

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 30TH-31ST, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

RESTING (MATTHEW 12:1-8)

A RELIGIOUS TRUMP CARD

Keeping the Sabbath (sunset Friday- sunset Saturday) was a big deal to Jewish leaders, though they'd forgotten the intentions behind it. The "rest day" had become a legalistic barometer of how good of a person one was.

- **Though corporate worship is extremely important, just attending service doesn't make one righteous.**

"JESUS PASSED THROUGH...ON THE SABBATH"

One Sabbath, the Pharisees saw Jesus and His disciples passing through fields picking grain because they were hungry (Deut. 23). The Pharisees considered this working, therefore breaking Sabbath.

- A rabbi was responsible for his students, so they accused Jesus of being a bad teacher.

SO, LET'S GO BACK TO THE BIBLE

Instead of getting into a petty argument, Jesus simply goes back to the scripture. Jesus reminded the religious leaders about 1 Sam. 21 when David fed people on the Sabbath to show them mercy.

- **When we have theological disagreements, we have to go to the authority for the true believer, the Bible.**

"...BUT ONLY FOR THE PRIESTS?"

Lev. 24 tells us that priests were allowed to work on the Sabbath in order to eat and help others be able to worship. Jesus asks the Pharisees why they can get around their version of the Sabbath but others cannot.

- Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 for the second time reminding the religious people that **mercy is the bedrock of ministry.**

"...SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE IS HERE."

Jesus is calling the Pharisees to use common sense. Though the Sabbath is commanded and vital, we are also to take care of our bodies and minds.

- Practically speaking, this means **it's ok to shop and work on the weekends. The point is to be close to Christ, not just a "holy day."**

BALANCE, BALANCE, BALANCE

Let's use scripture and common sense. **The Bible is clear that we're to gather together (Heb. 10:25).** Church is vitally important, but we also know some people have weekend jobs and other obligations at times.

- This means **we should worship as much as possible, but show grace when people have other obligations.**

SABBATH IS A LIFESTYLE, NOT A DAY

The point of the Sabbath was to bring us closer to God as we rest. It is less about a particular day and more about the state of the heart. **We are to take time, rest, read the Bible, worship, and pray.**

- **Sabbath isn't Netflix and hangout time, it is intentional time to grow in intimacy with our Creator.**

MERCY (MATTHEW 12:9-14)

"MOVING ON...HE ENTERED THEIR SYNAGOGUE."

Jesus intentionally moved from the fields to the Pharisees' home turf. While there, a man with a withered hand that was probably planted by the leaders, approached Jesus for healing.

- The Pharisees had resorted to trying to trap Jesus into doing more "work" on the Sabbath. Before healing the man, Christ goes back to the Word.

THE POINT OF SABBATH

Jesus goes back to the heart of the Sabbath. **For the minister, it's to help "lift out sheep" that have fallen into a pit (sin). For the believer, it's a time of worship, rest, and reflection.**

- Healing was beneficial for both sides, therefore permitted on Sabbath. So, Jesus tells the man, "Stretch out your hand."

SEEING, BUT REFUSING TO BELIEVE

In spite of such power and authority in the healing of the man with the withered hand, the Pharisees still didn't believe. **Many people are blinded by their preconceived notions and selfish desires. We want a Savior, not a Lord, healing without accountability, our desires, not the desires of our Maker.**

IF WE CAN'T CONTROL, WE WILL KILL

Since the Pharisees couldn't control Jesus, they decided to kill Him.

- We do this as well! **If we can't have faith on our terms, we remove the biblical Christ and replace Him with one of our own design. We must decide what Jesus we want; our manufactured idea, or the true Christ.**

QUIETLY (MATTHEW 12:15-21)

"JESUS WAS AWARE OF THIS AND WITHDREW."

The opposition from the Pharisees was growing, and to ensure His mission was carried out, Jesus avoided further conflict for awhile.

- Jesus wasn't afraid, but knew that the arguments would only detract Him and the 12 from ministering to the people.

MANY FOLLOWED AND HE HEALED THEM

The decreasing trust in the religious leaders along with Jesus' healing and teaching led many to follow Him. Jesus told people to not "make Him known" because His ministry wasn't a show. Jesus truly cared for people. **Jesus did ministry with humility. Can we say the same about the Christian leaders of today?**

THE MESSIAH-KING

Jesus was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that Matt quotes in v18-21. Jesus didn't come as a politician or military leader as expected, and that is why so many people rejected Him.

- **Jesus came as a humble servant that would suffer for mankind. Through unconventional means He would bring justice and set the captives free.**

JESUS STUCK WITH THE MISSION

Jesus didn't waste time "arguing and shouting in the streets," He taught of the kingdom, healed, and saved. He wasn't here to win an argument, Jesus was here to lead "justice to victory."

- **Christians aren't called to win debates, we are called to teach and demonstrate the Kingdom of God.**

UNFORGIVABLE (MATTHEW 12:22-32)

JESUS GOES ON THE OFFENSIVE

Until this point, Jesus has reacted to the opposition. Now, Jesus goes straight at the hypocritical religious leaders.

- The restoration of a demon-possessed man that couldn't see or speak would serve as a catalyst for Jesus to call out the audacity and corruption of the Pharisees.

"COULD THIS BE THE SON OF DAVID?"

After the healing, the people watching started to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. This outraged the Pharisees and they quickly announced that Jesus "drives out demons only by Beelzebul..."

- The Pharisees couldn't deny the act, so they attributed it to Jesus being Satan's false messiah.

THE LOGICAL SIDE OF SPIRITUALITY

"Knowing their thoughts" Jesus addressed the illogical side of the Pharisees' argument. Jesus said that it is impossible for a divided house to stand. "If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself."

- **We often forget the logical side of faith. God fully intends for us to use our minds while we put our faith in Him.**

"...BY WHOM DO YOUR SONS DRIVE HIM OUT?"

Jesus also turns the table on them. He asks how the Pharisees can drive out demons. Basically, Jesus could use their argument against them. The point was that if it made no sense for Satan to cast out Satan, it must be the work of God through the real Messiah.

BINDING THE "STRONG MAN"

Jesus asks how one can enter a strong man's house (Satan) and "steal his possessions unless He first ties up the strong man?" This is a reference to Jesus' power to overcome Satan and save souls from the clutches of Hell. **At the core of Christianity must be the belief that God can deliver us.**

THERE IS NO NEUTRAL GROUND

Jesus eliminates all possibility of people remaining indifferent to Him. He plainly states that "Anyone who is not with Me is against Me."

- **Those that choose to follow Christ will be forgiven of "every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven."**

IF WE KNOWINGLY SIN, IT GETS WORSE

Jesus says if we speak against Him it can be forgiven, but to speak "against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven." To speak against the Spirit means one has knowledge, but rejects it.

- **Are we so arrogant and foolish to know the commands of God yet still push against them? This kind of arrogance leads to a reprobate mind.**
- James 4:17 CSB / Romans 1:28 CSB

PERSONAL INVENTORY

Do we observe a proper Sabbath? **Do we intentionally rest, read, pray, reflect, and worship consistently?** Do we have a biblical perception of Jesus? Do we want to discover the real Jesus? Under whose terms do we build our faith? What is the focus of our faith, us or God? Do we follow the model of Jesus when it comes to dealing with opposition? **Are we humble servants that strive to love people or do we just want to win debates? Have we addressed and truly repented for the sin in our lives?** Have we become willingly negligent to Christ's commands? Does it bother us?