

**“Religion That Misses God”**  
**Luke 6:1-11**  
**Sermon Series: “The Servant King”**

**Introduction:** Composite person as an example

Different categories of people I’m speaking to: Non-Christians who have been turned off by legalism, people who think they are saved but are really just religious people whose legalism is pushing others away

-Background of the Sabbath and what the Pharisees did with it: Warren Wiersbe writes, “The sanctity of the seventh day was a distinctive part of the Jewish faith. God gave Israel the Sabbath law at Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14) and made it a sign between Him and the nation (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17). The word *Sabbath* means “rest” and is linked with God’s cessation of work after the six days of Creation (Gen. 2:2-3). Some of the rabbis taught that Messiah could not come until Israel had perfectly kept the Sabbath, so obeying this law was very important both personally and nationally.”

-Define Legalism

-Read Luke 6:1-11

**-Main Idea: We can follow religious rules and completely miss God. How do we know when we are doing this?**

**1. We follow religious rules instead of and/or in addition to Scripture (v. 2-4).**

-David Garland writes, “The Pharisees set up what they described as a “fence around the law” (*m. Abot* 1:1). Their interpretative decisions on how to apply the law (*halakah*) were designed to set up precautions that would prevent the actual breaking of the law. Two tractates in Mishnah are devoted to Sabbath regulations, and in it the rabbis admit, “The rules about the sabbath, festal offerings and sacrilege are as mountains

hanging by a hair, for Scripture is scanty and the rules many” (*m. Hag.* 1:8).

The Pharisees’ objections to the disciples’ apparent violation of the Sabbath should not be dismissed as an obsession with trifles. The Sabbath was a sign of Israel’s sanctification among all the nations and made them distinct. Careful observance was regarded as a bulwark against assimilation to pagan culture as well as a way to honor the holiness of Yahweh (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15).

The shared assumption was that those who obey the law prosper; those who disobey “come to grief” (*Ant.* 1.1.2-3 \_\_ 5-13). But individuals disobeying the law did not bring grief to themselves alone; they brought it to the whole nation of Israel (see Deut 28:15-68; 29:20-28). Sabbath infractions, the Pharisees believed, landed Israel in her current state of wretchedness under Roman oppression. Flaunting Sabbath law would only bring further disaster on the land and people.”

-Jesus’s response of “have you not even read this”

-Liberalism and legalism

-Examples of how people do this

## **2. We focus on religious rules instead of worshipping Jesus (v. 8).**

### **A. Jesus is God who is to be worshipped.**

-He is God who created the Sabbath (Genesis 2:3).

### **B. Jesus is Lord who is to be obeyed.**

### **C. Jesus is Savior who is to be trusted.**

Thabiti Anyabwile writes, “Jesus, the Lawgiver, has not come to demand that we obey the law. This is what makes Pharisaical religion so odious to God. Pharisees demand we keep the law when even the Lawgiver

does not demand that for righteousness. We have already failed at keeping the law. The law requires that we die for that failure. But Jesus has come to perfectly fulfill the law (Matt 5:17) and to pay the penalty the law requires. Every demand God places on us, Jesus Christ has fulfilled—even the keeping of the Sabbath. That is why Jesus lives a perfect life in obedience to God: to offer to God the righteousness we do not have. And that is why Jesus voluntarily and lovingly sacrifices himself on the cross: to pay the penalty of death and to suffer God's condemnation in our place. All who believe in this Jesus stop trying to work their way to God; and, turning from any hopes of self-righteousness, they enter into the true rest, an unending Sabbath, based on faith.

That is why the writer of Hebrews tells us the real Sabbath is, first, ceasing from working to earn righteousness with God and, second, by faith in Christ entering the rest Jesus gives (Heb 4). The Sabbath, like all the law, prophesies about the coming of Christ and a coming rest. That rest is not merely the seventh day but eternity. We who believe have rested from our war with sin and have entered the rest Christ purchased by his blood. In that rest we flourish without effort. This is the true Sabbath, and all who believe in Christ live in it.

Should we serve the law or serve the Son? Oh, beloved, serve the Son and find rest for your souls.”

-Don't miss Jesus because you are focused on religious rules!  
(Illustration of not being able to see something that is right in front of you- maybe how my parents figured out that I needed glasses.

-They were looking for an opportunity to make an accusation instead of seeing the obvious implication of Him doing a miracle (confirmation bias).

### **3. We value religious rules over caring for people (v. 6-11).**

-Them being angry. Religion making you mad at people is a problem. We should be angry about sin and injustice. The Pharisees in plotting to

destroy Jesus illustrate Pascal's adage, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

-Not worshipping it we're not serving, doing good, and helping people.

-Amos 5:21-24

**-Conclusion: The great commandments (Matthew 22:35-40).**

**1 John 4:7-11, 19**