

Sunday, April 23, 2023 | Everyday Disciple

Week 2 | Luke 6:6-11 | "Sins of Omission"

Last week, resumed our study of Luke's gospel account by starting a series called "Everyday Disciple." In it, we'll explore a part of Luke's writing that gives us a peek into the day-to-day activities of Jesus' ministry. And, in doing so, we'll discover what it means to be like Jesus in everyday life.

The topic we covered last week revolved around the Sabbath. In essence, by the first century, the Jews had put such an emphasis on the Sabbath that it became a burden rather than a gift. And so, to redeem the Sabbath from the clutches of legalism, Jesus stepped on the scene and declared, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." In doing so, he showed that we find our rest in him. We are not justified by works but by our attachment to Jesus. **The Lord of the Sabbath invites his followers to rest in his presence.**

Today, we'll discuss another instance in which Jesus appeared to "break" the Sabbath. But rather than the issue being over some food, as before (cf. Lu. 6:1-5), it will be centered on a medical need.

Now, though most would see what Jesus does in this passage as something to celebrate, sadly, it will cause the Pharisees more than a bit of grief. Why? Because, with Jesus telling everyone that he was the "Lord of the Sabbath" (cf. Lu. 6:5), the religious leaders felt like their authority was being threatened. After all, this miracle-working rabbi didn't follow *their* traditions. In fact, he was very clearly breaking long-held Jewish customs on purpose!

And so, at the heart of this passage is a story about conflicting authorities. The Lord the Sabbath stood on one side of the ring, and the Pharisees stood on the other as competing "lords" of the Sabbath. But which side was right? Who was the one who interpreted the Sabbath correctly? Luke has the answer for us.

I want you to notice *two* things...

i. The "lords" of the Sabbath use the day of rest to actively do evil (cf. 6:6-7).

READ: Luke 6:6-7 (ESV)

⁶On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. ⁷And 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.

During this time, any disability was understood as a judgment from God. Jews believed that should a person be blind, lame, or, in this case, have a withered hand, it was the result of either the handicapped person or the disabled person's parents (cf. Jhn. 9). In fact, this would've likely been the assumption by anyone reading Luke's account. But Luke masterfully goes against this convention and reveals the Pharisee's sin rather than pointing out how the man with the withered hand had done something wrong. They knew where Jesus would be. They knew that, in this particular synagogue, there was a man with a withered hand. And they knew that Jesus would likely heal the man, even if it was a Sabbath, because, if he had no qualms with picking grain on the Sabbath, he doubtless wouldn't hesitate to heal someone.

To be fair, Jews made exceptions to Sabbath regulations regarding medical needs. For instance, if life was jeopardized, such as in childbirth or some tremendous physical injury, Jews were allowed to intervene. But only in such circumstances that were deemed *absolutely necessary* to preserve life. In fact, this is true even today. Orthodox Jews who have professions in the medical field are pressured to switch shifts with a non-Jewish coworker on the Sabbath.¹ In essence, be it a Jewish doctor then or today, if you needed an x-ray but they deemed it unnecessary to preserve your life, you'd have to wait till after the Sabbath.

All that to say that Jesus could've waited to heal this man after the Sabbath. And the Pharisees knew that the Lord wouldn't wait. So they used something good—i.e., Sabbath—and someone good—i.e., Jesus—to do something evil—i.e., entrapment. This poor man with the withered hand didn't know he'd be the center of attention this day. He was just going to church. Yet the Pharisees saw this man's need and used it to satisfy their own ends.

i. The Lord of the Sabbath uses the day of rest to actively do good (cf. 6:8-11).

READ: Luke 6:8-11 (ESV)

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.

¹ Fel, Michael, "I work as an EMT. Does it violate Shabbat if I work on a Saturday, even if they're desperate for help?" August 7, 2012, *Jewish Boston*, <https://www.jewishboston.com/read/i-work-as-an-emt-does-it-violate-shabbat-if-i-work-on-a-saturday-even-if-theyre-desperate-for-help/>, [accessed, April 22, 2023].

Though Jesus knew their thoughts and even though he knew the trouble this would cause, he performed the miracle anyways. The Pharisees wanted to use people. Jesus never used people. They were not objects to manipulate but love.

Jesus does not give any middle ground regarding this issue. Healing the withered hand was actively doing “good” and saving a “life.” To not heal the withered hand was actively doing “harm” and further destroying a life. Jesus came to do good and save life, so he would no longer allow that man's hand to be withered. And so he healed it. And this made the Pharisees rage. Rather than marvel at the miracle, they schemed against this great miracle worker.

So, what's the takeaway?

Sins of omission--i.e., withholding good when it is in your power to do it--actively promote evil.

READ: James 4:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

READ: Matthew 25:31-46 (ESV)

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to *You*?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

So, what’s the takeaway?

Sins of omission—i.e., withholding good when it is in your power to do it—actively promote evil (cf. Lu. 6:6-11; Ja. 4:17).

A heart that is not moved by the plight of its neighbor is a heart that has not been transformed by the gospel (cf. Matt. 25:31-46). This is not to say that true believers never struggle with sins of omission. Like all sins, even Christians fail to do what they know they should do. Paul said as much in Romans 7:14-25. Sometimes we don't do what we know we should do!

But, on the whole, throughout the year, what does your life look like? Is it driven by self-interests or selflessness? It's almost impossible to have the God of love residing in one's life and not be loving. It would be like someone saying they're a musician but don't produce music. The only logical conclusion is that a person is more proficient at lying than playing an instrument.

Video Description

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Pastor's manuscript can be found here: