



SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM

Sermon: "Jesus Honours the Sabbath and the Pharisees Don't" (Matthew 12:1-8)

Date: **February 16, 2020**

We are in a new chapter this week as we continue our series through the Gospel of Matthew. In Matthew 11, Jesus defended the ministry of John the Baptist and contrasted him with the soft, effete generation of their day. Chapter 11 finished with a prayer that spoke of both the sovereignty of God and the open invitation that Christ offers to all who would come to him for rest. In this week's text, Jesus' disciples pluck heads of grain for food on the Sabbath. The Pharisees rebuke Jesus and his disciples for this. In response, Jesus defends himself and demonstrates his superior understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures. As we study this narrative, we will see the importance of using Scripture alone as our basis to evaluate things. Scripture is our standard. If our conservatism focuses on conserving something that is unscriptural, then we're wrong. The Pharisees were wrong to place demands on people that went beyond Scripture's demands. Scripture *alone* must be our standard. Anything else breeds legalism.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read Matthew 12:1-8 and ensure that you've listened to Sunday's sermon.
 - a. What is the allegation that the Pharisees make against Jesus and his disciples in verses 1-2? How do Exodus 20:8-11 and Exodus 16:23 give some context to this allegation?
 - b. Why is this allegation so serious? What are the Pharisees suggesting when they accuse Jesus and his disciples of doing something unlawful on the Sabbath?
 - c. Compare and contrast what Jesus says about his "burden" in Matthew 11:28-30 with what the Pharisees have done with the Sabbath.
 - d. Some believe that Jesus is breaking the Sabbath here and thus is teaching us that it's okay to break the Sabbath. Is that what Jesus is doing in this text? Why or why not?
 - e. Summarize how Jesus defends himself in verses 3-8 from the blasphemous attacks of the Pharisees.



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- f. What does Jesus mean when he says, “something greater than the temple is here,” in verse 6?
- g. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 in verse 7. What do we learn about the purpose of the law from Jesus’ use of Hosea 6:6?
- h. In verse 8, Jesus concludes his defense by contending that “the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.” What does this mean and how does this put the Pharisees in their place?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. How would you define the term “legalism”? How are the Pharisees guilty of legalism in this text? How can we determine whether or not a standard that someone places on us is legalistic or not?
3. Twice in this text Jesus said, “Have you not read?” to the Pharisees (v. 3, 5). Why is this significant? What does this teach us about the priority of using Scripture to evaluating standards and traditions?
4. Most people have various traditions that they uphold related to their faith and worship. How can certain traditions be helpful to our walk with Christ? How can traditions be hurtful to our walk with Christ? Give examples of both.
5. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 in verse 7. What does this verse teach us about the purpose of the law? How does this principle justify something like what occurred in Exodus 1:15-21 or what occurred during World War II when some would hide Jews in their homes and lie about it to Nazi soldiers? How does this principle affect the way we think about something like pacifism/nonresistance?
6. If someone came to our church from a legalistic background and still thought it necessary to live according to the unscriptural demands and traditions placed on them by their previous church, how would you counsel them? How would you speak the gospel of grace into their situation?