

## 18. Jesus Healed on the Sabbath

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to follow the example of Jesus and share the message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Jesus showed us by His example that we are to share that message with those who are rejected by their culture and society. We also saw that many people who are religious are like the scribes and Pharisees who were more concerned about following their own traditions than they were about the spiritual needs of others. In our topic today, we will see that the Pharisees continued their attempts to condemn Jesus.

Luke 6:1-5 says, “Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them*, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, ‘Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?’ But Jesus answering them said, ‘Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?’ And He said to them, ‘The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.’” Here, we see that Jesus and His disciples were walking through the grainfields on the Sabbath.

As the disciples walked through the grainfields, they were doing something that they had probably done many times in their lives. They were breaking off heads of grain and rubbing them with their hands. In the law, in Deuteronomy 23:25, we read, “When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.” Here, we see that the law clearly gave the people the right to break off heads of grain and eat them when they were hungry and it was not considered stealing. It was only considered stealing if a person came to the field of another and began to harvest their grain.

However, the Pharisees saw this as an opportunity to condemn the disciples of Jesus. As a result, some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” The Pharisees were focusing on two things that the disciples were doing. First, they were picking the heads of grain on the Sabbath. Second, they were rubbing the heads of grain together in their hands to remove the outer shell. The previous paragraph shows that it was lawful to pick the heads of grain. However, the things that the Pharisees said were unlawful were the picking and the rubbing together on the Sabbath. They were accusing the disciples of working on the Sabbath by picking off the heads of grain and rubbing them together.

Jesus took charge and answered the question that the Pharisees had asked the disciples. Jesus spoke of what David did when he and the men with him were hungry. David asked the priest for food for his men. 1 Samuel 21:4 and 6 say, “And the priest answered David and said, ‘*There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.*’...So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread *in its place* on the day when it was taken away.” The priests had not yet eaten the bread that had been taken out of the tabernacle. Leviticus said that was to be done on the Sabbath day. After using this illustration,

Jesus said, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.” Here, we see that Jesus told them again that He is God.

The Pharisees could not reject the answer of Jesus after they heard the illustration that Jesus gave about David. However, they began to watch Jesus even closer on the Sabbaths to try and condemn the fact that Jesus said He is God. Soon they had another opportunity on a different Sabbath. Luke 6:6-8 says, “Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, ‘Arise and stand here.’ And he arose and stood.” We see that on this particular Sabbath that Jesus was teaching again in the synagogue.

The scribes and Pharisees were there to see if they could find any reason to condemn Jesus. They watched closely to see what Jesus would do when they saw a man with a withered right hand in the synagogue. The word translated “withered” means *dry or withered*. Due to various diseases, a hand can wither or shrink so that it becomes very small. When that happens, it is impossible for a person to use that hand to do most things. Here, we see that the withered hand of this man was his right hand. The Old Testament did not prohibit healing on the Sabbath. However, the Jews had a tradition that said a person could not practice medicine on the Sabbath unless the life of a person was in danger. This withered hand did not put the life of this man in danger.

Jesus knew that the scribes and Pharisees were watching Him closely. Jesus also knew their thoughts and that they were looking for an opportunity to accuse Him of breaking their traditions. As a result, Jesus asked the man to stand so that everyone could see him. We saw in a topic on the last chapter that Jesus knew their thoughts in Luke 5:22. That same miracle is recorded in Matthew and Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 9:4, “But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts?’” Jesus knew that the scribes and Pharisees were again thinking evil in their hearts and that was why they were watching Him so closely.

Jesus chose to publicly confront the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. As the man was standing there, Jesus asked the Pharisees a question. Luke 6:9-11 says, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?’” And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.” The Jewish law forbade the Jews from working on the Sabbath day.

However, Jesus used this question to make a clear distinction that would reveal the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The opposite of doing good is doing evil. The opposite of saving life is destroying life. The Jews were allowed both to do good and to save life on the Sabbath day. The real problem that day was in the hearts of the Pharisees. Mark 3:4-5 says, “Then He said to them, ‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?’” But they kept silent. And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the

man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.” Here, we see that Jesus was grieved by the hardness of the hearts of the Pharisees. Jesus had anger at the sin shown by this hardness of heart. At the same time, Jesus loved the sinners who demonstrated this hardness of heart because He died for their sins as well as ours.

The word translated “good” comes from the word which means *that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects*. The word means to do what is right or to be a help to someone. 3 John 11 says, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.” Here, we see that the one who does good is of God. 1 Peter 2:15 says, “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” The hearts of the scribes and Pharisees were controlled by their evil thoughts. They had no concern to help a man who had a physical need.

After Jesus asked His question, He carefully looked at each of the scribes and Pharisees and gave them an opportunity to answer His question. None of the scribes or Pharisees gave Jesus an answer because each of the men knew in His heart that he would condemn himself if he answered that question. Then Jesus said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The man with the withered hand did as Jesus said and as he stretched out his right hand it was restored. The word translated “restored” means *to restore to its former condition*. Here, we see that his right hand became normal just like his left hand. This was a great miracle and everyone in the synagogue had the opportunity to watch as the miracle happened.

Jesus had confronted the sin of the scribes and Pharisees by asking His question. Their hypocrisy was clearly shown by that question. As a result, these men were filled with rage. The scribes and Pharisees had been humbled by Jesus in front of all of the people. Luke 18:14 says, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Jesus made this statement as He finished giving the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. In that parable, the Pharisee had boasted about his good works as he prayed. In contrast, the tax collector had asked the Lord to be merciful to him because he was a sinner. That is why Jesus said that the one who exalts himself will be humbled. Jesus had just humbled the scribes and Pharisees in front of the people in the synagogue and so they were filled with rage and discussed what to do to Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that Jesus made it clear that it is always right to do good to others. One of the ways we help them learn how to have an effective ministry is to show them how to do things that are good in their character and beneficial in their effects. The Lord will greatly bless their service for Him as they learn to do good to others whenever they have the opportunity. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to do good to others.