

CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE

Week 1: Healed



SIGNS OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD

January 31 - February 14

KEY POINT

The Sabbath is for rest and helping others. Jesus uses the Sabbath as a time for feeding, healing, and showing compassion, thus restoring the Sabbath to its original intent. Today, it can be hard for us to find time to rest in our busy lives. What does real rest, rejuvenation, and healing look like?

SCRIPTURE

Luke 6:1-16
Psalm 92

OPENING PRAYER

Begin your time together with this, or another, prayer: Holy God, today we come in from busy lives, lives that are full to the brim with needs, wants, and expectations. Lives where it can be hard to find the silence where you speak. Lives where rest is forgotten. As we gather, let our bodies relax. Let our hearts rest. Let our minds be gently opened to your Word and your will for us. In your name we pray. Amen.

READ

Luke 6:1-16

ABOUT THE STORY

As we journey with Jesus during the season of Epiphany, more of who he is and what he has come to do is revealed to us. In today's story, we see Jesus come into direct conflict with the Pharisees over what is allowed and not allowed on the Sabbath. The Pharisees were Jesus' most frequent debate partners. Like Jesus, they worked to interpret the Hebrew Bible and apply them to everyday life.

The Pharisees often felt that Jesus was too easy on the rules, putting the people in danger of mocking God and incurring God's anger toward them. Jesus argued that the Pharisees were too worried about right practices and that they hurt people as a result.

Today's story focuses on the practice of sabbath. When the Israelites left Egypt, God gave them a number of commandments to teach them to live faithful lives. One of the central commandments was a day of rest during the week. No longer would they live like slaves, toiling all day and sometimes into the night. The people were given a day to rest their bodies and souls (and even the bodies of their working animals) and to feel that God would provide. Working on the Sabbath was a selfish declaration that one did not trust God.

The Sabbath was meant to be a gift. The problem came when some of the Pharisees turned it into a burden—a test for who was in and who was out, who was righteous and who should be shamed. Jesus challenges that use of the Sabbath, turning it into a day of healing and restoration.

Today, Jesus claims a name for himself: the Son of Man. Jesus uses this name to declare that he has power over the Sabbath. It is a dangerous claim—one that will continue to follow him throughout the coming chapters.

First Lutheran
CHURCH
Where faith and life meet

SHARE

- What are some rules that you try very hard to keep, and it makes you crazy when others break them? What are some rules that you do not keep, and it makes you crazy when others insist that you should?
- The disciples have violated Sabbath rules by working. The Pharisees are often Jesus' main challengers because they served the role of interpreting and applying the Scriptures to everyday life. Who have you disagreed with because you were so much alike?
- Jesus retreats in order to pray. When do you feel your mind is most clear? How often do you get to have that clarity?

PRAY

Pray this or another prayer aloud together: Jesus, long ago you were revealed as Master and Lord of the world. Like the first disciples, we bow in awe of who you are. Yet you came not to command our fear but to release us to freedom, to call us into a life that follows you. Open our eyes to see the ways you work miracles in us. Amen.

BLESS

Mark one another with the sign of the cross on your hand and say, "May we, as we go from here, be well rested. With each new day, may we know God's peace. Amen."

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION AT HOME:

- The Sabbath was meant to be a gift to humanity—a day of rest after six long days of very hard work. This week, after a long day of work, choose to do something that replenishes your energy.
- The disciples pick and rub grains because they are hungry. Wandering around with Jesus is not always a guarantee of a good meal. Do some research about food shelves and other hunger-related organizations in your area. Can you contribute a little to support their work?
- Jesus heals on the Sabbath because it is the right thing to do. Where are you moved to do something unusual or even problematic when it is the right thing?

