

Sermon Notes

Luke 6:1-11

“The Lord Jesus and the Sabbath”

A Sermon Series on Rest and the Sabbath

August 25, 2019

Introduction

- 1) We are taking a look at the Sabbath and rest in the Bible and today we are going to study the teachings of the Lord Jesus Himself during His earthly ministry.
- 2) As usual, the words of our Lord are radical, shocking, jarring and comforting, all at the same time.
 - a) With Him things radically change. Luke 1:37; 18:27
 - b) The purpose of all history and creation is summed up in Him. Heb 1:1-2; 1Pet 1:20-21
- 3) Probably the best single text to focus on is Luke 6:1-11, and the parallel sections found in Matthew 12:1-14 and Mark 2:23-3:6.
 - a) Here there are two stories about the Sabbath put together:
 - i) Jesus’s disciples work on the Sabbath, and then Jesus claims to be the Lord of Sabbath. Luke 6:1-5
Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28
 - ii) Jesus heals on the Sabbath, which brings the wrath of the Pharisees. Luke 6:6-11
Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6

Luke 6:1-5

Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28

- 1) The Lord Jesus and His disciples were passing through a grain field on the Sabbath.
 - a) The disciples “*were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.*” Luke 6:1
 - b) The OT Civil Law allows travelers to eat the produce of the fields of others, as long as it is just for that meal. Deut 23:24-25
(Like taking a single apple, instead of pocketing several or harvesting from a tree.)
- 2) Some of the Pharisees become upset.
 - a) In their opinion, the disciples are reaping, threshing, winnowing and preparing food, things which the Pharisees believe are forbidden on the Sabbath.¹
 - b) The Pharisees complain, “*Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?*” Luke 6:2
- 3) Jesus' answer to their complaint is fascinating and very instructive.
 - a) He doesn't complain about them being legalistic.
 - i) Ex: “*Those rules don't fit with this modern age; you need to get with the times.*”
 - ii) That would simply be ungodly and irrational.
 - b) He doesn't get into some technical quibbling debate.
 - i) Ex: “*The disciples weren't using tools, so it wasn't technically work.*”
 - ii) This actually is a later ruling according to Jewish tradition.

¹ See: Mishnah Tractate Shabbat 7:2 for a list of 39 things Jews believe are forbidden on the Sabbath. The Mishnah is the first major collection of the Jewish oral law. It was created in the 3rd century AD. (Note, after Christ!)

iii) As Jesus would say of the Pharisees: *"You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"* Matt 23:24

c) Instead our Lord gives two reasons . . .

4) First, He argues from Scripture.

a) He states, *"Have you not even read . . ."* Luke 6:3

i) He frequently would use the phrase "have you not read" and then quotes the Bible.²

ii) This is to affirm the biblical teaching that Scripture has the final authority.

iii) Jesus is a fundamentalist when it comes to the Bible.

iv) When the Bible speaks, God speaks.³

b) In this text, Jesus refers to a time when David was fleeing from the evil king Saul and took the showbread which was only for the priests. 1Sam 21:1-6; Lev 24:8-9;

i) On the surface this seems like a rather nitpicky passage to cite to refute the clarity of the Law which forbids all work on the Sabbath.

ii) The 1Samuel text simply states David's action and doesn't comment on its violation of the Law, thus giving tacit approval to it.

iii) The focus, however, isn't on what David did, as if Jesus was saying, "David did it, so can anybody."

iv) Rather, that it's David, the future great king, who worked on the Sabbath.

v) By referring to this story in 1Samuel Jesus is implying that He is both the Great King from the line of David, and the High Priest, which is only possible with the Messiah, the Son of God. Ps 2; 110; Is 9:6-7; Matt 1:1,16-17; 16:13-16; Heb 2:17; 4:14-5:10

c) The radical nature of this claim is seen in Christ's second argument.

