

The Gospel According to Luke- Part 6

TITLE: ANOTHER HEALING

PART 8

Sabbath Law versus Human Compassion

READ MATTHEW 12:9-14

INTRODUCTION

Jesus made a regular habit of getting under the skin of the religious leaders during His time. The leaders were such that they would follow the Law of God that had been expanded to include the laws of man. The issue that Jesus had was that these laws of man were not to be placed on the same level as God's law and, what was more, they tried upholding man's law even more rigorously than God's. This is a gross misuse of the authority that God had given them as leaders of His people. Jesus knew that this was problematic and set out to point out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees often. This led up to His death on a cross.

In this account of Jesus healing a man with a withered hand, the text specifically points out that the Pharisees were watching to see if Jesus would "break their law" concerning the Sabbath and heal someone. Obviously, He did and that didn't sit well with the leaders because Jesus was supposed to be a teacher, a Rabbi Himself. Exodus 35 says that anyone who broke the Sabbath rest was to be put to death and so what Jesus was doing was not a small thing. What He wanted them to notice was that God cares more for us than their expectations on what the law was supposed to be.

Jesus specifically pointed out that the leaders would have been quick to save a sheep that was in need on a Sabbath day and that God's children are far more valuable to Him than a sheep. Jesus was pointing to their hearts in order to help them see that they were to be more concerned with the people than with the laws that they had imposed on the people. The response of the leaders to this healing was one of disdain. They immediately sought to destroy Jesus and that was the point. Jesus needed them to see the error in their thinking but, He also needed them to get angry enough to desire to kill Him. This all leads to the cross.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to continually show the Pharisees a better way of doing things? In what ways did He show them how to love people better? What do you think the biggest difference was between Jesus and the Pharisees?
2. Why do you think it was so easy for the Pharisees to add to the Law of God? What is similar in that to how we treat God's Law today? In what ways is it different?
3. What is the major difference between the people watching Jesus and the Pharisees watching Jesus? How do you watch Him? How can we better have a childlike faith with Christ?
4. Read Exodus 35:1-2. Why is the Law of God to be taken so seriously? How do we respect or disrespect this particular command? How do we observe a Sabbath today?
5. Is it easy to fall into the trap of thinking that Jesus is all about following rules and regulations and to forget about the fact that He cares for people? Why is that? How can we combat the temptation to view our relationship with Him as exclusively based on Law?

WRAP UP

Jesus knew that His road was leading to the cross. He also knew that one day the people who were watching in amazement and agreement would turn their backs on Him. His life was purposeful to lead to the forgiveness of sins and to conquer death. He did all of that and on the way to that death and resurrection He made sure that we knew His love for us was greater than any law of man.