

# Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

## The Authority of Jesus Over the Sabbath

**Scripture:** Matthew 12:1-14

**Sermon Series:** Matthew

### Introduction

As we continue to follow Jesus through Matthew's Gospel, he is becoming increasingly more offensive to the religious leaders of his day and increasingly more direct about his true identity. This chapter reveals a deepening of the hatred of Jesus by his enemies. For the first time in this Gospel we will learn that they begin active plans to murder him.

Nevertheless, Matthew continues to lay before us the astonishing authority of Jesus. Does Jesus possess an authority higher than the temple and even higher than the Sabbath itself? Jesus claims to be "Lord of the Sabbath." Could this be true? Or is Jesus out of his mind?



The implicit question continues to be, *Will you humbly and willingly submit to Jesus as almighty Lord of all or will you stubbornly reject him as the looniest lunatic of all?*

### Review

Last week Chris led us through these incredibly—breathtaking even—authoritative claims of Jesus.

**Matthew 11:27 (ESV)** "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, ...and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

So, Jesus, this raises questions for us. God gave *you* all his authority? And it's not possible for a person to know God apart from *you*? And knowing God is ultimately *your* decision? Really? I thought you were a carpenter from Nazareth? How'd you get to be so buddy-buddy with God? Since when were *you* appointed God's righthand man? Is this a little hyperbolae? Or a little sarcasm? Or do you actually mean this?

**Matthew 11:28-29 (ESV)** <sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> ... rest for your souls."

So, Jesus, we should go to *you* if we need spiritual rest? Are you saying that you want us who are overburdened to come to *you*? Are you saying that you are inviting those of us who struggle with fear and anxiety to come to *you* and you will give us rest? Are *you* so full of spiritual rest that you have a sufficient supply to spare to give to *all* who would come to you? I don't know if you know it or not, but there's a lot of us who heavily stressed, heavily worried, heavily anxious, and heavily burdened in this room and in the world today? Are you really authorized to do what you're saying? *How can we know that you can give us rest for our souls?*

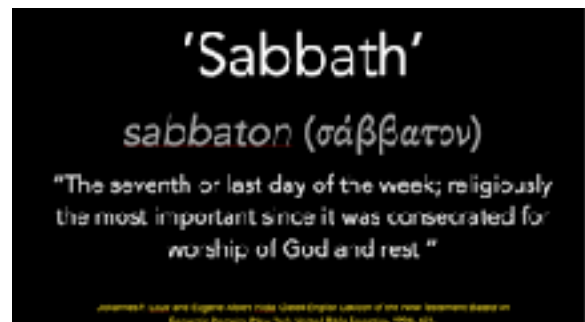
Jesus: "Because I am the Lord of rest."

This is what the next section, 12:1-14, is about. *Jesus proves that he is the true source of spiritual rest by demonstrating his lordship over the Sabbath*, which is the day of rest. Matthew takes us through grain fields and a synagogue to help us see *Jesus as the almighty Lord of rest*. *Rest* is the connecting idea that bridges between the end of chapter 11 and the beginning of 12. Notice the first verse.

**Matthew 12:1 (ESV)** At 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.

## What is the Sabbath?

Matthew opens this new section with something that Jesus did on the *Sabbath*. Why does he do this? Because Sabbath (*sabbaton* *σάββατον*) is the day of worship and *rest*.



## The Significance of the Sabbath

The significance of the Sabbath is seen in at least four ways.

1. **Regular reminder of the rhythm of Creation.** The Sabbath serves as a weekly reminder of who created this world and how it was created.
  - **Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in

