

Is It Permissible to Eat Out on the Sabbath or Not?

(Elder's Conference)
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Exodus 16 gives the first commands to the children of Israel of what to do on the Sabbath when they were in the wilderness. God told them that in the morning there would be manna, six days you would gather it and then on the preparation day you would gather twice as much and it wouldn't breed worms and stink.

They were to keep the Sabbaths, and everyone at that point was to stay in his own tent. He could probably get outside of his tent—be right there—but he was not to go wandering out and go to pick up manna like one man said: 'I'll go out on the Sabbath and see if I can get some.' Or later when a man went out on the Sabbath to pick up wood. He knew better.

Let's look at the circumstances of what we have here: They were in the wilderness; there was no place to go. God was right there. They kept the Sabbath in the letter, and we can strongly say for sure, they weren't converted. We will see that conversion will also play a role in helping to answer the question of how do we deal with it today?

We can all unanimously concur we are not in the desert and we're not staying in tents and the pillars of cloud and fire are not hanging over this hotel. So, the circumstances for them was quite a bit different than circumstances we're faced with. When we read the commandment:

Exodus 20:8: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (vs 8-11).

A comment was brought up in a discussion that if we eat out on the Sabbath we are not remembering the Sabbath. I don't think that you can make the connection that you're forgetting the Sabbath. We keep the Sabbath. We remember the Sabbath. For a lot of us it's been decades. For me, it's been 50 years next year. All during that time I have not forgotten the Sabbath! I have *remembered* it and have *kept* it.

When the children of Israel came into the 'promised land' they were to be a nation that followed God's laws, and we see the remnant of that

in Neh. 13. The whole nation was to keep the Sabbath. In that case, there is no question if everyone kept the Sabbath. They were supposed to have enough synagogues so that they could all go to a local church; they could all walk there. But, unfortunately, the situation never worked out ideally that I just described. Had it been that, they could have all kept the Sabbath; all shops would have been closed, all gates would have been closed, all strangers within the land would keep the Sabbath, as well. But were they converted? *No!*

Even in Jesus' day, they had difficulties trying to define what was *doing good* on the Sabbath. What about doing good on the Sabbath? What if you belong to the Humane Society and your *good deed* is that every Sabbath morning you go down and take care of the dogs, and sometimes you don't show up for church? Well, you could say that that doing good would keep you away from the Sabbath. You may not have forgotten it, but you *misused* the Sabbath, and that certainly could become sin, unless it were an emergency.

I've known people who thought they were *doing good* to help take care of dogs on the Sabbath *at a dog show!* A little further 'fudging' down the road.

Those are clear examples of what *not to do!* Now let's look at a situation where things began to change when Jesus was dealing with His disciples and they were doing a lot of extensive travel and walking. I am sure more than a 'Sabbath day's journey' which is likened to three-quarters of a mile.

Mark 3:1: "And again He went into the synagogue, and a man who had a withered hand was there. And they were watching Him *to see* if He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse Him" (vs 1-2).

Let's stop and think about this: Were those in the synagogue keeping the Sabbath? *No, they weren't!* They were there on the Sabbath, but they weren't *keeping* the Sabbath, because of what was going on in their mind. But they were there, and remember when they were *at* the temple and they were *at* the Feast of Tabernacles (John 8)—notice I didn't say *keeping* the Feast of Tabernacles. What did Jesus say who their father was? *Satan the devil!* Just because you are in a certain place at a certain time on the Sabbath Day does not necessarily mean you're *keeping* it or that you're *remembering* it. What if the minister helps you break the Sabbath while you're there in the congregation by talking about something that is so elementary and boring

that you start daydreaming about what you would like to be doing? *A lousy Sabbath*—right? You’d have to say that no, you’re really not keeping the Sabbath.

Here they are, “...a man who had a withered hand was there. And they were watching Him *to see* if He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse Him. Then He said to the man who had the withered hand, ‘Stand up *here* in the center.’ And He said to them, ‘Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbaths, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?’ But they were silent” (vs 1-4).

How would you do *good* today? Say you went to Sabbath services in the morning and you wanted to do something that was good.

