

Mark 2:23–28

June 3, 2018

“Going against the Grain”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pentecost 2

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Fathers
And Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

The Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots.

Each a Jewish sect. Each mentioned in the Bible.

Each with their Pros. Each with the Cons.

The Pharisees... well.

The Pharisees were regarded as men who were outstanding in the law.

They were outstanding in their field.

Literally....

they were out standing... in a field.

They were in a field of grain *all* to ambush Jesus,

whose authoritative teaching was “rubbing them the wrong way.”

“It was rubbing against their grain.”

AND On this particular day, Jesus and his disciples were walking through a field,
with the disciples rubbing grain in their hands.

The action of Jesus’ disciples went against the Pharisees’ laws,

which were at best an overly-zealous understanding of the Torah.

The Pharisees, eager to find fault, charged Jesus with a technicality,

even though the Torah sanctioned the disciples’ actions.

But instead of quibbling over the letter of the law,

Jesus points to the Spirit—the divine intent—of the Torah and the prophets,
through whom God showed grace and mercy to his people.

That was the higher purpose of the Sabbath too.

OH! But... On that Sabbath, the Pharisees were working overtime

trying to trap Jesus in a sin

so they would have reason to dispose of him.

They were guilty of a Sabbath sin greater than their accusation:
they were seeking to “condemn the innocent” (the Mt 12:7 parallel)
instead of using the Sabbath for physical and spiritual refreshment.

Legalism goes against the grain of what God is about and what he desires.
Legalism violates the very Word of God it imagines that it is defending.
In our own zeal for what is right, have we committed that sin too?

The response of the Pharisees goes against the grain of Jesus’ call for grace
and mercy.

The law was ingrained into the minds of the Pharisees but it hadn’t worked
repentance in their hearts. Like veneer or wood-grain contact paper that
hides what is underneath, the Pharisees had outwardly pious behavior. Jesus,
however, was concerned about what was within them – the inside.

The Pharisees were only concerned about the outside.

Jesus was concerned about the inside.

God’s grace and mercy are given us through Holy Baptism into Christ,
as we “inwardly digest” God’s Word,
and as we partake of our Lord’s Supper.

God’s grace and mercy on the inside
will lead to human behavior that reflects grace and mercy on the outside.

If you try to do it the other way around,
you will have nothing but a mess on your hands,
like a sandwich with the peanut butter and jelly on the outside.

Jesus pointed the Pharisees to the actions of David,
whom they held in high esteem.

David once ate bread that God had set apart only for priests,
and David shared it with his men too.

Jesus went against the grain when he spoke as one who had authority.
He was of God, speaking to people of the world.
He said that he was Lord of the Sabbath!

Remove Christ's authority and you have only human opinions and legalism.

God is serious about his laws and our breaking his commands.

We are unable to keep his law.

But God is also serious about displaying his grace and mercy to all people.

He sent Jesus Christ to live under the law and to keep the law perfectly.

Because Christ, the "Son of Man," fulfilled the law on behalf of man,
God's mercy now extends to all men—to all people.

You know...

Even grace goes against the grain of people.

People are conditioned to think that reward is based solely on their performance.

God's gift is salvation by grace, through faith—not by works.

To strengthen us in our grace-filled walk through life,
God blesses us with a day to rest and to nourish us, body and soul,
through his Word and Sacraments.

The nourishment of grace delivers us from the famine of legalism and sin.

David and his men were weary and hungry as they were unjustly persecuted. The disciples were hungry as they had abandoned everything for the sake of following Jesus.	We are hungry for the spiritual nourishment found only in the Bread of Life. Our High Priest (greater than Abiathar) invites us to come to him for food and rest, in every time of physical or spiritual need.
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Instead of judging David, the priest gave him the showbread.

As we examine ourselves before the Lord's Supper,
we are mindful of our sin and unworthiness,
but we also believe that Jesus delivers us from judgment.

Our High Priest says to his priesthood of believers,

***"Take and eat, this is my body; take, drink . . .
my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."***

He feeds us, nourishes us, and grants rest for our weary bodies and souls.

[Conclusion]

We confess our sins of legalism and lawlessness,
since both go against the grain of God's righteousness
—the righteousness that is ours by his grace in Christ, our Lord.

We thank God for the rest he gives us each Lord's Day.
We remember that Jesus' body rested in a tomb on a Sabbath day.
We rejoice in his grace in raising us to new and eternal life.

In the Sacrament of the Altar he feeds us with his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

His love replaces legalism with mercy and grace
which we display in our dealings with others,
which we share as we go out and serve this Christ Cares Sunday.

As you leave this place, share the love, share the grace, share the mercy
That comes from Jesus.
Tell others. And if you do... that will go against the grain.
Amen!

“Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good
that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen.” (Heb 13:20-21)
