

Sunday Gathering

Matthew 12:1-14

4/16/23

Matthew 12:1-14 (ESV - English Standard Version)

1At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

2But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

3He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him:

4how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?

5Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?

6I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

7And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

8For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

9He went on from there and entered their synagogue.

10And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse him.

11He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?"

12Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

13Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other.

14But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

1) In Our Consumer Culture, the Sacredness of Rest/Sabbath has Been Lost

Exodus 20:8-11 NIV *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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.”*

Isaiah 58:13-14 NIV *“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 honorable, and if you honor 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.”*

2) Man-Made Rules Are Never Better Than God's Way

The Pharisees were angry that the disciples would be doing any "work" on the Sabbath.

"This vagueness was problematic for legalists. Their thought was, “Well, if God is not going to give more specification than that, we must add our own specifications, careful clarifications of what constitutes ‘work.’” Thus, over time, like blue laws in our country, many additional commandments were created by man to answer every conceivable Sabbath question. And with these invented and uninspired additions, the Sabbath, which was intended to bring freedom and rest to men, “was hedged around with literally thousands of petty rules and regulations” that ironically made much work of not working. What was originally intended to serve as a sign of Israel’s unique role in the history of redemption and honor the absolute holiness of Yahweh (as their God and Creator) mutated into something wholly un-Scriptural.”

Because of the vagueness of what constituted work in the Old Testament, the Pharisees added to the law their own rules and regulations.

"Even the best intentions of the human heart fall short of God's perfect ways."

- **The Pharisees took this beautiful gift from God and turned it into something unrecognizable. So unrecognizable that they miss the God Who gave them this gift as He stands in their midst.**

"Divine devotion without human sympathy is irreligious. It's ungodly. It's unbiblical. Above all God desires mercy. The Sabbath is made for people. The Sabbath is made for people to show mercy to people."

3) Jesus's Response

a. Jesus points to 1 Samuel 21 and the story of David eating the bread of the Presence.

"The priest had a choice to make: should he let common mercy (these people are hungry) and this king's authority (this is after all David) override sacred ritual? What did he do? Seeing David's need and recognizing David's authority, the priest broke the letter of the Law so as to uphold its spirit. He gave David and his men the consecrated bread. And they gladly ate it."

Whats the point?

- Jesus is greater than David and is the true king!
- People matter more than things.
- Jesus is saying if you see a need (hunger/healing) and you decide not to meet it NO MATTER THE DAY then you are missing what is most important to God.
- Jesus points to the priests who work on the Sabbath

c. Jesus quotes Hosea

- **Hosea 6:6 NIV "For I desire mercy not sacrifice."**
- God is not impressed with our devotion if we are overlooking those in need
- God is not impressed with our devotion if we aren't loving His people

d. Jesus reminds the Pharisees of Who He is

- The Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath
- **Daniel 7:14 says the Son of Man, "was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."**

Jesus has all authority and is Lord of the Sabbath

e. Jesus heals

- Over and over and over again throughout the gospels, Jesus chooses to heal people on the Sabbath!
 - On this day of rest, we reflect on God's finished work in creation
 - On this day of rest, we remember our freedom
 - On this day of rest, God goes to His people and heals
 - There isn't a better day for Jesus to heal!
 - The day that Israel hits pause and they stop their toiling and their striving and their working. Jesus steps in and restores.

Maybe the takeaway for us today is that the Sabbath **isn't about keeping a specific day, but more about ending a specific effort**

- That even this morning we can pause and know that we don't have to produce something that only God can provide through the finished work of Jesus on the cross.
- **Romans 5:1-2 NIV "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."**