- How about visiting the sick? *That would be doing good!*
- How about visiting a widow who is not in the Church who is alone and terribly lonely? *That would be doing good!*
- How about if someone in the Church happens to have had, unfortunately, an accident and is in the hospital and you go visit that person? *That’s doing good on the Sabbath*—according to what Jesus did here in healing.

How about if you’re a baseball fan and you take your iPod and put a sermon in it, put your earplugs in your ears and run on down to the local baseball field and watch a game while you listen to a sermon? Are you keeping the Sabbath? You’re just sitting there and once in a while you stand up and clap, you don’t use too much energy. ***NO! You’re not keeping the Sabbath!***

What if you’re sitting dead still at home and it’s just you and God, and it’s the Sabbath Day, and you sit there and watch television all day long? You’ve rested—haven’t you? You didn’t exert yourself—did you? ***But your mind was on the television and not on God! You didn’t keep the Sabbath***—did you? *No!* You can think of many different examples.

Verse 5: “And after looking around at them with anger...” Here’s ‘righteous indignation’; and I don’t think Jesus’ face was too kindly when He looked around at them with anger. It didn’t say that He’s a handsome, beautiful man that everyone would desire. It said of Him that there was ‘nothing comely or beautiful about Him that we should desire.’ I just imagine that He had very penetrating, piercing eyes when He looked at people. He was God manifested in the flesh, so when He looked around at them with anger, He probably had going through His mind that these are the descendants at those ‘that rejected Me while I was giving the Ten

Commandments to Moses on the mountain.’ Here they’re at it again!

“...being grieved at the hardness of their hearts...” (v 5). The Sabbath to them on that day was worthless as far as their attitude goes. It would be like, today what if someone came in and sat down with their arms folded, granite face, sitting in the back when a comment is made about the Truth. He was there *but he wasn’t keeping the Sabbath*. We do have to have preparation, but it’s also how do we use the Sabbath!

“...He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored *as* sound as the other. Then the Pharisees left *and* immediately took counsel with the Herodians against Him *as to* how they might destroy Him” (vs 5-6). Wonderful Sabbath conversation on very spiritual things! ***NO! They didn’t keep the Sabbath!***

On another occasion when Jesus healed—they were all upset because He healed on the Sabbath—Jesus said, ‘Don’t even you—you Pharisees and scribes—if your donkey falls in a ditch help him out?’ *or* ‘If your lamb falls in a pit pull it out?’ *and* ‘Doesn’t this man deserve to be healed on the Sabbath?’

Now let’s see something else here, Isaiah 58:13: “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires... [in other words, don’t do what you want to do] ...on My Holy Day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own* words.”

I’ve had people say that after Church brethren are talking about everything except the sermon or the Word of God. It’s interesting to know what’s going on in your life, but it is also a challenge to the one who is doing the teaching that you give some teaching that is worthwhile enough that the brethren can talk about it after they have heard it. If you talk about your life, talk about how God has helped you and intervened for you and things like that—speaking God’s Word!

Verse 14: “Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.”

Isaiah 56:1 Thus says the LORD, ‘Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation *is* near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed *is* the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it... [going out and doing your own business, speaking your own words, seeking your

own pleasures] ...and keeps his hand from doing any evil” (vs 1-2). And we can add in there *controls your mind* so you’re not *thinking* any evil.

Verse 3: “And do not let the son of the stranger, who has joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, ‘The LORD has utterly separated me from His people.’ And do not let the eunuch say, ‘Behold, I *am* a dry tree.’ For thus says the LORD, ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant” (vs 3-4). There it is for them to keep the Sabbath.

- How then do we keep the Sabbath?
- What if you keep the Sabbath in your own home?

You don’t go anywhere. There are a lot of people that way.

- What should you do?

You should prepare! Preparation for us a snap! If you want to have chicken and cook it ahead of time, it’s done in an hour. But before this post-modern time that we live in, you wanted to have a chicken for Sabbath you’d better get out there about 10 o’clock in the morning on Friday and you’d better get the chicken out of the chicken yard. You hack off the head, bleed it, clean out the intestines, take all the feathers off, cool it down and now you’re ready to cook it.

If you wanted a roast, that’s a different proposition. You want to kill a little calf? A goat? That’s a little bit of work! Today, if you want a roast you just run down to the supermarket and buy the roast all ready to go.