5) Next, Christ states He has authority over the Sabbath.

a) Luke 6:5 reads: *"And He was saying to them, 'The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.'"*

b) This is a blasphemous statement, unless the one speaking is God.

i) The Sabbath is the 4th Commandment of the Ten, the only part of the Law spoken by God directly to His people. Ex 19:1ff; Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15

ii) To be Lord of the Sabbath means you are God.

c) The text in Mark adds an additional piece of important information.

i) Mark 2:27-28 – *"Jesus said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.'"*

² For "have you not read" see: Matt 12:3,5; 19:4; 21:16; 22:31; Mark 2:25; 12:10,26; Luke 6:3.

For the similar, "it is written" see: Matt 2:5; 4:4,6,7,10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24; Mark 1:2; 7:6; 9:12-13; 11:17; 14:21,27; Luke 2:23; 3:4; 4:4,8,10,17; 7:27; 10:26; 18:31; 19:46; 20:17; 21:22; 22:37; 24:44-46; John 2:17; 6:31,45; 8:17; 10:34; 12:14,16; 15:25.

³ See: Ex 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:1; Deut 9:10; Ps 119; Mark 7:1-13; Matt 2:5; 4:4,6,7,10; 11:10; 21:13; 22:31; 26:24; Luke 24:44-46; John 5:39-47; 20:30-31; Acts 17:10-11; Rom 9:25; 15:4; 1Cor 1:31; 3:19-20; 4:6; 14:37; 2Tim 3:14-4:6; 2Pet 1:19-21; 3:15-16; 1John 4:6.

- ii) The creation of man is more important than the Sabbath.
 - Since man, and not the Sabbath, is in the image of God. Gen 1:26-27
 - The Sabbath has been given to us, we have not been given to the Sabbath.
- iii) This strongly implies that at least some parts of the Sabbath are Civil/Ceremonial.
 - The Civil/Ceremonial laws are those part of the Law that apply only to ancient Israel, especially the political and sacrificial laws that are now fulfilled in Christ. Rom 14:1ff
Col 2:16-17
Gal 3:1ff; Heb 8-10
 - This avoids the sin of legalism (earning one's righteousness through the Law).
- iv) However, the Lord Jesus is still Lord of the Sabbath.
 - Our rest is now to be found in Him. Matt 11:28-29; Heb 3-4
 - And we are called to diligently enter into His rest (through receiving the Gospel). Heb 4:11ff
 - This avoids the sin of licentiousness (that we can do anything we want.)
- v) Note also our Lord's use of the title "Son of Man."
 - Yes, Jesus is of course "Son of God." Mark 1:1; Matt 4:3-6; John 1:34
The only begotten Son of God, John 1:14,18; Col 2:9-10
unlike we who are adopted. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5
 - However, the favorite phrase He used to describe Himself is "Son of Man."
It shows His purpose, to die for us men/humanity. John 12:27
It also shows His affinity with us. Heb 2:17-18; 4:15-16

Luke 6:6-11

Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6

- 1) To emphasize that Christ is Lord and the Son of Man, the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke) then tell of Jesus healing on the Sabbath.
 - a) The Lord Jesus enters a synagogue and teaches on the Sabbath. This is normal. Luke 6:1
Adult males over 30 were allowed to speak during the service.
 - b) "They" asked Him, "*is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?*" Matt 12:9
 - c) The "*scribes and the Pharisees were watching closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him.*" Luke 6:7b
 - d) Jesus "knew what they were thinking" yet still calls the man forward. Luke 6:8
 - e) Jesus states, "*I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?*" Luke 6:9
 - f) Matthew adds, "*What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.*" Matt 12:11b-12
 - g) Jesus then heals the man, which enrages the Pharisees who "*went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.*" Luke 6:10-11
Matt 12:14

