

Shabbat: rest for the faithful and a burden for others. Matthew 12:1-32

If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure, and speaking your own word, then you will take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth. Isaiah 58:13-14

How did Jesus interpret Sabbath obligations?

- The Sabbath challenge of the Pharisees, v.1-2.
 - Judging the disciples, “behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. _____
 - Over interpreting Lev. 23:3-8. _____
 - The Talmud: 39 categories of work that cannot be performed, including “cutting,” and the “tree climbing” prohibition. _____
- Jesus’ answer, v.3-8.
 - Example of David, and the priestly exemption. _____
 - *Something greater than the temple is here.* _____
 - Hosea 6:6. _____
- Another Sabbath test by the Pharisees, v.8-10.
 - “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? _____
 - The Hebrew word for work means any creative or generative endeavor. _____
 - Therefore, even “good” is prohibited if it is “work.” _____
- Jesus responds again, v.11-13.
 - *Will you not rescue an endangered sheep?* _____
 - *And, of how much more value is a man than a sheep?* _____
 - Therefore, *it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.* _____

(So, the nasty Pharisees left to plot against him)
- Disturbed, but undaunted, Jesus continues his “work,” v.15-21.
 - He healed all who followed him. _____

In verses 18-21, Matthew refers us to one of the great Messianic quotes from Isaiah 42:1-4, which proclaims Jesus as the one on

whom God bestows his Spirit, and sets the stage for the next response by Jesus to the Pharisee’s challenge.

One final insult from the Pharisees, and one final rebuke.

- Jesus heals a blind and speechless man who was also demon-possessed, v.22-24.
 - The crowd, amazed, speaks rhetorically “this man cannot be the Son of David, can he? _____
 - The Pharisees, on the other hand, accuse him of being the son of the Devil. _____
- The first part of Jesus’ response speaks from impeccable logic.
 - *Can a kingdom, city, or household survive if divided against itself?* _____
 - *If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?* _____
 - **But**, *if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom is upon you.* _____
- Now the real sting in his answer.
 - *If you are not with me you are against me. You can babble on about me, and you shall still be forgiven.* _____
 - **But**, if you speak arrogance and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, *it shall not be forgiven, either in this age, or the age to come.* _____
 - These are harsh and frightening words, yet speak to an arrogance of the human heart that will not repent, and resists any influence of the Holy Spirit. _____

Avoiding Pharisee-ism in the church today

Three classical mistakes

1. Making God subject to the law he created for mankind. _____
2. “One-upping” God by over-interpreting the law. _____
3. The big one, judging God. _____

Errors in contemporary Christian thought

1. Anthrocentrism: *God is like us.* _____
2. Legalism, despite all the warnings. _____
3. Solipsism: _____

A final warning to Pharisees: careful who you call the enemy.