

The Lord of the Sabbath

Introduction

Two years ago Trump became the new representative head of the government of the United States of America

Trump is doing things in a new way – a new era of political machinations

There has been a lot of controversy and a lot of confrontation

He was placed in his position by the political, democratic will of the people and his presidency requires a response from people

This morning I draw your attention to two things and two things only...please do not take it any further than that

First, the stunning events of the political process in the USA from two years ago revealed the identity of the president...Who is the president of the United States of America? Donald Trump

Second, What is the nature of his leading and ruling? However you classify it, it is new.

Two thousand years ago, unbeknownst to many of God's people, there was a new representative head of the people of God – Jesus

Two thousand years ago he began to do a new thing-actually more controversial and more confrontational than anything we have seen in a leader in history-it was confrontation on a cosmic scale...but for much different reasons

IDENTITY + ACTIONS = NEW LEADER
DOING
NEW THINGS

Luke 6:1-11 ESV

¹ On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. ² But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" ³ And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" ⁵ And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

⁶ On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. ⁷ And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. ⁸ But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there. ⁹ And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" ¹⁰ And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

2 Questions

Two legitimate questions about legitimate issues^a that nevertheless point to bigger and more important questions regarding Jesus

² But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”

- The law permitted one to pass through a neighbor’s field and pluck grain as long as one did not attempt to harvest it (put a sickle to it, Deut 23:25).
- Picking grain and rubbing it on the Sabbath could be construed as harvesting (Exod 34:21), and that is how the Pharisees saw it (m. Šabb. 7:2).
- Therefore, they declare that the disciples are doing “what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”
- They are really concerned with Jesus: “Who do you think you are?” – Jesus’ concluding remarks indicate that this was the primary issue
- It is a question of ontology – a question of the nature of Jesus’ being

There is a type of questioning Jesus’ disciples that is really a questioning of who Jesus is...make sure that your scrutiny of the disciples is coming from a good place.

*excitement
in worship
• talking
about Bible
• pastors
always
asking about
service/life
groups
membership
evangelism*

⁹ And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?”

- Jesus has a question of his own in regards to lawfulness
- Jesus’ question is in regards to ethics: what are morally virtuous actions in regards to the Sabbath
- They were experts in the Law...what does the Law really mean and intend?

These two questions set the meaning of these stories

Luke has put them together, remember, to help Theophilus be certain of what he has been taught

Luke is shining light on the person and the work of Jesus – Who is he? What is he doing? ...Not just Sabbath lawfulness!

*even though at a surface level this is
what they're talking about*

2 Illustrations

Both these illustration set up Jesus in terms of the answers to the questions, both of which Jesus will answer even though he directs one of the questions to the Pharisees.

³ And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?"

- In addressing the question of lawfulness put to him by the Pharisees, Jesus hearkens back to an episode in the life of David
- Jesus notes that David broke a far more serious law – David broke the Law!
- Using David as an example is a clear indication that Jesus was linking himself to the great savior-king of Israel
- Using this example in some ways could be seen as undermining the law, but at the same time it also must be seen as reinforcing the Old Testament—an OT story had argumentative force
- Jesus' illustration sets up his answer to the Pharisees' question as being in the realm of Jesus' personhood by his clear connecting of himself to the King of Israel

¹⁰ And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored.

- The first illustration was an allusion to the OT; a literary-historical elaboration of the point he would make
- His second illustration is a demonstration through actions; he heals the man
- His illustration is a miracle of restoration, a miracle of salvation, a miracle of mercy – withered hand a sign of God's displeasure and judgment
- I can display to you who I am through interpreting the Law; I can demonstrate who I am by the actions I take
- This is an audiovisual illustration of the truth Jesus had in mind

(and Luke)

OMIT ?

The two illustrations—one historical and one ^{activity} ~~actual~~ ^{miraculous}—are persuasive tactics that Jesus uses to prepare his audience for the point he will make on the surface level about Sabbath lawfulness ^{and} ~~but~~ at a deeper level he is raising the issue of who he is and what he is doing.

2 Answers

Jesus ultimately is concerned about communicating who he is and what he is doing, but he is also concerned with teaching about Sabbath lawfulness.