- 2) Much more is going on here than allowing healing on the Sabbath.
- a) According to Jewish tradition, emergency medical work to save a life, helping a baby to be born, and/or performing circumcision was allowed on the Sabbath. So too could be saving one's cattle. John 7:22-23
Luke 14:5
 - b) The fact that this healing wasn't urgent would, according to the Pharisees, violate the Law.
- 3) This text illustrates several things:
- a) First, God is compassionate, merciful and loving through His Son. As Christ is loving, so should we be.
 - b) It shows that Jesus has the power to heal, something Pharisees could not do.
 - c) This shows Christ's lordship; He truly is the Lord of Sabbath, i.e. God incarnate.
 - d) This points to the fact He can truly heal us, and much more than mere physical ailments. We are regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified by His work on the cross.
 - e) The real problem is the hardness of the fallen heart, as shown by the Pharisees. They are far more crippled than the man with a withered hand.
 - f) Therefore our rest must be in Christ.

Conclusion

- 1) Yes, there are a great many travails in this life.
 - a) And the Lord has been merciful: He has given us the Church, our family, friends, doctors, policemen, firemen, etc., to aid us.
 - b) However, our rest is to be found only in Him.
- 2) The Lord Jesus has freed us from the demands/curses of God's perfect Law.
- 3) This freedom is not for licentiousness, but that we can find our rest in Him.
- 4) This rest is first and foremost that we rest from trying to earn our righteousness by our good works and rest in His perfect righteousness imputed/credited to us by faith alone in Him.
 - a) This rest is a lifelong striving to diligently enter His rest. Heb 3-4
 - b) You receive this rest by receiving the Gospel, which is given on the Lord's Day through preaching and the giving of the Sacraments.
- 5) This rest is perfect because it is from Christ, who is God incarnate, the Lord of the Sabbath.
- 6) **Matthew 11:25-30**

At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Appendix

Other Texts About Jesus' Teaching about the Sabbath

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| 1) Warned to pray that the Great Tribulation wouldn't happen on a Sabbath. | Matt 24:20 |
| 2) Taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath. | Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:16; 13:10 |
| 3) Healed a woman who was sick for 18 years "caused by a spirit," and mocked by hypocritical synagogue officials. | Luke 13:10-16 |
| 4) Healed a man of the dropsy while stating it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath. | Luke 14:1-6 |
| 5) Jesus commands a blind lame man He healed to carry his pallet, this brings persecution from the Jews. | John 5:1-16 |
| 6) Jesus defends His healing on the Sabbath because it is lawful to circumcise on the Sabbath. | John 7:21-23 |
| 7) Jesus heals a blind man on the Sabbath, which brings the wrath of the Pharisees. | John 9:14-16 |
| 8) Because Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath that means He claims to be God's only Son, and thus equal with the Father. | John 5:16-24 |

Texts About Jesus and the Sabbath from the Gospels

Matthew 12:1-14

Matthew 24:20

Matthew 28:1

Mark 1:21

Mark 2:23-3:6

Mark 6:2

Mark 15:42

Mark 16:1

Luke 4:16

Luke 6:1-11

Luke 13:10

Luke 13:14-16

Luke 14:1-6

Luke 23:54-56

John 5:9-18

John 7:22-23

John 9:14-16

John 19:31

Matthew 12:1-8,9-14

- 1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.
- 2 But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath."
- 3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions,
- 4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?
- 5 Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?
- 6 But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.
- 7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.
- 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."
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- 9 Departing from there, He went into their synagogue.
- 10 And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him.
- 11 And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?
- 12 How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."
- 13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.
- 14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

Mark 2:23-28,3:1-6

- 23 And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.
- 24 The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"
- 25 And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;
- 26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"
- 27 Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.
- 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."
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- 1 He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.
- 2 They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.
- 3 He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!"
- 4 And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.
- 5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.
- 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

Luke 6:1-5,6-11

- 1 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.
- 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"
- 3 And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him,
- 4 how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?"
- 5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."
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- 6 On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.
- 7 The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him.
- 8 But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward.
- 9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"
- 10 After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was restored.
- 11 But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

