 9: So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God." What's he talking about? He's talking about Box F—calling people to trust in Christ: you can live in Sabbath. "Verse 10: For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works"—what does that mean? I don't do good deeds? No—it's not about that at all. It's about the idea that I think I can somehow garner favor with God by doing my deeds and be accepted when I die. I want to be at peace with God. How do I do that? By faith in Christ.

God's rest—template of work and rest. By the Exodus, ceremonial rest was now imposed on the people, which looked forward to the cross. National rest is referred to in this text as forfeited by Moses' generation and temporarily accomplished as a nation in Joshua's generation. David then 450 years later says, "You know what? Today if you'd hear his voice, don't be like they were in the wilderness; you trust God, you don't let sin harden your hearts, and you can have this rest." What rest are you talking about? "I get a Sabbath rest every week." We're not talking about that—we're talking about the spiritual rest. And we really won't be able to see it brought to fruition until the coming of Christ. And the writer of Hebrews—one of the apostles—looks back at this and says, "Hey, it's been accomplished, and it's available."

Now there's one more box. Because when I read that "there still remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God," I think to myself, well, I have relational peace with God, but I'm living in a world that, according to Christ, is full of hostility and tribulation. The good news is that one day we're going to enter, lastly, the ultimate rest—which, if you read passages like Revelation 7:15–17, or you could look at 14:13—it's talking about us reaching the place where finally we're at the ultimate Sabbath rest, where we don't have the conflicts externally. Right now you're at peace internally with God, I trust—why? Because you trust in Christ. The ceremony of Exodus—which was one of the seven rests that we can talk about in Hebrews 4—was ceremonially imposed for Israel, which looked to, just like the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the clean and unclean laws about food and everything else—to the coming of Christ. The Sabbath has been fulfilled.

If you've ever wondered, "Well, really—is that the way the New Testament puts this out?" Absolutely. And I don't have time to look at all these, but if you're taking notes, jot them down: Colossians 2:16–17. It says that no one can come to you and say you are not obeying God, you're doing something ungodly, because you're not keeping the Sabbath. It says, "Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These were a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." And as we already learned in Hebrews 10, those were shadows; reality's here. As we learned in chapter 9 of Hebrews, they're obsolete—all the ceremonies obsolete.

Now, God gave us two new ones and a lot of other things in the New Covenant—but those Old Covenant ceremonies are gone. Galatians 4:9–10 and Galatians 5:1–6: he says, "Listen,"—and this is to Messianic Jews, by the way, if you want to call them that; Peter, James, and John, and they were all Messianic Jews, were they not?—here's Paul saying this: "If you want to turn back to those things, they're weak and worthless elementary principles of the world. Don't be slaves to them again." And he's chiding them, saying, "You're observing days and months and seasons and years." Don't you know those are gone? Chapter 5: "We're free from those. Stand firm; don't submit to that yoke of slavery. Look, I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision"—which was the topic on the table in Galatians—"then Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he's obligated to keep the whole law." You want to play around with the ceremonies? "I just think it feels good to do something that Exodus said I should do." Then do it all. But know there's no need to. Why? Not only is there no need to—Paul says neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything. It's nothing. It's a waste of your time. Why? Because in Christ it's been fulfilled. We are not to go back to these things. These were all about the realities being found in Christ, lived out through faith in Christ.

You want to know the exact moment this took place? We tried to illustrate it on this stage on Good Friday: Matthew 27:50–51. It was the moment he died—"yielded up his spirit." When he said "Tetelestai," when he was dead on the cross, the Bible says the veil of the temple tore. He wrecked the whole thing. The centerpiece of symbolic, ceremonial worship—made obsolete at the moment of his death.

You want to compare one more thing—jot this down: if you read Romans 14:5–6, compare that when you get home to 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8. Here he says in Romans 14 that when it comes to special days and special diets, no one on the patio can enforce any of that. Do not let them do that—not to mention from the pulpit. Don't let that happen. And then in 1 Thessalonians 4 he talks about moral law—like, I don't know, sexual ethics and being faithful to your wife—and he says, "Listen, if you don't do this, not only will God be the avenger in all these things, but if you disregard what I've told you, you've disregarded God." I mean, if you want to talk about the difference between moral law and the ceremonial law, it couldn't be clearer in the New Testament. The seven rests really only point to the one that we're concerned with as New Testament believers, and that is that we get right with the living God through our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.



Number three—as though we had time—we get back to the second scene here in Luke 6 (it’s printed there on your worksheet). “On another Sabbath he enters the synagogue, he’s teaching; a man with a withered right hand comes in. The scribes and Pharisees watched him to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath so that they might find a reason to accuse him.” Now, all that you know about this passage because we read it earlier—tell me this: did the Pharisees and scribes want him to heal the man on the Sabbath? Yes or no? Yes. Why? So they could bust him.