When you put the things in the oven to cook, or you cook on top of the stove, you don’t have to have already split kindling, already gathered all the small chips for the fire to go. They didn’t have matches back then, so you’d have to start the fire. If you’re smart, you’d always keep a little fire going and little pot of coals going all the time, so that way you could get your fire going.

The way they had it, they had to put the fire and their clay ovens outside which were built up and where they put the wood, and the heat from the smoke would come up on the back side, up under the oven. The oven would be like a beehive on the top, and the smoke would come up the backside and the whole oven would be hot.

That takes some time to do! Same way with baking bread. Stop and think of how you would prepare a meal without a refrigerator, you get everything out of your garden or you have to go down to the bazaar and buy it down there where it’s sold on Friday. You have to come home and get it all prepared to get ready for the Sabbath. A lot of work

involved.

Today, it’s a snap! Does turning on a light switch constitute igniting a fire? *No!* Does turning on an electric stove involve a great deal of work for cooking? *No!* Our whole preparation day-to-day is entirely different. We need to understand that.

If you’re home alone, even with all the modern conveniences that are there, you listen to a CD or your watch a DVD, you do some Bible study, maybe even take a nap and you get up and you and your wife and/or children have another Bible study that afternoon. In the winter time the Sabbath is over about 5 o’clock. In the summer time the sun goes sometimes at 8:30, so you have to adjust everything according to that.

There is no need for you to eat out! None! Are there circumstances when you’re traveling where that may be necessary? Let’s look at the circumstances that we have here and we will add on to that ‘go into all the world, into all nations.’ I think we will see that presents a different set of circumstances.

Mark 2:23: “Now, it came to pass that He went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as His disciples made *their way through the fields*, they were picking *and eating* the grain.”

It does say in the book of Exodus that you’re to keep the Sabbath in seed time, in harvest time, all the time. You’re not to harvest on the Sabbath. Granted, this wasn’t full-fledged harvesting, but they were picking and eating. It doesn’t tell us how much they were taking. They were probably taking whatever they needed to satisfy their hunger at that particular time.

What does this tell us? *That they were hungry!* Why would they be hungry? *Because they had probably been traveling—walking—a long way.* We can be almost guaranteed that they did a lot of walking, even on the Sabbath Day. Not every Sabbath Day, but on a lot of Sabbath Days.

Verse 24: “Then the Pharisees said to Him, ‘Look *at them!* Why are they doing that which is not lawful on the Sabbath?’”

(go to the next track)

A lot of people will say that this was related to a law from the *Code of Jewish Law*. but Jesus didn’t answer and say that it was because of ‘their traditions.’ This had to be referring to the Scriptures to no harvest.

Notice how He answered. Why did He answer this way? *Because a lot of things were going to be permissible or allowed on the Sabbath Day for the New Covenant!* That would violate some of the practices of the Old Covenant.

Verse 25: “And He said to them, ‘Have you

never read what David did when he was hungry and in need of food, he and those with him? How in the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered into the house of God and he ate the showbread, which it is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?” (vs 25-26).

By quoting this what Jesus is showing is that for the need of hunger it was permissible—while He and His disciples were traveling, to pick and eat, which violated the law which said that ‘you shall not harvest.’ In the same way, because it was needful, for David and those with him to eat the showbread. Remember, that was a very important function. That was to be before God day and night, those 12 loaves.

Verse 27: “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.’” What did He declare by doing this? He declared that what His disciples did—though it broke a Law in the Old Testament in the letter—did not break the Law in the New Covenant in taking care of a need!

Let’s talk about some needs that are of a little greater urgency. Jesus said, ‘Go into all the world, teach all nations.’ What are you going to find in different nations? Different groups of people being called to the Truth who knew nothing of the Old Testament! Some of the Greeks knew, but not all of them. What was one of the problems that came up because of what Paul said was permissible?

Here is something that you could say was far worse than the disciples plucking the grain while they were walking/traveling and eating it:

1-Corinthians 8:1: “Now, concerning things sacrificed to idols... [Whoa! Where was that done? At the pagan temples. Complete change of circumstances. So, the question comes up and He answers it]: ...we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. So then, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols...” (vs 1-4). What were the idols there? Zeus, Apollo, Mercury, Diana!

