

# Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C Sunday School

Lesson 6 January 7, 2024

LOVE, MERCY, AND THE SABBATH

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## LOVE, MERCY, AND THE SABBATH

- ▶ Bible Basis: Luke 6:1–11
- ▶ Bible Truth: Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
- ▶ Memory Verse: “Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?” (Luke 6:9, KJV)
- ▶ Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will KNOW the Sabbath laws and their conflicts with human need; FEEL an appreciation for the priority of human needs being met; and DECIDE to live in such a way that we honor the Sabbath from Jesus’ perspective.
- ▶ Background Scriptures: Luke 6– Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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### Lesson Scripture: Luke 6:1-11, KJV

1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;



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### Lesson Scripture: Luke 6:1-11, KJV

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.



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## Lesson Scripture: Luke 6:1-11, KJV

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.



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## Lesson Scripture: Luke 6:1-11, KJV

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.



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## LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Sabbath or Jewish day of rest is based on God's act of resting on the seventh day after creation. Its observance has been practiced by Jewish people from the time of Moses. Keeping the Sabbath was a very critical issue in separating Jews from Gentiles and maintaining purity. Jewish leaders created 39 laws to make sure they were not violating the Sabbath. There were multiple laws on what constituted work on the Sabbath, and these laws were hotly debated by the Pharisees and other religious groups in first-century Palestine.



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# Teaching the Bible Lesson

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will learn that acts of love and mercy are a  
part of the Sabbath.





## INTRODUCTION

### Work for the Sabbath

Work for the Sabbath observance was one of the marks of being a true Jew in first-century Palestine. True Sabbath observance was a controversial topic for it could mean not doing normal daily activities since there was no set definition of what was meant by “work.” Pharisees and religious leaders debated the definition of “work” and established many guidelines to direct people in observing the Sabbath. Ordinary things were considered Sabbath violations like simply lighting a lamp. Unfortunately, many extra laws became direct violations of human need.

## BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will learn why good deeds can be a part  
of worship on the Sabbath.

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### I. HUNGER ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:1-4

This chapter in Luke was quite relatable because Jesus and His disciples were just hungry. Jesus broke a Sabbath rule causing the Pharisees to question him after he and His disciples plucked grains of corn, rubbed the grains in their hands, and ate the kernels. Jesus explained his actions by recounting a similar scriptural situation where David and his friends were also hungry running from King Saul. Although temple shewbread was reserved only for priests, wise Abiathar the priest, fed them the shewbread and met their basic needs. This act of kindness showed how human needs were more of a priority than sticking to man-made rules.

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## LOVE, MERCY, AND THE SABBATH

### I. HUNGER ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:1-4

Jesus went an extra step in meeting human needs by settling the debate on whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath by healing the man with the withered hand. He showed it was lawful to “do good” on the Sabbath and not to “do evil,” to “save life” and not to “destroy it” (verse 9).

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### I. HUNGER ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:1-4

Jesus Meets Human Needs on the Sabbath

Luke also highlighted how gleaning by hand and not using tools (“sickle,” Deuteronomy 23:25) in someone else’s field was permissible. The issue was the day of the week, which made what they were doing violations of just reaping, threshing, winnowing, and preparing food!

Jesus saw this as a teachable moment for the Pharisees, so His example included David and His disciples with a similar controversy involving ritual law vs. moral law (1 Samuel 21:1–6; cf. Exodus 25:30). These teachers of the law had misunderstood their own scriptures. Today, it would be like Thomas Jefferson explaining the Constitution to the U.S. Supreme Court Justices or Bishop C.H. Mason explaining Church of God in Christ (COGIC) holiness principles to the COGIC General Board.



## LIGHT ON THE WORD

### **Kingly Parallel**

Jesus answered the Pharisees' question with the story of David and his men eating the shewbread for it justified Jesus' actions in plucking grain and eating on the Sabbath plus it described Jesus' rightful authoritative role.

