**Humility, Love and the Sabbath**

Based on [Luke 14:1-11](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk14.1-11)

Preached on September 23, 2018

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

Today we heard about a confrontation between Jesus and the lawyers and Pharisees, about healing on the Sabbath day. God created the world in six days, and on the seventh day he rested, blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

Jesus, in his life on earth, religiously kept the Sabbath in that he went to the Synogogue every Saturday to hear the word of God being read and taught. Jesus was perfect; but we see here that his perfection made the religious leaders upset with him. On the surface level, they were opposed to Jesus because they believed he was neglecting God’s Law. On a deeper level, they were opposed to Jesus because they were prideful, and believed that they were superior to Jesus.

Pride is a deadly sin. Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty sprirt before a fall (16:18). **Pride is regarding yourself more significant than others; and the Pharisees and lawyers regarded themselves more important than Jesus, they have a marked agenda in the gospels to bring him low, off his high-horse as it were**. And they try to do this by either catching him breaking God’s Law, or saying something that contradicts it. The Law says, you shall do not work on the Sabbath.

And so the Pharisees were watching Jesus carefully on the Sabbath for this very reason…to try and catch him doing “work.” They’re trying to get dirt on Jesus, something to build a case against him. **Jesus is aware of them, he knows the hearts of men, and so he beats them to the punch.** There was a man standing before him with dropsy, a build-up of water in the body. Jesus asks them before he does anything, “**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?**” But they remained silent. Then he healed the man and sent him away.

These men don’t even know the law of the Sabbath well enough to answer Jesus about healing. Jesus goes on to point out that their actions are answer enough, that they would rescue their own son or an ox from a well, why then are they doubting Jesus’ healing? It is because of their pride, which with sinful man always bears the mark of hypocrisy and selective partial judgment, and most of all lacks love. Jesus is the opposite of the religious hypocrites, does all things well, and perfectly upholds God’s commands according to their true sense.

First, Jesus does not violate the Sabbath when he heals this man. This is a very important point. Some use this passage to promote ethical pragmatism or situational ethics. **They reason that since Jesus broke the commandment of God to help his neighbor, so we can do the same.** This is false doctrine. Jesus **never violated the Sabbath,** for the sake of his neighbor or otherwise. Rather, acts of mercy were never commanded by God to be prohibited work when the Sabbath was instituted. Jesus says, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” In other words, work—that which you do for your livelihood—to support yourself in the future, that is what the Sabbath prohibited. You may prepare your fields, store up grain, make clothing, things that are oriented towards improving your material situation. These are the things called “work”.

But acts of mercy and love…these are not work, and the fact that the Pharisees did not know these things is telling. Healing a man of his ailments is not work. Dressing a wound is not work. Lifting a fork to your mouth and chewing food is not work. It may seem like a fine line, but it’s really not. Hunger, thirst, sickness, these are immediate assaults on the body and to address them is not work in the sense of the commandment, thus not forbidden on the Sabbath. In fact, immediate ailments of the body interfere with rest, and thus to be unable to address them on the Sabbath makes the Sabbath a burden when it was supposed to be a gift of God to man.

All of God’s Commands are more than the letter, they carry with them the Sprit. The spirit of the Sabbath was faith, trusting in the lord to provide for their needs. For sure, since the fall we are to eat our bread by the sweat of our brow. Even in Eden’s paradise man was made to work the garden. Work means preparing for one’s future, and we are to do that. **However, we are also to know and take comfort in the fact that, though man plants and waters…it is God and God alone Who gives the growth**. The Sabbath was a time God gave, not to burden his people, but so his people could live out their faith, trusting God to look after their future, so that they need not put trust in their own works to save them.

A great example of this is when the Israelites were in the wilderness, God gave them manna to eat every morning. **It appeared on the ground and they were to gather enough for the day, and were not to leave any left over until the morning.** They were to trust that God would do as he promised, and provide more to gather then next morning. Thus God tested them.

It must have been tempting to gather more, since God provided more on the ground than they needed for the day. **But to gather more would be to hedge your bets in case God failed to keep his promise and provide tomorrow.** That is doubt, but God commands faith. So too the Sabbath was a guarantee by God that he would provide for them tomorrow without work on that day.

But feeding the hungry, healing the sick, these do not violate the Sabbath because they do not prepare for the future. It is not gathering extra manna for future days. **Feeding and healing are immediate acts of love, and love is the fulfillment of the law.** God is love, and to love on the Sabbath is Godliness.

Jesus shows here that the Pharisees, though they are a strict religious sect, and the lawyers, though they carefully read and interpret the law, lack the most important element. **They lack love, they lack humility, and to try to strictly interpret and obey God’s law without the motivation of love, is blind.**

And so Jesus instructs his hearers towards what was lacking in the righteousness of the Pharisees, humility. **This is not false humility, which is simply pride in disguise. Humility is humbling oneself, and waiting upon God to exalt you.** The Pharisees tried to seize righteousness for themselves, but is not your place to take anything, but for God to give. You will face many trials and injustices in this life; do not respond with pride. If someone hits you, do not hit them back, but offer the other cheek. **Vengeance is the lords, and he will repay. If someone insults you, don’t insult them back; speak the truth in love and trust in God to vindicate you.** The essence of the Sabbath is humility, knowing your own poverty, material and spiritual, and trusting upon the lord to provide for you, vindicate you, exalt you. And he will do it, through Jesus Christ who was sent to be Lord of the Sabbath, in whom you have your Sabbath rest, who,

***though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***