- In regards to the actions of his disciples, he is suggesting they were not unlawful in feeding themselves on the Sabbath
- “His point is made from the lesser to the greater: if the law could be set aside by David and his men in their urgent situation, how much more so for Jesus and his disciples in a situation of greater urgency, the necessity of proclaiming the reign of God?” *David/Men/situation < Jesus/disciples/situation*
- Jesus insists their actions do not, in fact, transgress the Law; Ceremonial restrictions are to give way to human need
- Furthermore, the restrictions about Sabbath that the Pharisees are raising pertain more to their own tradition and interpretation than what God’s Word explicitly commands
- Jesus’ answer: A correct interpretation of the Law results in the understanding that what my disciples have done is not unlawful

Do you recognize and understand that Jesus is the advocate of his disciples? We are accused of wrongdoing by our consciences but through repentance and faith we have forgiveness of sin and the blood of Jesus cleanses our conscience. We are told that Satan accuses the people of God day and night but Jesus has overthrown the God of this age and eventually his mouth will be stopped but in the meantime Jesus intercedes for us.

- Jesus answers his own question regarding the lawfulness of doing good on the Sabbath through his miraculous healing of the man's hand: it is lawful to do good and save lives on the Sabbath
- Sabbath restrictions on work are for rest and rejuvenation, not to thwart salvation and good works
- The newness of health in the man's hand, and Jesus' insistence that doing good on the Sabbath is not contrary to God's Law, is an indication of the importance of newness to this story

Two answers to two questions: Why do your disciples act unlawfully? They don't. Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath? It is.

These questions and answers point to two conclusions which I am convinced were intended by: God in inspiring his Word, Jesus in his actions and answers, Luke in his arrangement of the stories

These two conclusions are about the gospel, about who Jesus is and what Jesus does

2 Conclusions

The two questions were about Sabbath lawfulness. And Jesus answered both questions to teach his people. But there were two deeper questions behind the questions of Sabbath lawfulness. We can see this in Luke's inspired arrangement of the two events. We can also see it Jesus' concluding remarks to the first question.

Who is Jesus?

⁵ And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

- Jesus' concluding remarks to the Pharisees ultimately departs from the smokescreen of their original question
- His answer is ultimately based on his concluding remark which pertains to who he is: Jesus declares that like David, he—as the Son of Man—is the authoritative representative of his people ⇒ *there is a new "anointed king" in town*
- Jesus' interpretation of the Law, and the appropriateness of setting aside ceremonial laws, is at his discretion
- In fact, Jesus is claiming an authority equal to God – he can interpret God's Law in a way that is binding and in a way that is contrary to the teaching of the experts

The Pharisees were trying to subject Jesus to their interpretation and understanding of the Law. They were saying, "Our understanding of religious things has authority over you, Jesus!" What things in our own life do we try and subjugate Jesus under? Are there things in your life that elevate in authority over Jesus?

- Comfort – giving, time, reputation
- Pleasure – substance abuse, pornography, gossip
① physical ② both ③ psychological
- Tradition – songs, coffee in sanctuary

What does Jesus do?

¹⁰ And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored.

- Jesus is doing a new thing, a miraculous thing, a thing which brings the restorative power of God into contact with his people
- This is a precursor to his ultimate work on the cross: a work of restoration and renewal that will impact the internal and eternal realities of his people
- GOSPEL – who Jesus is and what Jesus has done

He is the Son of God, God himself. He came to earth and took on flesh and was born of the virgin Mary – For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

From the moment he came he was the new representative head of his people and sovereign ruler of the universe

But like the healing of a withered hand, he came to remove the curse of God (the result of sin) and restore God's people to their relationship with their Creator.

He did this healing, restoring, saving work by dying on the cross as the penalty for sin and then rising from the dead in victory of sin, death, and the devil.

Notes of application:

- Is your critical questioning of the disciples more accurately a questioning of Jesus?
- Do you know Jesus as advocate?
- Do you place other thing in your life in authority over Jesus?

But the most important application this morning applies to the conclusions about himself that Jesus was making in answering the questions about Sabbath lawfulness: Who is Jesus? What has he done? He is the new authoritative, representative head of his people and he is doing a new thing, a new work of restoration and healing and salvation.

Believer: remind yourself of who he is and what he has done.

Unbeliever: believe Jesus is who the Bible says he is and believe in what he has done by repenting of your sin and trusting in Christ.