

“But the Pharisees said to Jesus, “Look, why are they breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath?” Mark 2:24 NLT

## lectio // Mark 2:23-28

The shepherd also protects some sheep from other sheep! Mark tells us exactly what everyone was doing, “His disciples were breaking off heads of grain.” Jesus was with them. And, the teachers of the law were with them as well. I have a couple questions: 1. Who grabbed the first wheat stalk? Was it Peter? James and John, sons of thunder? 2. Why didn't the teachers stop the disciples immediately, why did they ask Jesus? Just wondering. Again, I'm sure there was cultural norms that we are not aware of, but the point of the story comes across clearly. When does a law drift off target and become harmful rather than helpful. We know some of the facts. The Jewish people had developed over a thousand “extended” laws on how to keep the law. And the Sabbath was the most expanded of all the “extra” laws. How does the good shepherd protect sheep from sheep? Even with all the status of rank, respect and deep knowledge, the “teachers” had it wrong - WRONG WRONG! They believed their job was to protect the law, but God never assigned them that job. In fact God does not need anyone to protect him or his law! The “teachers” weren't protecting the law here, they were controlling the law for their own outcomes. But here's the point. Who protects the sheep from being called out for seemingly “breaking” the law, when in fact they were innocent. Who stands up to the “teacher,” the “expert,” the ones with clout and power? The one who knows God, knows his heart, knows his will and the “why” behind the law to be able to not only stands up to the accuser, but uses the situation to model and teach about what God is really like. He doesn't shame the law, he corrects the misuse of it! And in one sentence clears the fog of religiosity - the Sabbath was for people, not the other way around. Folks think that grace is sloppy and ineffective at stopping “sin” and controlling behaviors that are disapproved. This “offense” in those days came with a tax (fine) to be paid to the temple but also came with shame and a “judgmental” eye from the religious superior. Here, grace is not “loose” or ill-defined at all. It was specific - don't misrepresent God or twist God's intent to control people!

Dad,  
I had A LOT of issues in my life, some specific sins, but many just misunderstandings of who you are. I think my stereotypes of who I thought you were was as dangerous as my own sin. As a good father YOU invited me to be disciplined by your love and I learned (often stubbornly) to submit to your will. Your word and your Spirit led me not only know you intimately, but to also know when I had sinned or drifted away from you. Yes, I did have people I respect call me out on several things, but they did it in love and I recognized it. Thank you for protecting me from legalistic sheep that were misrepresenting you.