“...we understand that an idol in the world is nothing...” (v 4). An idol is an idol, but even the Old Testament says it’s dumb, stupid and can’t speak and can’t hear, and can’t see. How can an idol, of and by itself, pollute clean food that happens to be sacrificed to it? It can’t! But, what if you’re still superstitious and you still have a conscience toward the idol? See all the arguments that you get into?

“...and that there is no other God except one. For indeed, even if there are those which are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are many gods and many lords, still, to us there is

one God the Father, from Whom are all things, and we are in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we are by Him. However, **not all have this knowledge...**” (vs 4-7). Now we have a split decision.

Some believe that an idol is nothing know it’s nothing. They’re converted and understand that that does not affect the meat. There are others who say, ‘Ooo, that was handled by those dirty, bastard priests when they killed it at Apollo’s temple. It’s polluted!’ Furthermore, where a lot of them went to eat—you couldn’t ship meat around like we do today—were shanties or little restaurants. If you want to understand what a shanty is like, see the documentaries on food in China. They’ve got all these little booths everywhere. That’s a shanty! The meat from the sacrifice was sold to the people to raise money for the temple.

Now you’ve got another problem. In order to buy the food to eat, it’s going to Apollo’s priesthood. Do you see the complications you get into when you go into all the nations of the world. If you think you have a hard time trying to sort out clean and unclean foods, next time there’s a special on food in China, and they show all these shanties, watch it all the way through, especially when they eat the donkey meat, and when they eat mice head first, deep fried! Little mice! Crispy little bones! Like potato chips! I wouldn’t want to be a missionary in China. Can you imagine that? They would say, ‘What can we eat?’ Most of what they have is unclean!

“...But some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. But **meat**... [also can mean food] ...**does not commend us to God**; for we do not have any spiritual advantage if we eat... [because we understand the circumstances] ...nor do we come short spiritually if we do not eat” (vs 7-8).

There’s the split decision, which, if you can’t in conscience, do not eat anything—even though it’s clean food—sacrificed to an idol. If you in conscience eat it, don’t offend the one who has conscience that he can’t eat it. We’re not dealing with any days here, that’s for sure. I’m not trying to make it a Sabbath or non-Sabbath question.

Then he says, v 10: “For if anyone sees you, who have knowledge, sitting to eat in an idol-temple, will not his weak conscience be emboldened so as to cause him to eat things sacrificed to idols?” If their conscience is weak, they may be emboldened, and so forth.

Now let’s talk about another problem, but let’s analyze it and say this: Was Paul’s permission to eat things sacrificed to idols of a greater violation of the Law of God on the surface than plucking and

eating grain? *On the surface, you would have to say yes!* But if you have understanding and you realize that an idol is nothing. See how you have a split decision?

Acts 14—Remember, this was the whole covenant, the whole purpose of taking the Passover in Exo. 12 and the way that the Jews were taking the proselytes and making them become physically circumcised. {see sermon series: *The Circumcision Wars*}. Let's carry that one step further. Paul said to the Jews, 'If you and your circumcision are not keeping the righteousness of the Law and are sinning, your circumcision has become uncircumcision (Rom 2).

I wouldn't want to go into a Jewish synagogue today and say that to them. It's very dangerous to say that. One step further, a great insult: The one who is uncircumcised in the flesh, but is circumcised in the heart, and he keeps the righteousness of the Law, 'his uncircumcision is counted as circumcision.' Whoa! That's a big leap from the Old Testament!

What did it say if you're going to keep the Passover? *Let everyone be circumcised!* If a stranger will keep it, let him be circumcised. Don't you think that's Scriptural authority to make the proselytes to become circumcised? *Until you understand that it is circumcision of the heart and the mind*, which is a greater circumcision. But in the letter it doesn't make any sense. This is why they had the argument.

Acts 15:1: "Now, certain men who had come down from Judea... [Judaizers or of the 'circumcision party] ...were teaching the brethren, *saying*, 'Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" That's a pretty strong statement. For a Jew, for one living in Jerusalem and in Judea, they better be circumcised. What about all the Gentiles? They always look down on the Gentiles, 'Oh, you uncircumcised dogs.'

Verse 2 is going right down in the heartland of Antioch, which was the main church of the Apostle Paul where there were a lot of Greeks. There were some Jews there, too.

