



Remember the Reason

Mark 2:15–17, 21–22, 27;

Mark 1:15; 3:1-6, 21; Matthew 11:29

The Big Idea: God’s commands are **for** people because God is **for** people.

The Bottom Line: When we focus on the letter of the law, we forget why the law was written in the first place.

Introduction:

In my experience, the gravitational pull of religion is usually toward...

Behavioral Conformity

It may be the reason you left religion.

You either couldn’t keep the rules or got tired of keeping them.

One of the most stunning, perplexing, irreverent, and irreligious statements Jesus ever made addressed this:

Mark 2:27: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Religious folks in that culture and in our culture get this turned around.

No one has children so there will be someone to play with the toys. Toys are there for the benefit of children. Not the other way around.

God didn’t create us so there would be someone to keep his rules.

His commands are for people because God is for people. God is for you.

This may be hard to believe: God loves you more than God loves his commandments. Get this reversed, and people get hurt.

Review:

Today, we’re in Part 2 of a story that should’ve died in Nero’s Rome, but it didn’t. It’s the Story of Jesus of Nazareth as told by Simon Peter. It was dictated to and recorded by John Mark. It comes to us as The Gospel of Mark.

Mark 1:1: “The beginning of the gospel [good news] about Jesus Christ the Son of God.”

Mark 1:14–15: “Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come! The KINGDOM OF GOD is near. REPENT and BELIEVE the good news!”

Tension:

While in Capernaum, Jesus meets a man Peter knows (but doesn’t like very much):

Levi: Tax Collector

Jesus asks Levi to follow him. This made no sense. Are there no standards? Are there no restrictions as to whom was invited into this “kingdom”?

To Peter’s dismay, Jesus had them follow him to Levi’s house. That would contaminate the entire group! What is Jesus thinking?

Mark 2:15: “While Jesus was having **dinner** at Levi’s house, ...”

This was wrong on so many levels. It was intimate and symbolic. It implies acceptance. And ... It gets worse.

Mark 2:15: “... many tax collectors and ‘sinners’ were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.”

Apparently, Jesus or Levi (someone) invited the office home with Levi. Who would do such a despicable thing?

Truth:

Read: Mark 2:15–17, 21–22, 27; 3:1-6, 21; Matthew 11:29

Conclusion:

Here are two takeaways:

1. If you are a sinner, you are invited to follow Jesus. If you are willing to acknowledge something is wrong or broken in you, you are invited today from wherever you are to follow Jesus.
2. If you are a follower, you are invited to yield to Jesus. When your will bumps up against his will, just say yes. You're not saying yes to a list of laws but to a person. Say yes to someone who came for you because he loves you and is for you.

Matthew 11:29: "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."

If that version of faith stands in contrast to what you've heard from pastors, priests, or parents, perhaps they were attempting to pour Jesus's new life-giving wine into an old wineskin. That always results in a mess.

Jesus did not come to tweak something old. He came to introduce Something new!
Something near!

Application:

Mark 1:15: "The time has come! The KINGDOM OF GOD has come near. REPENT and BELIEVE the good news!"

When you do, life begins to change. Don't miss next week.

Next Steps:

- Memorize Mark 2:27.
- If you are a sinner, follow Jesus.
- If you are a follower, yield to Jesus.
- Repent and believe the good news.

Discussion questions for group this week:

1. What does this teach me about God?

2. What does this teach me about me?

3. How do I apply this to my life?

4. If I could ask a question about this it would be....