Now, let’s think about this. You’ve got Sabbath-keepers in their heart wanting this man to break the Sabbath. Do you see the problem here—the hypocrisy of this? “But he knew their thoughts.” He knew that’s what they wanted. So he says to the man, verse 8, with the withered hand, “Hey, you—come stand here.” You can see the indignant frustration of Christ. And he rose and stood there. And he said, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm?” Now, that’s what he wanted to do to the man with the withered hand—not only prove his credentials, as he’s doing throughout the synagogues in Galilee—but he wants to do good to this man. It’s a good thing. He says—now in the second couplet—“Is it lawful to save life or destroy it?” Now I know this: my daughter is paralyzed from the knees down; you don’t need to have all your limbs working to live life. He’s not saving a life here. But he uses the second couplet because, in reality, what’s happening is they are there on the Sabbath plotting to destroy Christ. Look at him expose their motive. Here’s what he says: “You’re here on the Sabbath not only wanting me to break the Sabbath, but look at your own heart. You come here saying you’re keeping the law of God, but in your heart you’ve come here to destroy a person. I’m trying to speak a word and heal the person, and you’re trying to condemn me for that.”

“After looking around at all of them,” verse 10, “he said to him, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he did so, and his hand was restored. And they were filled with fury, exactly as they planned to be, and they discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.” Do you see the hypocrisy in this? The hypocrisy is they’re checking a box—that they’re Sabbath-keepers doing what God wants them to do—when in their heart they’re doing something terrible. They’re plotting to kill a man who is simply speaking a word. If you’re talking about regulations from the law of Moses about healing, we have none. Why? Because it’s a miracle—because people don’t do this. Is it much work anyway for Christ to speak a word and heal the man? Say, “Stretch out your hand.” What kind of work is that?

Number three on your outline—here’s what’s happening: you’ve got men who on the outside look like they’re keeping the laws of God. And in fact, I suppose on the outside they were. But on the inside, they weren’t. And when it comes to our situation as New Testament believers, put it this way: we need to keep the moral rules inside and out. That’s the authenticity that keeps us from hypocrisy. And the hypocrisy is so easily done, because we can be something on the outside and something else on the inside—like the old story I often tell about the kid in class told to sit down: “Sit down, sit down, sit down.” Finally, disgruntled and frustrated and defiant, the kid sits down and tells the teacher, “I may be sitting on the outside, but I’m standing on the inside.” You’ve heard

that, right? That's really happening, is it not, as the Pharisees are obeying God on the outside, but they're disobeying God on the inside? I mean, they are there to kill a man, and they want him to break the Sabbath so that they can accuse him.

You say, "Well, I don't think that's happening in my life." Let me show you a passage. We said we'd finish it—Mark chapter 7. With this we'll wrap it up. Mark 7. We read verses 1 through 7 in Mark 7. Let's pick it up now in verse 8. I told you we'd come back to this. Not only are they taking the teachings and commands of people and putting it on par with the teachings and doctrines of God—it's worse than that. They're raising those as a cover for evil behavior. Look at how he puts it, beginning of verse 8:

"When it comes to these two things, it's not only that you equate them and keep them equal, it's that you're actually leaving the commandment of God," Mark 7:8, "and holding to the tradition of men." "And he said this: 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition. For Moses said, for instance, "Honor your father and your mother," and "Whoever reviles father or mother must surely be put to death."'" Clearly those commands were having you be favorable and kind to your parents—that's the point of the command. "But you say, 'Listen, I've got a tradition here and another law,' and what we'll do is we'll say if a man has property or money and he can help his father, but he says, 'Listen, I can't do it because whatever would have been gained if I gave you that, I've marked it "Corban,"' which is a word, as Mark explains, which means 'given to God.' 'I've kind of put an X on that for God; I've set the money aside for God.' Then you no longer permit the man to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the Word of God by your tradition that you handed down. And many such things you do."

You do something that gives an appearance of godliness, but in many ways you're doing that while your heart's moving in the opposite direction. And when it comes to this—the Bible says honor your parents—and look at this one practice where you'd say, "Well, I really don't want to honor my parents." And because I don't want to honor my parents, I've come up with a way to justify not honoring my parents by putting some kind of thing here that looks very religious—and that is: "I've set the money aside for the Lord; I can't give it to you." You're really breaking the law while you're giving the appearance that you're keeping the law. That's the kind of hypocrisy God has just had enough of.