six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

- "Holy" here does not mean sinless, but rather 'set apart by God for God.' The sabbath rest of the seventh day was a regular reminder that God created this world and he rested after he finished his work. Thus, he commanded Israel to follow his example and work six days then stop working and rest on the seventh day. As God the Father did, so Israel was to do so that every week they would be reminded of his power and blessing.
2. **Unique sign of God's Covenant with Israel.** The practice of keeping the sabbath made Israel distinct from all other nations.
    - **Exodus 31:16-17 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> "Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. <sup>17</sup> It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel..."
    - God made no such covenant with nor gave any such sign to any other nation of people on this planet. The sabbath was a *unique marker* of the special relationship that existed between God and the people of Israel.
  3. **Reminder that holiness comes from God alone.** In other words, we cannot work our way into heaven or earn salvation ourselves.
    - **Exodus 31:13 (ESV)** "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.'"
    - The language of God here emphasizes that the Sabbath was the most important of all commandments he had given to Israel. Not only was it a sign of the covenant God made with Israel, but the sabbath was also "*so that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.*" *True holiness comes from the only One who is holy and that is God alone. "Salvation belongs to the Lord"* (Ps 3:8; Jon 2:9; Rev 7:10). The Sabbath is a day of no work, which teaches us that there is no work we can do to effect (i.e. earn) our own salvation. No human being can work his way into God's kingdom. Resting on the Sabbath is a reminder that we must trust in the work of God if we are to enjoy communion with God. When we cannot work, we trust in God to work for us. "*I, the LORD, sanctify you.*" We do not sanctify ourselves. Ultimately we cannot make ourselves holy. Only God is holy and thus true holiness comes only from him and not us.
  4. **Regular reminder of the future heavenly rest.** The temporary Sabbath rest on earth points to the eternal rest of God in heaven.
    - **Hebrews 4:9-11 (ESV)** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God... Let us strive to enter to that rest...
    - The rest of God is fully manifested in heaven. Jesus is today *seated* at God's right hand, enjoying the heavenly rest. His labor is complete. His saving, redemptive work is finished.

While hanging on the cross, Jesus said, "*It is finished.*"<sup>1</sup> He now rests from his redemptive work in God's presence. Thus, heaven is a place of peace and rest. (Not inactivity, for much is happening in heaven, but it is a place of peace and rest.) There is no burdensome labor or harsh and heavy work in heaven.

### **Summary: Sabbath Blessing**

Thus, the Sabbath was a gracious gift from God to man on which to worship God and rest from all labor and work. The Sabbath day was a rest from work because on that day God rested from his work of creation. It was a day that God chose to mark as unique sign of his covenant love relationship between himself and Israel. It was a reminder of God's saving and sanctifying work. And it was a present pointer to the eternal rest of heaven.

### **Rabbi's Made Sabbath a Burden**

However, what God intended as a day of rest, worship, and blessing, by the time of Jesus, had become nothing but a heavy burden. Indeed it had become almost unbearable. God had given only a few specific instructions related to the observance of the Sabbath, which most simply was to cease from doing the work you ordinarily do on the other six days, including you, your servants, and your animals. Everyone was stop work in order to rest and worship. Over the course of time, the rabbis began to define exactly what "work" meant and in so doing they had heaped up a ton of unbearable rules and regulations.

## Lord in the Grainfields

We see the heaviness of this burden as Matthew takes us into the grain fields where the Pharisees condemn Jesus' disciples for eating breakfast. While the Pharisees are condemning, Jesus will show compassion and authority. Matthew leads us into the grain fields to begin to show us that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.

**Matthew 12:1-2 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> At 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. <sup>2</sup> But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

What!? Eating grain is not lawful on the Sabbath? Yes, according to the definition of 'work' by the rabbis, *reaping*, *threshing*, and *harvesting* was prohibited on the Sabbath because it was work. In the eyes of the Pharisees, what the disciples were doing was unlawful work; plucking, crushing the head, sifting the husk from the grain, and eating, all qualified as 'work.' Thus, in their eyes, the disciples were working and doing what was "*not lawful to do on the Sabbath.*"

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<sup>1</sup> John 19:30.

## The Heavy Burden of Sabbath Regulations

The rabbis had come up with rules and regulations that covered every area of life.

