

Christ the Worker

Sunday 4th May 2025



Sunday Worship Materials for Christ The Worker:

Sermon Ideas and Bible Study—On the Seventh Day...

This year we have two readings for Christ the Worker Sunday: [Luke 6:1-10](#) and [Mark 2:23-28](#). The first reading shows Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath and the second shows Jesus as our Sabbath rest.

Luke 6:1-10

6 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields, and his disciples began to pick some ears of corn, rub them in their hands and eat the grain. ² Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

³ Jesus answered them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁶ On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shrivelled. ⁷ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. ⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shrivelled hand, “Get up and stand in front of everyone.” So he got up and stood there.

⁹ Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?”

¹⁰ He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was completely restored.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Discussion points

- ◆ The concept of “sabbath” was important enough to be instituted by God as one of the Ten Commandments. It existed before Moses received the Commandments. The Israelites in the wilderness could collect enough manna to avoid them working on the sabbath. Eating is an important part of resting ([Exodus 16:23-25](#)). The punishment for breaking the sabbath was death ([Exodus 31:14](#)) but the purpose of the sabbath was holiness and to acknowledge the Lordship of God ([Exodus 31:13](#)).

Exodus 20:8-11 ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labour and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

- ◆ The land rested as well as the people and animals. A fallow period was built into the seven-day cycle. **Leviticus 25:4** ⁴ *But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards.*
- ◆ King David ate the bread reserved for priests (**1 Samuel 21**)
- ◆ The ritualistic observance of the sabbath while doing evil is detestable to God (**Isaiah 1:12-14**)
- ◆ In Isaiah, God used ‘keeping the sabbath’ well as a contrast to the fasts, where the people were disobedient – including exploiting the workers. **Isaiah 58:13-14** ¹³ *“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, ¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*
- ◆ Jesus healed a man on the sabbath. Referring back to when David and the soldiers ate the priests’ bread. **Luke 14:1-6** **14** *One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. ² There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. ³ Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?” ⁴ But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way. ⁵ Then he asked them, “If one of you has a child^[a] or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?” ⁶ And they had nothing to say.*

Jesus states the importance of the principle behind the sabbath, not its pedantic observance. **Mark 2:27-28** ²⁷ *Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”*

There were many laws listed in the rabbinical writings about exactly what was and was not permissible on the sabbath and some of those laws were around the care of livestock. They were very detailed and precise, for instance you could push an escaped hen to safety, but you couldn't pick it up and carry it. The laws also applied to people – helping a woman who was in labour would not be breaking the sabbath. Jesus was looking at the bigger picture: that it is still important to observe a sabbath. Jesus came to fulfil the law, not abolish it. We still need a time to physically and mentally rest and to worship God.

- ◆ [Matthew 11:28-29](#) ²⁸ 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

There is no rest outside Jesus. Physical and mental rest are important to recharge our bodies and minds. We cannot be healthy without rest. Rest is also a spiritual concept and in full circle, the creator who rested on the seventh day becomes our rest.. It is in him we find our sabbath rest. Everything else is distraction. Our mind and body needs rest, but so does our soul, and the only place that is found is in Jesus.

Songs

O Lord and Father of Mankind	Jesus, Lover of my Soul
Be still for the Presence of the Lord	How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds
Oceans (Hillsong)	This is the Day of Rest
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say	You Give Rest to the Weary
Come As You Are (Crowder)	Called by Christ to be Disciples

Intercessions

For all at work – paid or voluntary, and their colleagues and workplaces

That those who work might find time to rest

For those who have to work across 7 days, particularly medical or emergency workers and care workers.

For small businesses and those who are understaffed or in crisis.

For clergy and church ministers, that they find a time to rest and receive from God

For those missing regular times of worship, that God might meet them in their place of work

Further Intercessions

For those who are unemployed or finding it difficult to work due to health problems or disability
Years ago, Sunday was a day of rest in British culture. Shops and businesses were closed and families had time off together. That is no longer the case. Help us to find spaces in this busy, modern world.

Then of course there are those who believe themselves to be indispensable, who then damage others as well as themselves.

Help us to build a rhythm into our lives of work, rest and worship.

Thank you for those who step in so we can take our rest. Help us to be grateful and mindful of their needs as well as our own.

A story from Chaplaincy

Sabbath is not always Sunday for many people.

One of the cleaners in my place of chaplaincy, a regular Christian, works 4 days on/4 days off which meant that at a recent Easter her 4-on were Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday. Her church had no services that she could attend, and she asked if I could provide a Eucharist Service. I had to explain that I couldn't, for a range of reasons that could get me into trouble with my church – but that I would raise it with her minister as 1 in 5 of the workers in his parish are shift workers with similar difficulties from time to time. His reaction was 'well it works for 80%'.

As chaplains we need to follow Christ and be concerned for the lost 1%.

What else can I do?

- ◆ Think of different occupations and pray for the workers.
- ◆ Join Days of Prayer for specific occupations – teachers, medical workers, media.
- ◆ Commission working members for the living out of their faith at work.
- ◆ Encourage members to attend a retreat.
- ◆ Try a 'This Time Tomorrow' interview ([This Time Tomorrow | LICC](#)).
- ◆ Invite a local KWM Chaplain or Trustee to share in the service.
- ◆ Distribute blessing cards for people to give out to workers during the following week.

In the News

Changes in employment laws to benefit workers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-most-significant-reforms-to-employment-rights>

B&Q, Aldi and Waitrose to close Boxing Day: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/bq-makes-huge-announcement-see-33818618>

An article about work and rest: <https://www.theologyofwork.org/key-topics/rest-and-work-overview/how-christians-can-experience-deeper-rest#:~:text=The%20first%20step%20is%20to%20look%20to%20Jesus,easy%2C%20and%20my%20burden%20is%20light%20%28Matthew%2011%3A28%E2%80%9330%29>

The World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Workplace Network have launched a ‘Global Day of Faith at Work’ to be held on 1st May 2025: [Global Day of Faith at Work](#)

Quotations

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” — Anne Lamott

“There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest. Use both and overlook neither.” — Alan Cohen

“Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future. Jobs, family, employers, and friends can exist one day without any one of us, and if our egos permit us to confess, they could exist eternally in our absence. Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us.” — Maya Angelou

“God knows we need rest, and one of the reasons He established the Sabbath was to give us rest...But God’s plan also was to use the Sabbath to turn our hearts and minds toward Him. In other words, He wants us to set aside one day of the week as a special time of worship and reflection on God’s Word.” — Billy Graham

Other Resources

LICC resources for the Workplace: <https://licc.org.uk/about/work/>

Theos – Just Work Project: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/Just-work-v6-combined.pdf>

A creative animation from Theos about cycles and rest: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQQBArk_3EE&t=1s