Verse 2: "Therefore, after a great deal of strife and arguing with them by Paul and Barnabas... [they had a heated, knockdown drag out] ...the *brethren* appointed Paul and Barnabas, and certain others from among them, to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question."

They couldn't settle it. Some would say one thing, and that's correct. Some would say another thing and they would say that's correct. Someone would say, 'Exo. 12 says you've got to be circumcised.' Another one says Deut. 10 says 'be circumcised in the heart.' How do we settle the

issue?

Verse 3: "So then, after being sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, *where* they reported the conversion of the Gentiles. And they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the Church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all the things that God had done with them. But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees, saying, 'It is obligatory... [it's in the Law] ...to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses'" (vs 3-5).

Their interpretation of the Law of Moses was expanded out to include all their traditional laws, too, which they called the Law of Moses. If you only had the Old Testament, is that not a strong argument? If you said 'solo scriptura'—only the Scriptures—is that not an ironclad argument? *Yes!* Remember, there was no covenantal relationship without the circumcision of the flesh under the Old Covenant.

Notice that something very interesting happens, v 6: "Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter... [Without the Pharisees! The Pharisees left.] ...And after much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Men, brethren, you know that from *the* early days, God made *the* choice among us *that* by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe'" (vs 6-7). Remember what happened there? *God had to show by a miracle He was going to deal with uncircumcised Gentiles*, and He gave them the Holy Spirit without being circumcised (Acts 10). That's revolutionary!

What happened when those in Jerusalem heard about it? *They said*, 'Boy wait until Peter gets here, we're going to question him. Why did he do that and go in among those who were uncircumcised and baptize them?' Peter had to explain the whole thing, so he's bringing it out here. When you read Gal. 2 you will understand why Peter was at fault in what he was doing (but that's another topic altogether).

Verse 8: "And God, Who knows the heart, bore witness to them *by* giving them the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith. Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But by the grace of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also'" (vs 8-11).

Verse 12: "Then all the multitude kept silence and heard Barnabas and Paul relate what

signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. And after they were silent, James answered *and* said... [I want you to listen to the Scriptural argument that he gave]: ...‘Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written. **After these things, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David,** which has fallen; and its ruins I will build again, and will set it up; so that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, says *the* Lord, Who does all these things.’” (vs 12-17).

How can you get out of that you don't have to have the Gentiles circumcised? *I don't know!* But that's what he used. A very broad brush, wouldn't you say? Include a lot of things, yes! What I'm getting to is that there is a reason for Mark 2 being the way that it is. Is not circumcision of utmost importance up to this time? *Yes!* Now we're dealing with the Spirit. What did Jesus say that He wanted?

Matthew 9:10: “Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.” Very interesting. Like Jesus going to a local bar, because they called Him a ‘wine bibber’ and a ‘glutton.’

Down in ‘Baptist land’ if the Sunday-keeping preacher went into the local bar and had a joyous time with the participants, just think what would happen next Sunday at church services. Same thing! ‘What did you go in there for? They saw you in this local bar!’

Verse 11: “And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call *the* righteous... [those who thought they were righteous] ...but sinners to repentance” (vs 11-13). God wants mercy and not sacrifice.

It was proposed that we could get a hall. Today, if we came from all the different directions that we came from and we found a hall we could get, I can guarantee you that there would have to be attendants there for insurance sake—correct? Those of you who have been in insurance, you can understand that.

If we had all the brethren bring the food and we had the hall where we could have the food there's still a lot of work to prepare it, to get it out and ready. If things needed to be heated up then heat it up. You know that's a lot of work. If we have a

hundred people in the hall and you have to fix a portion and a half to make sure that those who would be there would have enough, that's a lot of food, a lot of lifting, a lot of heaving—on the Sabbath. They're not hired servants, they're brethren, but I see no difference in the labor between someone who works in a hotel and brethren who have to work to provide for other brethren. The labor is no different.

Then when you're done eating, even if you have paper-ware and plastic-ware, you've got to throw it away, you've got to clean up the place because that's part of the rules for renting. You've got to dispose of the garbage and you have to leave it as clean as it was, and that requires more work. So, I submit that that labor is more than those who work here at the hotel.