### Prohibited Acts of Labor<sup>2</sup>

1. Sewing
2. Ploughing
3. Reaping
4. Binding sheaves
5. Threshing wheat
6. Winnowing
7. Sorting crops (i.e. the good from the bad)
8. Grinding
9. Sifting
10. Kneading (bread)
11. Baking
12. Shearing wool
13. Washing wool
14. Beating wool
15. Dying wool
16. Spinning cloth
17. Weaving cloth
18. Making two loops
19. Weaving two threads
20. Separating two threads
21. Tying
22. Untying
23. Sewing two stitches
24. Tearing in order to sew stitches
25. Trapping an animal
26. Killing an animal
27. Flaying an animal
28. Salting it's meat
29. Curing animal hide
30. Scraping animal skin
31. Cutting animal skin
32. Writing more than two letters (i.e. alphabetical)
33. Erasing letters
34. Building
35. Tearing down
36. Putting out a fire
37. Starting a fire
38. Hitting anything with a hammer
39. Carrying an object from a private domain to public

### Various Prohibitions<sup>3</sup>

1. Getting a haircut
2. A tailor could not carry a needle (he might be tempted to sew, thus doing work)
3. A scribe could not carry a pen (lest he do his work of writing)
4. Buying
5. Selling
6. Getting a Gentile to do anything that is forbidden for a Jew to do
7. A man cannot dress for battle, put on sword, armor, etc.
8. Clip fingernails
9. Pull out hair (either for grooming or getting rid of the gray)
10. Many regulations concerns animals...

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<sup>2</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah : A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 187.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah : A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 178–179.

#### Food Preparation Regulations<sup>4</sup>

Cooking is not allowed on Sabbath, so great preparations are required beforehand.

1. No squeezing fruit
2. No mashing fruit or vegetables,
3. No boiling
4. No roasting
5. No frying
6. No baking
7. No removing of bones from fish
8. No use of gas or electric stove or oven unless it is turned on and left on and not adjusted at all; you can use an oven to keep things warm, but if the fan is triggered by opening the oven door, then you can't use it.
9. No adding salt, spices, or liquid (if you want to add, then must do it before sabbath)
10. The list goes on and on...

#### Prohibited Movement<sup>5</sup>

Cannot be moved directly (with the hand) or indirectly (with an other object, like a broom), but can be moved with teeth, elbow, or by blowing:

1. Stones
2. Plants
3. Flowers in a vase
4. Raw food (i.e. beans)
5. Broken objects that are no longer useful: Buttons, bowl, etc. If you drop a glass bowl on sabbath, you cannot sweep up the broken pieces.
6. Any valuable object (decorations, important documents: passports, etc.)
7. Tools
8. Driving or riding in car or other vehicle (including bike, skateboard, rollerblades, scooter, etc)
9. Shopping
10. Using telephone
11. Turning on or off anything that uses electricity: lights, radio, TV, computer, air-conditioner, etc. Lights that you need on the sabbath must be turned on *before* the sabbath (18 minutes before sundown<sup>6</sup>) and left on until after, or else have it on a timer so that it automatically comes on or off, but they must be set before the sabbath not during the sabbath. Refrigerator can be used, but it must be on before

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<sup>4</sup> Source: [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/95914/jewish/Food-Preparation-on-Shabbat.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/95914/jewish/Food-Preparation-on-Shabbat.htm) accessed 24 February 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Source: [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/95907/jewish/The-Shabbat-Laws.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/95907/jewish/The-Shabbat-Laws.htm) accessed 24 February 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Source: [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/4541260/jewish/25-Shabbat-Facts-Every-Jew-Should-Know.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4541260/jewish/25-Shabbat-Facts-Every-Jew-Should-Know.htm) accessed 24 February 2024.

- the sabbath, but you must unscrew the lightbulb so it does not come on when you open the door.
12. Gardening, mowing grass
  13. Doing laundry
  14. No walking more than 3,000 feet, no walking in a straight line more than about six tenths of a mile in any direction outside your city limits. However, if there are contiguous houses along the way you can keep going.
  15. "This can be complex, and a rabbi should be consulted before planning a long trek."<sup>7</sup>

The lists of regulations literally goes on and on. The Mishnah contains pages and pages totaling 24 chapters of Sabbath regulations from every topic imaginable and even some that are unimaginable. The rabbis took God's single command to "rest from your usual daily work" and turned it into hundreds of particular do's and don'ts, which robbed the people of the very rest the Sabbath was supposed to bring. This is what Jesus was referring to when he said that the scribes and Pharisees are those who,

**Matthew 23:4** (ESV) They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

All these rules and regulations regarding the Sabbath required so much advance planning and preparation that it could easily take two to three days to get ready so as not to violate any of the rules. Or by the time Sabbath arrived, after all the work of preparing not to do any work, one is likely so exhausted that it takes one whole day to recover. So perhaps it wasn't difficult to keep the Sabbath at all—so long as you don't eat or move.

