

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 6:1-5**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we will read Luke chapter 6. Today, we will read verses 1-5.

Before reading chapter six, let us first look back to the end of chapter 5. At that time, Jesus was eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners. As a result, the scribes and Pharisees came to challenge Him, saying: John's disciples and the Pharisees often fast—why do You and Your disciples eat and drink? In response to this question, Jesus used a parable. He said that no one tears a piece from a new garment to patch an old one; if he does, the new garment is torn, and the patch from the new does not match the old. Remember, these words were spoken to the Pharisees and the scribes.

A similar situation is also recorded in Matthew 9:14, where it says that the disciples of John came to Jesus. Although it was the same question—they also asked why they and the Pharisees fast while Jesus and His disciples eat and drink—Jesus used a similar but not identical parable. When we read Scripture, we must be careful and precise. Matthew 9:16 says: “No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.”

To John's disciples, Jesus spoke of new cloth being patched onto an old garment. John the Baptist's ministry was to introduce Jesus. When Jesus began His ministry, John's disciples should have laid aside their former role and joined Jesus Christ, because what He offered was a new garment. If you merely take some new cloth to patch an old garment, the result will be that the old garment is torn.

In Luke's Gospel, however, Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. The Pharisees insisted on old, traditional practices. What they had was an old garment. But being with Jesus, and through Jesus Christ becoming our righteousness, we receive that new garment.

Why explain all this? Because chapter six is a continuation of chapter five. The formation of the Pharisees basically took place during the period between the two Testaments, in the time of the Maccabean dynasty. Their original intention was good—they wanted to restore reverence for the Law of Moses as in earlier times. So they took the books of the Law of Moses, studied them together, and sought to observe them. But in the process, they added many interpretations—interpretations that were not originally in the Old Testament. Not only interpretations, but also many of their own rules and traditions. It is within this background that we now read chapter six.

**Verses 1–2: “Now it happened on a Sabbath that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, ‘Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?’”**

We need to look at this carefully. Jesus and His disciples were walking on the Sabbath. They were hungry. As they passed through the grainfields, they plucked heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate. There are two issues here: first, the issue of time; second, the issue of what they were doing. When someone is hungry and passes through a grainfield, is plucking heads of grain and eating them a violation of the Law of Moses? On this point, the Pharisees did not challenge them. What they challenged was the time, because it was the Sabbath. They said they were doing what was not lawful to do on the Sabbath.

Let us first address whether it was lawful to pluck grain when hungry. The entire Law of Moses, given by God through Moses, stands firmly on the principle of respecting life. When a person is hungry and passes through a grainfield, plucking heads of grain to eat is not a violation of the law. This is recorded in Deuteronomy 23:24–25: “When you come into your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container. When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain.”

So when you are hungry and use your hand to pluck grain to eat and satisfy yourself, this is in accordance with the Law of Moses. Moses allowed this because it is based on the principle of respecting life. But you may not use a sickle to harvest a large amount of grain; that would become theft.

Therefore, these Pharisees actually knew the Law of Moses and knew that plucking grain by hand was permitted. What they challenged was not what was done, but when it was done. They said it was done on the Sabbath. This brings us back to the Pharisees themselves.

The command that no work should be done on the Sabbath was established by God. After God created man, He rested on the seventh day and told man that no work should be done on the Sabbath. God rested on the seventh day, and man was created toward the end of the sixth day. Thus, man's very first full day was a day of rest. God's original intention was that human beings would live their entire lives out of rest.

Not working on the Sabbath is a principle. But during the period between the two Testaments, as the Pharisees gradually formed, they began to define what "work" meant. In order to explain what constituted work, they listed 39 categories of work. Later, the Pharisees expanded the Law into 613 regulations that people were required to observe. Among these regulations, harvesting was considered work, and threshing was also considered work. On top of these regulations, they added even more rules, which became their traditions. Within this system, plucking heads of grain and rubbing them in one's hands was equated with harvesting.

Thus, a simple divine command—no work on the Sabbath—was turned into countless traditions, regulations, and rules, with many things forbidden. Even today, if you go to Israel and stay in a hotel, there are special Sabbath elevators that stop automatically at every floor. You are not allowed to press the button yourself, because that, too, is considered work. It was against this kind of challenge that Jesus responded.

**Verse 3: “But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:’”**

Jesus was blunt when speaking to the Pharisees. He always brought them back to God’s original intention in establishing these ordinances and laws. God highly values life. When a person is hungry and passes through a neighbor’s grainfield, plucking grain to eat is permissible. As for the Sabbath, God’s primary purpose is that people should rest.

David eating the showbread is recorded in 1 Samuel 21. When David began fleeing, he came to the city of Nob. He and those who were with him were hungry, so they went to the priest to ask if there was anything to eat. The priest was poor and had no ordinary food, only the showbread that had been removed from before the LORD. According to ceremonial law, only priests were allowed to eat the showbread. David and his men were not priests. All of this is recorded in 1 Samuel.

**Verse 4: “How he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?”**

In saying this, Jesus was telling the Pharisees: David was hungry and ate bread that only priests were permitted to eat, and God allowed it. How much more, then, when the Sabbath regulations you insist on are not part of the original Law of Moses, but are the result of your added interpretations, traditions, and rules? The Sabbath is God’s loving ordinance for man, meant so that people may rest. But when a person is hungry, how can he rest?

**Verse 5: “And He said to them, ‘The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.’”**

This verse is extremely important. Jesus was, in effect, declaring to the Pharisees: I am the Lord of the Sabbath. All the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament—what

can be eaten, what cannot be eaten, what cannot be done on the Sabbath—come to an end when I come, because I am the Lord of the Sabbath.

His reference to David carries deep significance. At that time, David was still fleeing, and he was a key figure in the transition from the period of the judges to the period of the kings. Through David's emergence, a completely new era was ushered in—the transition from the priestly era to the kingly era.

In the same way, Jesus was telling the Pharisees: Do you not realize that when the Son of Man has come, the age has shifted? All the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament come to a halt in Me. These ceremonial laws were merely types and shadows of the Son of Man. When the Messiah—the Son of Man—truly comes, they are fulfilled and no longer need to be observed.

On the other hand, the moral law is actually strengthened. Referring back to the parable Jesus spoke near the end of chapter 5, He was also saying to the Pharisees: Why do you still cling to your old garment? Do you not realize that the age has changed and a new age has come? Those who follow Jesus—His disciples, including us believers of later generations—when we are saved, put on the robe of righteousness that Jesus gives. The righteousness of Jesus Christ becomes the basis on which we are accepted by God and find grace before Him, because the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. When we receive You, You give us a brand-new life, and this brand-new life brings forth a brand-new way of living. Help us to always live according to the principle of life, and help us to go beyond all kinds of rules and laws, so that in the newness of life we may follow Your leading day by day and enjoy Your grace daily. Bless my life today, that it may be full of enjoyment in life and growth in life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.