What does it also do for the sake of not buying or eating out on the Sabbath. We're not talking about buying and selling. That's a different proposition. We're talking about eating. I don't buy and sell on the Sabbath. I don't do anything other than eat on the Sabbath. I travel 250 miles three out of four Sabbaths of the month. Then the other Sabbath of the month I travel out someplace and people gather together.

I think that we can extrapolate from Mark 2... Some will disagree, and if consciously you disagree then you disagree, we'll have a split decision. If you conscientiously cannot eat with the brethren on the Sabbath Day, being served by people in the world who are not converted... Our example of kindness, mercy and love will do more for them than if we came here and met in the hall and we all dismissed to our cars to eat a sack lunch in-between so we wouldn't buy a meal and then come back for the afternoon. They would look at us and say ‘they are strange folks.’

This becomes a matter of judgment based upon mercy and not sacrifice. As an aside, I have already paid for the hall and for the meal a week before I arrived. When we eat like we've been eating, we don't have to have a great number of brethren out doing chores to serve other brethren. They can fellowship. Remember what happens with deacons and deaconesses when they have to do all this work, and all their helpers, after a while the question comes up: When can we fellowship with the brethren?

What we're dealing with is not an absolute clear-cut choice of right and wrong, but we are dealing with something of what works out best for the brethren for eating. Some are going to get up early to get here by 10:30 for services. The meal is prepared. We can all visit with them. We can fellowship with them, spend time with them. Yes, these people work. But none of the brethren are

working. Yes, they prepared the food, but they are in the world and we're not. Have we violated the Sabbath spiritually by doing so? *NO!* We're with the brethren and we have the Scripture that says: 'Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together.'

When so many of the people that come to services are from outlying areas and have to keep the Sabbath alone, it's a joy for them to come and be with the other brethren. I got a call and she didn't get her letter. She called me at the office and asked if I was coming back east this year. I said, 'Yes.' She wants to come here and be with the brethren. It's a long trip. So, living in the age that we live in, I think based on Mark 2, that it is permissible for us to eat out on the Sabbath. Or in circumstances like this, to have people provide it for us.

- Does it give us more time to study? *Yes!*
- Does it give us more time to fellowship? *Yes!*
- Is that more important than not eating out on the Sabbath? *Yes!*

It's not perfect! We're not living in a perfect world. It wasn't perfect when they were offering things sacrificed to idols. It wasn't perfect when they were demanding that they be circumcised. In the case of circumcision, you can't have a split decision.

Let's add one other thing to it before anyone gets entrenched one way or the other. The Bible says that 'you will know them by their fruits.' How many years have I've been doing what I've been doing? *Since about 1991 when I came down to Montgomery!*

- Has God blessed us on those Sabbath Days that we have gathered together and we purchase a meal on the Sabbath for everyone? *Yes!*
- Has He blessed the preaching? *Yes!*
- Has He blessed the fellowship? *Yes!*
- Have the brethren been strengthened spiritually by having fellowship with one another where they don't have to work and be servants for other brethren? *Yes!*

That's the basis of it.

Every Sabbath when I drive to Fairfield, I have to cross a toll bridge; costs \$4.00. One time I didn't have \$4 and I said, 'I'll write you a check.' They didn't take them. I offered a credit card. They didn't take them. 'You just go on and we'll send you a letter.' The letter came: *evasion of toll fee—\$29 (\$4 + \$25).*

I can't get up to Fairfield any other way but crossing the toll bridge. I'm buying my way across the bridge. Although I gas up the car so I can make it up and back on one tank. But after we have driven 250 miles I think it's well in keeping with the *spirit*

of the Sabbath if we eat out at a place that is a decent and quite place. I wouldn't recommend going to Applebee's. Their music will drum you into the jungle! *Choose* where you should eat.

- Have the brethren grown in grace and knowledge with all of these trips? *Yes!*
- Do we love each other more because of that? *Yes, sure do!*
- Do you know me better because I come? *Yes!*
- Do I know you better because you come? *Yes!*

I was given advice one time, 'Fred, it's important for you to get out there and see the brethren.' I do, about every month. When I come out, I ask God to bless the trip and bless everything that we do. Bless the teaching and that we have something worthwhile to give to the brethren so that

- they can be spiritually strengthened
- they can face the problems individually
- they can face and conquer the world and overcome
- they can *walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love*

That's mercy! To say that we should now change all of this and say you should buy a meal on the Sabbath, would that become sacrifice? *You need to think on it!*

Romans 14—we have the problem between the meat-eaters and the vegetarians and still have that today. I would have to say with the quality of meats that we have today that vegetarians probably have the greater edge. We'll give you 70% of the argument today.