## Defending Hungry Disciples

But eating was exactly what the disciples need to do on this Sabbath morning. And eating was what the Pharisees were condemning them for. The Pharisees are demonstrating absolutely no concern for the basic needs of their fellow Israelites. They are pretending to be righteous, but actually exposing the evil of their hearts. Jesus defends his disciples. They were not "reaping." Besides God's law allowed people to eat grain when hungry so long as they did not pull out a sickle and start storing it up for later (See Dt 23:24-25). The disciples were not breaking the law.

## Three Reasons the Pharisees Were Wrong

Jesus now offers three reasons why the Pharisees are wrong.

**1) David did what was unlawful on the Sabbath and he was not condemned.** Jesus illustrates his point from the life of David when he was hungry and ate unlawfully on the Sabbath.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/484235/jewish/How-far-am-I-allowed-to-walk-on-Shabbat.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/484235/jewish/How-far-am-I-allowed-to-walk-on-Shabbat.htm) accessed 24 February 2024.

**Matthew 12:3-4** (ESV) He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> how 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?"

Religious rules are never more important than the real need of real people. This truth would be understood if the Pharisees had rightly read their Bible.

- In this instance, David was on the run from Saul, who was trying to kill David (1 Sam 21:1-6). In fleeing for his life, David had no time to pack a lunch. He was needy and hungry and he sought relief and help from the priests at the tabernacle (which was then at the city of Nob).
- The **bread of Presence**, was the twelve loaves of bread—representing the twelve tribes of Israel—that were made fresh each Sabbath<sup>8</sup> and placed on the golden table in front of the Holy of Holies, which is where the Presence of God was.
- Evidently David arrived on the Sabbath<sup>9</sup> since the only bread the priest had to give to David was the bread of the Presence, which was made fresh and replaced each Sabbath.
- This holy bread could only be lawfully eaten by the priests.<sup>10</sup> David was not a priest, thus he could not lawfully eat it. However, he and those who were with him had no other means of provision, thus the priest gave them this bread. In doing so, the priest and David both did what was unlawful, and yet the Scripture records no condemnation of either David or the priest.

Thus, Jesus concludes, that the priest was right in feeding David and his friends with the holy bread rather than strictly adhering to letter of the law. It was more in accord with the Spirit of God's law to (unlawfully) feed hungry people with the extra holy bread than it was to (lawfully) give that bread to priests only. Thus, *it is not unlawful on the Sabbath to feed hungry people.*

The Pharisees upheld David as an anointed prophet and deliverer. None of them condemned him for his unlawful eating on the Sabbath, and thus why would they condemn these hungry disciples, who did not break God's law, for eating.

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<sup>8</sup> Leviticus 24:8-9; 1 Chronicles 9:32.

<sup>9</sup> David's language indicates that this day was perhaps a holy day ("...the vessels of the young men are holy when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today..." 1 Samuel 21:5), the bread could only be eaten after being removed, which took place on the Sabbath, and Doeg was there that day "detained before the LORD," probably because he could not travel on the Sabbath day. See also D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 280 and Eduard Lohse, "Σάββατον, Σαββατισμός, Παρασκευή," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 22.

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 24:5-9.



**2) Priests do unlawful work on the Sabbath and they are not condemned.** Jesus illustrates his second point but pointing out that priests break the Sabbath every week and yet God holds them guiltless.