## II. AUTHORITY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:5

Jesus intentionally shared the scriptural story of David and his men eating shewbread while they were on the run from King Saul. David had been anointed King of Israel but not yet crowned king. Using this story, Jesus is teaching another more important lesson by pointing out how He is the rightful King of Israel, although He is not king yet. This made His interpretation of keeping the Sabbath superior because He had authority as the rightful King of God's people. Jesus' actions on this Sabbath and His interpretations of the Sabbath are correct for He is Lord of the Sabbath.

## II. AUTHORITY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:5

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

The silence from the Pharisees as they heard Jesus make bold statements meant they did not have good answers. Jesus' straight-forward responses let them know without a doubt that He was divine and had the authority to speak to the issues. His answers forced the Pharisees to see that He had not authored their interpretations of the fourth commandment because He created the original concept of the Sabbath, so He understood precisely what was and what was not permissible. We find Jesus, in J. C. Ryle's words, "clearing the day of God from the rubbish of human traditions".



## LIGHT ON THE WORD

### The Keys to the Sabbath

Jesus taught in this lesson that the key values to properly observe the Sabbath are justice and mercy. Jesus showed justice and mercy toward His disciples by allowing them to pluck, rub, and eat the grain as they passed through a field on the Sabbath. Jesus showed justice and mercy to the man with the withered hand by healing him on the Sabbath.

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### III. HEALING AND MERCY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:6-10

It was right and just for Jesus to allow His disciples to pluck and eat grain since they had a genuine need. They were hungry and the law allowed them to do it (Deuteronomy 23:24–25). It showed mercy to sympathize with hungry people. It showed mercy to heal on the Sabbath. The man with a withered hand received healing because it was right to do good and to save a life no matter what day it was. The man received healing because of Jesus' mercy toward him.



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### III. HEALING AND MERCY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:6-10

#### Jesus Shows Justice and Mercy on the Sabbath

It would have been Jesus' custom from childhood to teach at the synagogue. Medically trained Doctor Luke noted details about Jesus' actions that other Gospel writers did not—for example, it was the man's right hand that was withered. Robert Stein describes this as “either paralysis or atrophy” (Luke, 189)—in other words, his primary hand was useless. Note also in those days, anyone left-handed was seen as weak or handicapped.

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### III. HEALING AND MERCY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:6-10

#### Jesus Shows Justice and Mercy on the Sabbath

These strait-laced rabbis, law professors, and Jewish leaders shamelessly shadowed Jesus everywhere, like paparazzi or news media hounding presidential candidates or English royalty. They were on the prowl for any infraction to “find an accusation” (Heb. kategoreo, ka-te-go-RE-o). Stein referred to it as “a legal accusation that could be used in court against Jesus”; today, a formal, legal charge.



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### III. HEALING AND MERCY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:6-10

#### Jesus Shows Justice and Mercy on the Sabbath

This illustrated how man's heart is hopelessly and helplessly evil (cf. Genesis 6:5, 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9). As the divine Son of man, Jesus "possessed a prophetic awareness of men's thoughts" (Stein, 190). Jesus helped to clarify His actions by having the man stand up so everyone could get a good look at what was about to happen. John Phillips wrote that the Pharisees "had withered hearts that were as shriveled as the hand of the cripple" —He would have healed them, too, had they only reached out to Him.



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### III. HEALING AND MERCY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:6-10

#### Jesus Shows Justice and Mercy on the Sabbath

Jesus knew this was another perfect teachable moment from the scriptures. He shared two extremes, good/evil, save/ destroy, which is “lawful”? Like Harvey Cox said, “Not to decide is to decide,” evil is the default when good is withheld. If you have the ability and opportunity to do something good but do not do it, you do evil (cf. James 4:17). David Jeffrey notes “the law was intended to serve rather than to encumber the children of the covenant” (Luke, 86).



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### III. HEALING AND MERCY ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:6-10

#### Jesus Shows Justice and Mercy on the Sabbath

Luke's detailed narrative accurately captured Jesus' stage presence as He looked around before the healing, as if to make sure He had everyone's attention. At the command of the Lord of the Sabbath, the man's hand was restored and made whole again right before their eyes.