Romans 14:7: "For no one among us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we should live unto the Lord; and if we die, we should die unto the Lord..." (vs 7-8). That's what we do. Because we purchase a meal here does not mean we forget the Sabbath. Our example is not the lack of purchasing a meal so that we can feed the brethren and fellowship with them in the spirit of love and joy. Our example is our love, our kindness and our goodness that we show the employees who are here. That's our example. Whether we keep the Sabbath or not, they could care less! It means nothing to them!

"...So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (v 8). We could say whether we eat a meal out or whether we don't eat a meal out, we're still the Lord's.

Verse 9: "*It is* for this very purpose *that* Christ both died and rose and is living again, so that He might be Lord over both *the* dead and *the* living. Now then, why do you judge your brother? Or why

do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, because it is written, “For *as* I live,” says *the* Lord, “every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then, each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (vs 9-12).

You can not eat out on the Sabbath and have thoughts which break the Sabbath. Any sinful thought not repented of would break the Sabbath. We can eat out on the Sabbath and still honor, remember and keep the Sabbath and not be in the spirit of buying and selling.

Verse 13: “Therefore, we should no longer judge one another, but judge this instead: Do not put an occasion of stumbling or a cause of offense before your brother.” If I said, ‘All right, we ‘re going to meet in Cincinnati and bring your sack lunch and when we’re done with the first sermon you can go to your cars and eat your lunch and come back at 2 o’clock, because they won’t allow us to bring food in here. That’s why they have the restaurant.’

- How many people would show up?
- How many people would be edified?
- *Probably not very many!*

Verse 14: “I understand and am persuaded by *the* Lord Jesus that nothing *is* common of itself... [that relates to the sacrifice of meat to idols and so forth] ...except to the one who regards anything to be common—to that one *it is* common. But if, because of meat... [this is the meat/vegetarian argument here] ...your brother is offended, you are no longer walking according to love. With your meat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. Therefore, do not let your good be evil spoken of. For the Kingdom of God is not *a matter of* eating and drinking; rather, *it is* righteousness and peace and joy in *the* Holy Spirit” (vs 14-17).

That’s what we need to have on the Sabbath, and that’s what we have on the Sabbath when we’re here. Have we had anything other than that when we have our meetings like this? Have we had anything where God has let it be known to us that to eat a meal like that on the Sabbath is sin? *No!*

Verse 18: “Because the one who serves Christ in these things *is* well pleasing to God and acceptable among men. So then, we should pursue the things of peace and the things that edify one another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of meat. All things *that are lawful are* indeed pure; but *it is* an evil thing for someone to cause an occasion of stumbling through his eating. *It is* better not to eat meat, or drink wine, or *anything else* by which your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak... [Where someone is weak and

offended. I hope this helps clarify this for them.] ...Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Blessed *is* the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But the one who doubts is condemned if he eats because *his eating is* not of faith; for everything that *is* not of faith is sin” (vs 18-23).

So, the one of conscious we can say today cannot eat a meal the way we do, then that’s your conscience. You’re perfectly free to choose it and do that. Those of us who do, we don’t judge you and we don’t condemn you. Don’t judge us and don’t condemn us. I think that’s the only way we can have peace with a split decision.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scripture References:

- 1) Exodus 20:8-11
- 2) Mark 3:1-2, 1-6
- 3) Isaiah 58:13-14
- 4) Isaiah 56:1-4
- 5) Mark 2:23-28
- 6) 1 Corinthians 8:1-8, 10
- 7) Acts 15:1-17
- 8) Matthew 9:10-13
- 9) Romans 14:7-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 16
- Nehemiah 13
- John 8
- Exodus 12
- Romans 2
- Deuteronomy 10
- Acts 10
- Galatians 2

Also referenced:

- Book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- Sermons Series: *The Circumcision Wars*

FRC:bo
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