

Jesus and the Bread of the Presence (9th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B)

Deuteronomy 5:12-15—The Sabbath Law

1. Ten Commandments: given to Moses on the plains of Moab (2nd time; 5:1-22).
2. Sabbath: seventh day of the week (5:12; cf. Gen 2:1-3)
3. Holy: keep the Sabbath “holy” or “set apart” (Hebrew *qadosh*) (5:12)
4. Rest: “six days you shall labor,” but no “work” on the Sabbath (5:14)

Psalm 81—Sing with Joy to God Our Help

1. Exodus: God delivered Israel from slave labor (81:3-6)

Mark 2:23-3:6—The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath

1. Sabbath: Jesus is going through the grainfields with disciples (3:23)
2. Harvesting: disciples pick heads of grain (2:23)
3. Pharisees: doing what is “not lawful” on the Sabbath (2:24)
4. King David: Jesus appeals to example of David (2:25; cf. 2 Sam 21:1-6)
 - a. Jesus = King David
 - b. Disciples = the priests in the Temple
 - c. Sacrifice = the Bread of the Presence (cf. Lev 24:1-4)
5. Purpose of Sabbath: “made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (2:27)
6. Lord of the Sabbath: “the Son of Man is lord (Greek *kyrios*) of the Sabbath” (2:28)

The Living Tradition

Novatian: As he is, according to his humanity, the Son of David, so is he also, as God, the Lord of David. *As he is, according to his humanity, born under the law, so is he as God, the Lord of the Sabbath.* (Novatian of Rome, *The Trinity* 11; trans. T. C. Oden and C. Hall [3rd century])

Theophylact: Some have asked how it is that the evangelist here calls the high priest Abiathar, while in the book of Kings [=1 Samuel] he is called Ahimelech. It can be said that perhaps Abiathar had two names and that he was also called Ahimelech. Also it can be said that the book of Kings says that the priest at that time was Ahimelech, while the evangelist says that the high priest was Abiathar. *So this is not contradictory, for the priest was Ahimelech, while the high priest was Abiathar.* (Theophylact, *The Gospel according to St. Mark 2:23-28*; trans. C. Stade [11th century])

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (9th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. Why does Jesus allude to King David eating the bread of the Presence? What does this allusion reveal about who Jesus is claiming to be, and who his disciples will become?

For Further Reading

1. Healy, Mary. *The Gospel of Mark*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
2. Cahill, Michael. *The First Commentary on Mark: An Annotated Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
3. Oden, Thomas C. and Christopher A. Hall. *Mark*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament II. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998.
4. Theophylact. *The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. Mark*. House Springs: Chrysostom Press, 1993.