



Luke 6:6–11

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he got up and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, ‘I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?’ 10 He looked round at them all, and then said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He did so, and his hand was completely restored. 11 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Reflection

(Today’s reflection is given by Justin Mof-fatt)

My text today begins right after Jesus, astonishingly, calls himself the ‘Lord of the

Sabbath' (Luke 6:5). The Sabbath is a Jewish 'rest day', usually taken on Saturday, and yet it has a higher meaning than merely a period of rest, as we learnt yesterday. And, it would appear, it has a Lord. A King.

Read it carefully. Its Luke 6:6–11:

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In Mark’s account of this incident, Jesus claims knowledge of why God set up the Sabbath Day. That, in and of itself, is amazing. He says ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.’ He knows why God made the Sabbath, that God made it ‘for man’; ‘for humanity’. Meaning,

it is for the good for humans: individually and collectively. For 'life'; for 'healing'. And Jesus is the ultimate human being. He, then, is Lord of this thing that lifts humanity up. He is Lord of the Sabbath. That's why he can say: 'I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?' So this Sabbath -- this 'rest day' -- is a gift to you from Jesus.

But the command 'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy' is one of the Ten Commandments. That makes it serious. And so, over the centuries, the Jewish leaders policed this (serious) command of God in ways never intended by God. The gift was being trodden on by do-gooders, wishing to exercise power over people. It was being pressed into the dirt and

stepped on. 'Man' was dancing around the command, serving it – 'what were you allowed to do, and not do, on this day'? And it became oppressive. And when that happens, who gets hurt? Humans are hurt, precisely because God made the Sabbath for man (not the other way around). The Sabbath was meant to lift you up, not bring you down. And more than that, the vulnerable get hurt, as we can see today.

In our passage today, Jesus asks a question that devastated the religious leaders approach to the Sabbath, and a man gets life! Suitable work, it would seem for a Rest Day.

Think

You see what Jesus is doing, don't you?

There is a man in need verse 6. He is in pain. It is a Sabbath Day. A Saturday. If Jesus heals him on that day, it could constitute as 'work', and therefore he is in breach of the rules. Jesus will make a scene of it. Unafraid, he stands the man up in front of everyone. So the man is standing there, and it's all very tense. What will happen next?

Then the question: 'I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?' The answer is: 'Do good' on the Sabbath! 'Save life' on the Sabbath! Not evil, not 'destroying life.' He looks at the religious leaders, and – perhaps while maintaining eye contact with them – says to the man: 'Stretch out your hand.' The man's hand was healed, and the leaders set about plotting Jesus'

demise. So the Sabbath is made for man. Jesus is Lord of it. And its design is to 'do good' and to 'save life'.

One of the reasons we don't rest properly is that we think Rest just taking time. My time! My weekend! My Long weekend! My holidays. My downtime. So we think we'll be satisfied with an overseas holiday. But we are far too easily pleased.

But all the rests we enjoy point elsewhere: to Life in God! To a life of love towards others.

Like you, I'm a busy person. And I'm looking for a break. Like you, I need rest for the body, better sleeping patterns, more margins built into my life. More holidays. More rest. All this is good. It is part of God's purposes. But if that is all there is,

we've missed the point. These things we do to 'get a break'. They are pointing higher: They are pointing to God, in whom we rest. They are pointing deeper: They are pointing to the deeper rest that comes with Jesus, and to the way we share that rest with others.

Jesus is Master of the Rest: 'So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.' He is Lord. He is the one who gives rest: Rest from sin, for Christ died. Rest from striving, for it is 'not by works that you have been saved'. Rest from the judgments of others, for God's judgement is the only thing that truly matters. Rest for the soul. Rest from worry. Rest from anxiety. (It's all there in the Bible) Rest from the judgment of God. Rest from death itself. And Rest 'to give life', and to 'save life'. Jesus came to give

life.

People were watching to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

10 He looked round at them all, and then said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was completely restored.

He has come to do good; to save life. And the way he'll do this (give life) is through his losing rest for you to gain it. He will give up his life to save yours. He will become 'shrivelled' for your life to stretch out and be restored.

How do you find that rest? You 'come to Jesus'.

Pray

Matthew 11:29,

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

In prayer, come to him. It's a personal and specific invitation. It's not to a religion; it's to a person. And not to anyone, but to him. You have to take his 'yoke'. Take his yoke, meaning learn from him. You need to trust and obey him. Not the patterns of just another person, or another idea. You have to become one of his disciples daily and in every area of life.

And pray for how you might use the margins God gives you to share life and healing. Who needs healing now? How can you use your time to 'give life'? Only Jesus can truly give it, but you can share it.

Pray for those you know who need this Rest; those who need this Lord of Rest.