"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)

Matthew 12:1-13

12-17-2017

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath shows the true important issues of life.

***Realize what really matters in life!**

I. <u>HUMAN NEED</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 1-4)

II. <u>GOD'S WORSHIP</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 5)

III. <u>SHOWING MERCY</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 7)

IV. <u>JESUS CHRIST</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 6, 8)

V. <u>DOING GOOD</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 9-13)

"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)

Matthew 12:1-13

12-17-2017

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath shows the true important issues of life.

***Realize what really matters in life!**

I. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 1-4)**

II. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 5)**

III. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 7)**

IV. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 6, 8)**

V. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 9-13)**

"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)

Matthew 12:1-13

12-17-2017

INTRODUCTION:

"The events recorded in Matthew 12 mark a major turning point in Jesus' ministry, focusing on the rejection of the Messiah by His own people" (MacArthur, p. 280).

On the front page of this account of Christ being rejected by His own people, controversy is stirred up over the matter of the "Sabbath" (v. 1, 10).

V. 1

"The Sabbath day" -

This was Saturday, the seventh day of the week, a day of rest - to cease from work.

Facts about the Sabbath:

1. The Sabbath was based on God's continual rest from His creative work on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2-3; Exod. 31:17)

2. The Sabbath was not a required day of rest until the Law was given by Moses (some 2,500 years after creation) (Exod. 16:23, 20:8-11, 31:12-17).

3. The Sabbath was given specifically to the nation of Israel (Exod. 31:13-17)

4. The Sabbath had 2 primary purposes:

    a. To be a sign of God's unique relationship to Israel (Exod. 31:13, 17). It was also to be a sign of her allegiance to God's covenant (Exod. 31:16; Jer. 17:19-27; Ezek. 20:12-24).

    b. To provide rest (refreshment) for everyone (even animals) in Israel (Exod. 23:12 - *"Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed."*)

5. The Sabbath law forbade even the building of fires (Exod. 35:1-3) and was punishable by death for those who presumptuously [with willful "high-handedness"] violated it (Num. 15:32-36)

6. The Sabbath law was fulfilled by Christ (Mt. 5:17, 18) and apparently completed, abolished and set aside by Christ at His death.

Proof:

a. The Sabbath was "a shadow (type) of the things that were to come (i.e. the eternal rest - Heb. 4:9-10); the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Col. 2:17).

b. Christ nailed such ordinances to the cross (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15).

c. The civil and ceremonial aspects of the Law were done away with at the cross (Heb. 9-10).

d. Paul calls the observation of days and months and times and years (references to the Sabbath and O.T. Jewish holidays) a return to *"weak and beggarly elements"* that resulted only in bondage (Gal. 4:9, 10).

e. The New Testament teaches that it is not God's requirement *"to esteem one day above another"* (Rom. 14:5); it is a matter of Christian liberty.

f. The Sabbath is no where required in the N.T. (especially not in places where such a command would be expected - EX: The Jerusalem Council - Acts 15).

7. Sunday is not the Sabbath, but was a day set apart by the early Church in commemoration of the Lord's resurrection (Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:19), to gather for corporate worship (I Cor. 16:2) and the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:20).

Sunday received the technical title: The Lord's Day - Rev. 1:10

We pattern our Sunday church gathering after the early Church's example.

8. Though the Church is under no Law of God to do so, it is wise to rest one day in seven.

SEE MacArthur page 282 for a long list of added rules and regulations restricting Sabbath

activity.

The Sabbath instead of being a day of rest "had become a day of incredible burden. Because of the thousands of man-made restrictions regarding it, the Sabbath was more tiresome than the six days devoted to one's occupation. It was harder to 'rest' than to earn a living." (MacArthur, p. 281).

Beware of cultural or traditional additions to God's Word. All additions end up nullifying it (Mt. 15:3, 6).

"Legalist" = one who imposes additions to God's Word on other people; one how makes requirements for salvation or spirituality that God has not made.

Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath shows the true important issues of life.

***Realize what really matters in life!**

I. HUMAN NEED takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 1-4)

V. 1

As the disciples pulled corn off the stalks, it was not a business endeavor. It was not plucking the ears of corn to sell but *"to eat"*

***"Pluck the ears of corn"* -** the Law allowed an Israelite to go into someone else's vineyard and eat grapes till he was full, but not to carry any home in a basket. Also, he could go into a neighbor's corn field and pluck ears of corn to satisfy his hunger but could not use a sickle to cut down corn so as to unjustly steal and make a business from his neighbor's corn (Deut. 23:24-25). The Law allowed people to satisfy a day's hunger by taking what was needed, but did not allow the person to plunder his neighbor's field.

V. 2

***"Thy disciples"* -** Apparently Jesus, so as to avoid wrong accusations made against Him, did not eat the corn His disciples did.

***"Thy disciples"* -** One way to discredit someone is to employ the tactic of guilt by

association.

The Pharisees wanted to knock Jesus by knocking those who were closely associated with Him. Sometimes, people will attack you; but their real motive is to attack Christ.

The Pharisees wrongly accused the disciples of working on the Sabbath, when in fact they were not working, but eating to satisfy their hunger.

V. 3

"Have ye not read" - Jesus puts them on the spot by appealing to their ignorance.

NOTE: Christ's authority is the Word of God. He authenticates I Samuel by citing I Sam. 21:1-6.

V. 4

"The house of God" - the Tabernacle

The ***"shewbread"*** or ***"bread of the Presence"*** was twelve loaves of bread (representing the 12 tribes of Israel) that were brought to the house of God as an offering before God's presence, to show appreciation for His provision. Every Sabbath the loaves would be changed, and the old loaves became food for the priests.