**Matthew 12:5-6 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? <sup>6</sup> I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

Again Jesus asks the Pharisees, Haven't you read your Bible? God's law requires the priests to break the Sabbath every week *in the temple* and yet God does not condemn them, but rather he holds them guiltless. God's word should inform careful application of God's rules.

There are at least three things that the priests do every Sabbath that is work (i.e. it is the same work as their normal work which they do every other day).

1. **Sacrificing.** *Slaughtering* an animal was work, according to the rabbis, that was forbidden on the Sabbath and yet the law required a double sacrifice on the Sabbath day (Num 28:9-10). *Flaying* an animal was also considered unlawful work on the Sabbath, but this they did too. *Kindling a fire* was also forbidden work and yet that too was a necessary requirement for the offering of sacrifices.
2. **Replacing bread of Presence.** The priests were required by the law to bake fresh bread every sabbath and replace the old bread before the Presence of the Lord. *Baking* was forbidden work. A *fire* is also needed for baking thus, more breaking of the Sabbath.
3. **Circumcising.** Jewish boys were, according to the law, to be circumcised on the eighth day<sup>11</sup> after their birth. Sometimes the eighth day fell on a Sabbath. Both *cutting* and *sewing* were forbidden work on the Sabbath and yet, both were required work of the priests in order to fulfill the requirement of circumcision. (See John 7:22-23)

All of this Sabbath breaking actually takes place at the *temple* itself. In the Holiest place of the land, all kinds of various Sabbath breaking is taking place every week. Yet all of this is necessary for the atonement for sin and keeping of the covenant with God. The *temple necessities were of greater importance than the Sabbath regulations.*

### Something Greater than the Temple

And if we are able to receive it, regarding the messiah, there will be much more breaking of God's law in order to accomplish atonement for sin and the granting of forgiveness. Jesus now thinks of himself in relation to the temple.

"I tell you, something greater than the temple is here." (V.6)

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3.

Jesus, in his work as God's only messiah, is also greater than the temple. *The work that Jesus will do will be greater than the work done at the temple. Animal sacrifices in the temple never permanently atoned for sin, but the work of Jesus on the cross did.* Jesus plainly says that he is greater than the temple. This is an astounding statement. I'm certain they all looked around to see about whom he was speaking. Did someone walk up behind them unnoticed as they were all conversing in this grain field? Jesus, are you talking about yourself? No, he can't be. Is he?

In Judaism there was nothing greater than the temple. This is still true to this day because the temple location is still the most desired place to pray (i.e. the Western Wall). The temple was the place where God's presence dwelled. There is nothing greater on earth than that! And is Jesus here claiming to be *greater than the temple*?!! I believe these words stunned them into silence as they pondered what he might mean by these words. But he's about to get clearer and more controversial.

**3) If you knew God's heart, you would not condemn innocent people.** Jesus reveals a third reason why the Pharisees were wrong by quoting from the prophet Hosea.<sup>12</sup>

**Matthew 12:7-8 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> And if you had known what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. <sup>8</sup> For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus has quoted this to the Pharisees before, during a meal at Matthew's house when they were criticizing him for eating with tax collectors and sinners (Mt 9:10-13). On that occasion, he told them to *"go and learn what this sentence means,"* but evidently they had not done that.

He is declaring to them that they have not rightly understood the heart of God the Father. They've read their Bibles, but they've missed the Father's heart. Oh *what a tragedy to know God's word but not know God's heart.* God's heart is a heart of mercy, not one of demanding and dogmatic rule keeping.

- God's heart prefers willing surrender, rather than forced obedience.
- He desires loving obedience from us far more than dutiful apology.
- He would rather we steadfastly love him rather than offend him and then go through all the proscribed sacrificial procedures to bring about reconciliation.
- Isn't an unbroken relationship far more restful than a broken one that's been rightly restored?

Jesus is saying, Listen to me, *"for the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."* Jesus is declaring that he knows how to find true Sabbath rest with God. He is declaring that he is the one who more authoritatively knows how to rightly interpret the Sabbath rules and regulations. He is the

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<sup>12</sup> Hosea 6:6.

one who rightly knows the heart of God the Father. Jesus is the lord over the correct understanding of how to have rest with God.

