>>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 30 <<<<<<<

1) O.k. another new chapter – 12!
2) We might label this section – "Here we go again …"

Matthew 12:1–8 (ESV)
Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. **2** But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." **3** He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: **4** how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? **5** Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? **6** I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. **7** And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. **8** For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

3) The first thing we should do is say exactly what the Pharisees were saying was unlawful.
   a) Plucking heads of grain was considered agricultural work.
   b) Luke even hints in his relating of this incident that it might be the preparation as well that the Pharisees were considering.
      i) Meal prep was not allowed on the Sabbath and since the disciples were "rubbing them in their hands" it could be considered preparing the grain?
   c) The Torah never says plucking heads for grain is work – it forbids work but makes no detailed explanations of what actually constitutes work.
   d) There are many scriptures in the OT regarding the keeping of the Sabbath. If you are interested, there is a list at this point in the notes for this lesson.
   e) I have also included a link to a Crossway Article about the Sabbath which I thought was really great.

"Sabbath Is More Than Self-Care" by Megan Hill

https://www.crossway.org/articles/sabbath-is-more-than-self-care/?utm_source=Crossway+Marketing&utm_campaign=4a057a559a-20260220+General-SabbathIsMoreThanSelfCare&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-4a057a559a-528930153&mc_cid=4a057a559a&mc_eid=ca5d9b5ef8

Summary of OT Sabbath-Work References

The main Old Testament passages prohibiting work on the Sabbath are:

Legal commands

- Exodus 20:8–11
- Exodus 23:12
- Exodus 31:12–17
- Exodus 34:21

- Exodus 35:1–3
- Leviticus 23:3
- Deuteronomy 5:12–15

Enforcement narrative

- Numbers 15:32–36

Post-exilic enforcement

- Nehemiah 13:15–22

Prophetic warning

- Jeremiah 17:21–27

f) However, the closest we get to this situation is:

Exodus 34:21 (ESV)

21 "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

g) In fact, the book of Deuteronomy specifically allows plucking of grain and makes no mention of any Sabbath exclusion.

Deuteronomy 23:25 (ESV)

25 If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

h) So, the truth is we are back to the oral tradition.

4) Jesus then gives the Pharisees two examples showing where their "Oral Tradition" is basically not in sync with the Torah.

a) The first is that of David and his men eating the bread of Presence.

b) The second is how the priests actually, by their definition, profane the temple on every sabbath because they actually have to "work."

c) Jesus points out clearly that even though by their tradition the priests are breaking the Sabbath, they are actually held guiltless by Torah.

5) Then he drops the other shoe so to speak and gives them a healthy dose of perspective:

6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. **7** And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

6) Saying **something greater than the Sabbath is here** and using the neuter something instead of someone, most scholars attribute to meaning the kingdom.

a) They in truth may not have even picked up on that but the second "**I desire mercy and not sacrifice**" they knew quite well.

i) There are no less than 5 times that God says this to Israel through the prophets.

So, when Jesus says: 8 For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath, what is he actually telling these Pharisees?

b) Barton explains it this way:

When Jesus said that he (again, calling himself *Son of Man*) was *Lord of the Sabbath,* he was claiming to be **greater than the law and above the law**. To the Pharisees,

this was heresy. They did not realize that Jesus, the divine Son of God, had created the Sabbath. The Creator is always greater than the creation; thus, Jesus had the authority to overrule their traditions and regulations. Jesus claimed the authority to correctly interpret the meaning of the Sabbath and all the laws pertaining to it.[32]

7) When we boil this down, we see that the Pharisees valued the keeping of the rules that they had made more than people.

Staying out of the past (we know a lot from there) and talking about today.

Can you think of any symbols or traditions that we value more than people?

1) Next, we have another Sabbath incident, this time with a different outcome …

Matthew 12:9–14 (ESV)

A Man with a Withered Hand

9 He went on from there and entered their synagogue. **10** And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse him. **11** He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? **12** Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." **13** Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. **14** But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

2) Just a note here on synagogues vs. Pharisees.
   a) There has been a tendency in the past to say that Pharisees ruled in the synagogues. That is simply not the case.
      i) They had influence, obviously, but they did not rule per se.
   b) So, the their here indicates these Pharisees were associated with this synagogue but it was not "their" (meaning they possessed it), synagogue.
3) Perhaps they felt thwarted in the grainfield so they hoped to catch him here.
   a) They want to escalate the conflict.
4) So, to set the focus on the man with the withered hand and trap him they ask him the question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"
5) At this point they knew that in their opinion, they had him!
   a) These Pharisees already held to the widely accepted belief that under normal circumstances, there was to be no healing allowed on the Sabbath.
   b) The only exception was a life-threatening situation which, of course, the man with the withered hand did not qualify under that exception.
6) As usual, we are back at the oral tradition.

[32] Bruce B. Barton, *Matthew*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 234–235.

a) Torah never explicitly defines healing or medical treatment of any kind as prohibited work on the Sabbath.

b) Therefore, the prohibition of healing and even the exception are both outside Torah.

7) So, here are the facts at this point:

a) There is no Torah law forbidding rescue of a sheep on the Sabbath.

b) There is no universal oral prohibition in Jesus' time.

c) There *was* debate about method, not principle.

d) Jesus' argument assumes a recognized, merciful practice.

8) Jesus then takes the mercy aspect and applies it to humans and proceeds with the healing.

9) Drat – spoiled again!!!!

10) So, unable to attack him immediately, they go out and conspire against him to destroy him.

11) As we look at this incident, even more than the last perhaps, we must see this as Jesus again teaching people the way they should live – the way they should consider their fellowman.

a) Always wanting to show mercy and help for those in need.

b) That is what God wants.

12) To finish this passage looking at 15 through 21, Matthew uses this incident as a way to again show a fulfillment of prophesy.

Matthew 12:15-21 (ESV)

God's Chosen Servant

15 Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all **16** and ordered them not to make him known. **17** This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

18 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
19 He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
20 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;
21 and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

13) Again here, we see Matthew emphasizing the fulfillment of OT prophesies.