As a matter of fact, the Sermon on the Mount that's recorded there in Matthew chapter 5 is filled with those things. He says you may be checking the box, and you may never have murdered anybody—you have no rap sheet—and yet in your heart you harbor bitterness toward them. When you hate them and call them names, the Bible says, really, you're moving in this direction toward your neighbor when the Bible says love your neighbor and you should be moving in this direction. When it comes to adultery—hey, fantastic: faithful to your wife; you haven't committed adultery. That's supposed to lead you to fidelity, and it is oneness in your marriage. But instead, you're



moving in your heart in the opposite direction with a lust-filled heart. You're keeping the law on the outside, but on the inside your heart's running the other direction. Oaths—the Bible says that the oaths you are to make, make a commitment, do all that here. But here's the thing—you're using that to say it only is applicable, and my words are only binding, when I'm making an oath. And I can then do the opposite; I can be untrustworthy; and I can do something that really isn't real—it's not true; it's deceptive—because I didn't make an oath. God lists all those kinds of things and says, "Look at what you're doing. You're keeping the law on the outside—or at least you think you are, and maybe someone sees that you are—but on the inside your heart is running the other direction."

I wanted to end our time with a celebration—the Lord's Supper. Because I thought, here's the one thing, aside from baptism, that God gives us in terms of a form—it's really the most ceremonial thing we have: celebrating the Lord's Supper. Because of that, it's a great opportunity for us to make sure that in our hearts we're doing exactly on the inside what we're doing on the outside. Because you could leave and drive home today—I'm going to have the ushers come down and start serving right now for the sake of time—but when you're driving home and someone says, "What was church all about?" "Well, I got a long, convoluted sermon about the Sabbath. And then we took the Lord's Supper." "Oh, you celebrated the Lord's Supper?" "Yeah, we took Communion at church." See, if you say that, really, you have the appearance of doing what God asked. But unless your heart has done what the Lord's Supper requires of you, you've been a hypocrite. You've unfortunately obeyed God on the outside but not the inside.

The Bible says we're supposed to be doing this in remembrance of Christ—focusing on what Christ did for us and all the associated implications of that. And in Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 11, he nails these Corinthian Christians because on the outside they went home, they drove home on their donkey and said, "Hey, we did the Lord's Supper," but their hearts were wrong. That's why he says this in verse 28: "You better examine yourself—look inside—then eat the bread and drink the cup. Because if anyone eats the bread and drinks the cup without discerning his own body, then he's eating judgment to himself." By "judgment," he means discipline. That's why many in the church are weak and ill, and some have even died. Why is that? They did what God asked; they did the ceremony, if you will, of the Lord's Supper. I understand that—but your heart needs to be in sync.

That's why I thought it'd be a good test case. It's better for what we do right now, in the next three or four minutes, to let that be the pattern for what you do all week. If you're going to tell the truth, tell the truth inside and out. Be faithful to your spouse inside and out. If you're going to deal with the issues at work and deal with the integrity the Bible asks for—inside and out. Don't let your heart be moving in the opposite direction.

I think sometimes we misunderstand what was going on in the Old Testament in terms of their relationship with God. And the biggest quote from Psalm 95 that shows up in Hebrews 4 is a great reminder to us. As David tells his generation not to harden their hearts, they can enter the rest. See—it's really all the same when it comes to what takes place in the human heart in terms of



repentance and faith. That's what God was looking for. The problem is, when the focal point of their faith had to be placed somewhere, it was a bit nebulous. We knew it was in God—God had to solve the sin problem. We cried out for his mercy. But how was a holy God going to solve the problem? Well, that's where the ceremonies came in. Those ceremonies—whether it was the dietary laws or the priesthood or the temple or whatever it was—they helped a society without the benefit that we have, living on the other side of the cross. This whole apparatus gave them a picture of the severity of sin and the need for redemption—all the bloody sacrifices, all the dietary restrictions, all the things about clean and unclean. Those helped them recognize something that we can recognize—we're privileged to recognize—just by looking back at the death of Christ.

Think about it: you and I have the advantage. When I talk about what it took to pay for your sin, we don't need an elaborate Seder. All we need is a piece of bread and a cup. And we don't even hardly need that to think back in our own minds to Christ on a cross bearing sin for us—God making him who knew no sin to be sin, treated as though he were you and me, that we might become in him the righteousness of God. That transaction, as Paul put it to the Galatian churches, is preached to us because of what the apostles recorded—as though Christ were crucified before our very eyes, and we weren't even there.

What's the point? One of the reasons it's so simplified for us is the advantage of history. We look back at Christ. They had to assemble in their minds the apparatus of the ceremonies—something of what that entailed—to tie that idea of "paid in full" to Christ on a cross as the Lamb of God. We can appreciate it without all the training wheels, as I've called it before—all the scaffolding of the ceremonial law. God didn't remove that obligation from us just to simplify your life so that you could go about your business, you know, every Saturday. That wasn't the reason. It was so that you and I could recognize, just through the eye of our minds, looking back through the historically accurate record of the death of Christ, we could appreciate the fullness of our redemption.