## Lord in the Synagogue

Jesus now gives us proof that he is Lord of the Sabbath. Matthew takes us into the synagogue to an event that demonstrates Jesus' authority over the Sabbath rest. This event will be the straw that broke the camel's back. It was the Sabbath, so it was Jesus' custom to always attend synagogue on the Sabbath.

**Matthew 12:9-10 (ESV)** <sup>9</sup> He went on from there and entered their synagogue. <sup>10</sup> And 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.

Notice that the reason they are asking this question is not so this man could be healed, but rather "**so that they might accuse him.**" The Pharisees are trying to provoke him. The only healing that was acceptable on the Sabbath was in life and death circumstances. This man with the "withered" or paralyzed hand is not in a life and death situation. Thus, according to the rabbinic understanding of the Sabbath law, it would be wrong to heal this man on the Sabbath. They are goading Jesus to heal this man—in a non-life threatening situation—so that they could have grounds to accuse him.

Notice also that they believe that Jesus has power to heal him. This is amazing. But they also believe the if he heals him, that his healing will be breaking the Sabbath and so the healing itself will be valid grounds for accusation. Jesus exposes their hypocrisy.

**Matthew 12:11-12 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> He 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? <sup>12</sup> Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Jesus often uses very practical examples and illustrations from everyday home life. So he takes them home and asks which of them would not lift out one of his sheep if it fell into a pit. Everyone would do this. If you went home from church today and found your dog stuck in a hole in the back yard, you'd reach in and pull him out. You would not say, "Awe, I'm so sorry. Today is the Sabbath and the law says I can't lift anything that weighs more than dried fig<sup>13</sup>, so you'll have to wait until tomorrow for me to get you out.." No one would say that. You'd simply reach down and lift it out. Jesus knows everyone would lift an endangered animal out of its desperate situation. So why would someone refuse to do the same for a person, since a person "**is of much more value than**" an animal. Jesus here affirms the greater value of humans (who are created in the image of God) over animals (which are not created in the image of God).

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<sup>13</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah : A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 191.

Jesus is not like present day politicians. He answers questions directly. They asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus answered, "*It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.*" Jesus then simply said to this man,

**Matthew 12:13** (ESV) Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other.

Only the Lord of the Sabbath could do such a thing. Only the Lord of the Sabbath would have the authority to restore a paralyzed hand. Only the Lord of the Sabbath would have the power to heal a useless hand. Only the Lord of the Sabbath would know the will of the Father with such clarity that the work of God the Father would be so powerfully manifested through him.

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Jesus is the Lord of right interpretation of God's word.

Jesus is the Lord of compassion.

Jesus is the Lord who defends against the wrongful condemnation of the enemy.

Jesus is the Lord who protects.

Jesus is the Lord who is greater than temple.

Jesus is the Lord who atones for sin.

Jesus is the Lord of mercy.

Jesus is the Lord who lifts us out of our pits of sinful despair, anxiety, worry, and burdens.

Jesus is the Lord who offers us rest for our souls.

Jesus is the Lord who heals.

Jesus is the Lord who restores.

Jesus is the Lord who gives rest.

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Who would not willingly surrender to such a Savior?

## Conclusion

Note the response of the Pharisees.

**Matthew 12:14 (ESV)** But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Such a response is demonic.

Don't reject him. Open up your heart and welcome him. Do not refuse him. Willingly surrender to him.

There is no one like him. He is the almighty Lord of the Sabbath and the Sovereign King of heaven and earth.

Worship him.

### Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the Sabbath? Why did God command Israel to keep the Sabbath?
2. Why did the Pharisees condemn the disciples?
3. What three answers did Jesus give to the Pharisees in defense of his disciples?
4. How do the priests "profane the Sabbath?" Why are they guiltless before God?
5. About what or whom was Jesus speaking when he said, "something greater than the temple is here?" How was that person or thing greater than the temple?
6. What does this sentence mean, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice?"
7. In what ways is "the Son of Man lord of the Sabbath?"
8. Do you believe that Christians today should "keep the Sabbath?" Why or why not?