

The two lessons from Chapter 6 in our passage concern the Hebrew *shabbat*, or Sabbath, specifically the prohibition against doing work on that day. Deuteronomy 23:25 clearly allows travelers like the disciples to pick and eat ears of grain on most days. The Pharisees, however, see the plucking as reaping and rubbing between the hands as threshing. That's work, and thus forbidden on the Sabbath. Likewise, life-saving first aid would be permitted on the Sabbath but not medical procedures that could be deferred to a weekday.

Observance of the Sabbath was held in high importance by both the Pharisees and the ordinary people. A sincere and pious desire to define "What is work?" led over time to more and more detailed regulations. Orthodox Judasim today defines thirty-nine broad categories of work. The Talmud and Mishnah rabbinical commentaries have twenty-four chapters of Sabbath rules.

The Lord Jesus cuts right through this. Here He declares, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." The

parallel passage in Mark 2:27 applies to all mankind: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

The Sabbath had special significance for the people of Israel according to Ezekiel 20:20: "Keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." The Sabbath was a day to observe and remember their special relationship with God. It was not a day to forgo good things as a test of obedience.

And, remember, the distinct seventh day goes all the way back to the original creation of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. That creation was for God's glory **and** man's material benefit (Genesis 1:28-30). It does not seem too great a stretch to say that God set apart the seventh day for mutual enjoyment between Himself and His creation, Adam. Jesus as the Son of Man, or representative of mankind, is reclaiming that purpose. And we who have entered the Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4) can enjoy God's free grace every day of the week.

Questions:

1. What was the significance of dining with someone? Where else does this come up?
2. Who is the bridegroom and who are the wedding guests in 5:34?
3. Explain the parables of 5:36-39.

4. Who might verse 5:39 refer to?

5. What can we learn about the Sabbath from 6:1-11?

6. Why do the Pharisees react as they do in 6:11?

7. Does verse 6:12 have a lesson for us?

8. Which disciples have two names?