## LIGHT ON THE WORD

### Do Good

The Pharisees believed that strict observance of the Sabbath was a way to gain God's favor. They believed if the Jewish people stayed ceremonially pure, then God would come and give them their land and break the yoke of Roman oppression. They thought that keeping the Sabbath was a means to that end, so they devised numerous rules. Jesus turned this concept on its head and asked them whether it was right to do good or evil on the Sabbath, to save life or destroy it. The Pharisees had nothing to say because they knew the answer: Do good.



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## IV. FREEDOM ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:11

Jesus claimed that the Sabbath was a means and not an end. The Pharisees had it all wrong. The Sabbath was a means to attain the end of doing good and showing justice and mercy. This is what people need. The Sabbath was not designed to oppress people but to liberate them and set them free.



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## IV. FREEDOM ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:11

Jesus Shows the True Meaning of the Sabbath

Instead of being amazed, impressed, or happy for the man, instead of allowing Jesus' good deed to rebuke their pettiness and self-centeredness—these leaders and teachers were irate! They were “out of their minds with anger,” writes Jeffrey, not because of the good deed, but they were “enraged at being outwitted” (Luke, 89). Then, like the original sore losers, they agreed among themselves that something must be done to this impudent Jesus. Who did He think He was?



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## IV. FREEDOM ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:11

### Jesus Shows the True Meaning of the Sabbath

As with the confrontation just prior in Luke 5:33–39, this one also illustrates the Pharisees’ attempt to pour new wine (Jesus; new covenant) into old wineskins (Judaism; Mosaic covenant) and the resulting predictable problems (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17). Darrell Bock observes, “Jesus is bringing about the new era in which we now share . . . the new way means the end of the old way” (Luke. The NIV Application Commentary, 173).



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## IV. FREEDOM ON THE SABBATH

Luke 6:11

Jesus Shows the True Meaning of the Sabbath

The take-away is that God's children should still honor the Sabbath, as God has commanded, but acts of kindness, mercy, and justice take priority over the letter of the law (cf. Matthew 22:37–40). They can and should be done any time and, as the popular phrase goes, “twice on Sunday.”

## LIGHT ON THE WORD

### Worked Up on the Sabbath

An uneasy tension was quickly brewing between Jesus and the Pharisees, scriptures mention several Sabbath controversies (Mark 1; Luke 6; 13; John 5; 9). The Sabbath created much debate because it had roots in the Ten Commandments, was a weekly issue, and involved multiple details of what was or was not permissible. This hot topic of debate among rabbis and teachers in Jesus' time included 39 activities that were prohibited on the Sabbath. This dispute continued long after His time, even to the present with some Christians insisting that Sunday worship violates Jewish Sabbath laws. Even among those who worship on Sunday, there is disagreement over what constitutes a day of rest—which is not far removed from the Pharisees' obsession over what constituted work on the Sabbath.

# BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will meet human needs and overcome the rules and limitations that can become barriers to doing so.

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### BIBLE APPLICATION

There are numerous rules and limitations in our society that keep us from meeting human needs. Many times, we will be challenged on whether to follow the rules or to follow justice and mercy. As followers of Christ, our allegiance is to our Lord of the Sabbath who is our Lord over the universe and every aspect of our lives. It is through following His example that we can meet human needs and overcome the rules and limitations that can become barriers. Jesus shows us that human needs are a priority over religious rule keeping. God's justice and mercy should be our guidelines when it comes to doing good and making a difference in the lives of others.



# STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: : We will respond to human needs in the future better  
than we have in the past.



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### STUDENT RESPONSES

It can be hard to see the importance of human needs around us. Many times, we are caught up in religious rule-keeping instead of the more important matter of showing justice and mercy to others. As followers of Jesus, we can learn from His example and bless those who are near us in tangible ways. We can choose to place ourselves in situations where human needs will be hard to ignore. We can volunteer at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. We can also choose to ask more insightful questions of our brothers and sisters in Christ to assess any needs that they may have. Then, we can ask God for compassion to act on the needs that He brings our way.



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# Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for your Sabbath rest in Jesus. We praise You for being a God of love and mercy. We ask that you would empower us to show love and mercy to those who need it. Give us wisdom to discern when and how we should act.

In Jesus' name we pray.

AMEN



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Next Sunday  
January 14, 2024  
Lesson 7  
Unconditional Love  
Luke 6:17-31

