When Religion Threatens Compassion April 16, 2023

*Luke 6:1-11 Series: Through Jesus’ Eyes*

There's something comfortable about reducing Christianity to a list of do's and don'ts. – Robert Roberts

Intro: Everybody has a religion, whether God is behind it or not

1. Religion threatens compassion when your rules don’t allow for mercy
2. Waiting in a field, trying to catch someone who’s hungry

v. 1 *On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.*

Matthew 12:1 *His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.*

Deuteronomy 23:25 *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.*

v. 2 *But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”*

1. God’s laws have always been about mercy

v. 3 *Have you not read what David did when he was hungry …?*

v. 4 *he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests*

Luke 6:36 *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*

Matthew 9:13 *Go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.”*

* Why is reducing Christianity to a list of rules “comfortable”?
* Why do we love to criticize and judge people by our rules?
* What does it mean that God desires mercy not sacrifice?

1. Religion threatens compassion when your rules excuse your hypocrisy
2. So busy trying to criticize that you can’t see people’s needs

v. 6 *he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered*

v. 7 *And 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.*

1. Have your rules made evil good and good evil?

v. 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?”*

Luke 13:14 *But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”*

Mark 3:6 *The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*

1. So busy trying to tear down that you can’t see what God is doing

v. 10 *… he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored.*

v. 11 *But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.*

Luke 15:25, 28 *Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.* *… But he was angry and refused to go in.*

* How could people justify Jesus’ healing as a violation of the Sabbath but not their plotting Jesus’ death?
* Why couldn’t the Pharisees celebrate Jesus’ miracles?
* Have you ever had a time when you couldn’t celebrate someone else’s success? What kept you from doing that?

1. Religion threatens compassion when your rules aren’t set by Jesus
2. Jesus defines the boundaries of compassion and religion not us

v. 5 *And he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”*

John 14:15 *If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*

1. Jesus is the rest that the Sabbath pointed to

Exodus 20:11 *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

Colossians 2:16-17 *Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

Romans 14:5 *One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.*

* What does Jesus’ authority as the “lord of the Sabbath” reveal about Him if the Sabbath was instituted at creation and made a part of the 10 Commandments?
* What’s wrong with us making the decisions about how to show compassion and which commands we can break to be merciful?
* In what sense was the Sabbath “a shadow of the things to come”?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Luke 6:12-19.

Notes