"Not lawful. . . but only for the priests" - the Law said that these special loaves of bread were for the priests to eat (Lev. 24:5-9). The priests would only eat the "week old" bread; after it sat for a week on a special table in the presence of God as a memorial.

Certain civil or ceremonial laws at certain occasions can be temporarily set aside in order to fulfill the higher laws of human need (EX: civil law. Speed limits are broken by ambulance drivers to rush a critical patient to the hospital; policemen can go through red lights and stop signs to respond to emergencies).

Jesus is teaching that human need supersedes mere ritual and ceremony.

Too often, organized Christianity fails to reach out to people and their needs by putting ritual, order, form, and rules ahead of the needs of people.

Too often, we act as though. . .

--man exists for rules and rituals, instead of rules and rituals existing for man

--man exists for religion, instead of religion existing for man

--man exists for church services instead of church services existing for man

--man lives for maintaining the organizations, instead of the organization existing for the spiritual well-being of man.

EX: To miss a church service because you were right in the middle of sharing the Gospel with a receptive, lost, needy sinner is totally justified.

II. <u>GOD'S WORSHIP</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 5)

How do the priests *"profane the Sabbath"*? They continue their <u>work</u> of offering sacrifices to God!

"The ministering priests had to light the altar fires, kill the sacrificial animals, and then lift up the carcasses and place them on the altar. Sacrifices on the Sabbath were, in fact, <u>double</u> sacrifices, requiring twice the work of the normal daily sacrifice (Num. 28:9-10; cf. Lev. 24:8-9) (MacArthur, p. 286).

The weekly day of rest was forfeited by the priests so that they could serve God! Some things are more important than rest! Service to God is one of them.

III. <u>SHOWING MERCY</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 7)

The added restrictive Sabbath rules were part of the *"sacrifice"* Jesus referred to.

Ahead of any of our sacrifices to God must come mercy to other people (Hos. 6:6).

Sacrifice without mercy is hypocrisy. If one shows that he loves God (whom he has not seen) by offering Him a sacrifice, yet does not love people (whom he has seen) by neglecting to show mercy, what kind of love is that? (I Jn. 4:20).

God does not want the sacrifices of the disobedient. *"To obey is better than sacrifice"* (I Sam. 15:22).

Hebrews 13:16 - *"But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."*

Micah 6:8 - *"He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doeth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"*

"Ye would not have condemned [judged] the guiltless" - the "guiltless" were the disciples, who did not wrong to pluck and eat corn on the Sabbath.

Jesus is saying that David did wrong, but you do not condemn him for it; my disciples did not do wrong and yet you condemn them.

IV. JESUS CHRIST takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 6, 8)

V. 6

To a Jew in Jesus' day, the only thing greater than the Temple was God. They were no doubt infuriated by Christ's claim to such greatness.

Jesus is greater than the Temple!

Why? He is the God who instituted the Temple and its worship. He is the Glory who filled the Temple. And He as God is the Deity who was worshipped via the Temple!

Jesus is greater than all! (Hebrews)

He is greater than the prophet Jonah (Mt. 12:41).

He is greater than King Solomon (Mt. 12:42).

V. 8

In declaring Himself ***"Lord of the Sabbath"*** Jesus was actually affirming equality with God; for God has established the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3).

Jesus being "Lord of the Sabbath" has the right to:

1) Teach us its true purpose

2) Elevate more important matters above it

3) Do away with it (like He did on the cross)

The main point is that Jesus is more important than the Sabbath.

Sometimes people can get so involved in the machinery of the work of the Lord that they forget the Lord of the work!

If things are not done "just so" (precisely as we had planned), we get all bent out of shape and view ourselves as failures, when really what mattered was: "Was Christ glorified?"

V. DOING GOOD takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 9-13)

V. 10

They are asking Him if it was not a violation of the Law to practice medicine on the Sabbath.

"Rabbinic tradition, not the O.T. Law, forbade practicing medicine on the Sabbath unless the person were on the verge of death" (Ryrie)

If Jesus were making money for healing, it would be wrong to practice such a business on the Sabbath. However, His works were works of charity with no enterprising motives.

V. 11

John 7:23 - *"If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry with me, because i have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"*

Jesus again shows the Pharisees the inconsistencies of their religious viewpoints.

The Jewish Rabbinical Law evidently for economic reasons allowed this rescue of a sheep on the Sabbath.

Rescuing one of their sheep from a pit would not be considered work, yet they had the audacity to accuse Christ of wrong doing for rescuing a man from deformity.

V. 10

Secular ancient history tells us that this man was a carpenter who formerly made a living with his hands but not had to beg for food in shame (The Gospel according to the Hebrews, cited by William Barclay).

V. 12

Sometimes people treat human beings with less respect than they do their animals.

(EX: Hinduism, which regards the cow as sacred, giving all it the food it wants while multitudes starve)
People are of more value than animals because they were created in the "image

and likeness of God," and possess a spirit that can commune with God and will live on forever.

Mark 3:4 - *"And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill? But they held their peace."*

V. 13

***"Stretch forth"* -** This was an action the man could not do, but by faith he did it, and by faith he was cured.

The arm was cured so well that you could not tell the difference between it and the other one.

CONCLUSION:

Lessons:

1. The time is always right to do right.

2. Human needs are more important than religious ritual (true religion is practical first and foremost - James 1:27)

3. Man was not created for the Sabbath, rather the Sabbath was created for man's benefit (Mk. 2:27).

4. Legalism and Christianity are incompatible (whenever someone adds to God's Word, the addition is sure to conflict with God's will)). Beware of making laws and standards that God has not made.