Sabbathtage

I. Slide1 Announce:
   A. Slide2 VBS

II. Slide3 Intro:
   A. Matthew’s Gospel flows logically from his theme...that Jesus is the Messiah of the OT.
      1. Ch’s 1,2 reported the birth of Jesus, and demonstrated its harmony with Old Testament messianic prophecy.
      2. Ch’s 3,4 affirmed Jesus’ full identity with humanity - and His victory over every human weakness. Surely this Person can lead us to victory too.
      3. Ch’s 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, contained Jesus’ explanation of the lifestyle appropriate for those who choose to live in His kingdom.
      4. Ch’s 8-11 proved Jesus’ authority over all that binds human beings. And it also shows that in Jesus, authority is expressed through servanthood - in both Master and disciples.
      5. Now, in ch’s 12-15, we learn of the response of the nation to Jesus and His message. i.e. growing opposition, spearheaded by the Pharisees.
         a) This band of rigid and committed men were quick to see the great gap between Israel’s present lifestyle and Jesus’ kingdom truth.
         b) Paul described them in Rom.10:2,3 I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don’t understand God’s way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God’s way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law.

   B. Slide4 Title: Sabbathtage [Sabotage comes from sabot (Fr. blend of savate/shoe and botte/boot.), so sabotage means to kick with sabots, wooden shoes] Here the Pharisees start kicking at Jesus’ & His disciples for breaking the sabbath.

III. Slide5 LORD OF THE SABBATH (1-8)
   A. Keeping the Sabbath was near the top of the list of Pharisaic virtues, but wasn’t keeping the Sabbath also important to Christ?
1. **Was Jesus throwing off the 4th commandment?**

2. **The difference?** The Pharisees, these *Sabbatarians*, enjoyed their own rigid definition & requirements. Jesus kept the Sabbath as was *intended*.

3. Jesus was Jewish & honored the Law.

4. **The habit** of Jesus was to *observe* the Sabbath as a day of worship in the synagogues.
   a) The Sabbath/rest was principally for *worship*, not just for *rests* sake.

5. Jesus’ failure to comply with *the minute restrictions* of the Pharisaic observance *brought conflict & confrontation*.

**B. Let me unfold the problem:**

1. About 200 yrs before Christ, there arose what was known as *The Great Synagogue*. It took the 10 commandments & the whole Law of Moses & added interpretations.
   a) Not by teaching *the inner spirit* of them, but by *adding to them other* commandments.
   b) Slide6 Example: The Great Synagogue had given 39 prohibitions to interpret the phrase *thou shall do no manner of work*.
   c) Those *prohibitions* were called Abhoth (fathers). Then they added Toldoth (descendants/i.e. descendants of Abhoth)
   d) 1 of the Abhoth prohibitions said, *Reaping is work*. Then the Toldoth (the rules to help you carry out the idea) it says, *plucking the ear of wheat is equal to reaping, & rubbing in the hands is equal to threshing*. [guilty of: reaping, gathering, threshing & winnowing]
   e) So, the disciples by doing this act were breaking Toldoth, & by breaking Toldoth they were breaking Abhoth, & by breaking Abhoth they were breaking *the Law*.

2. Slide7 This is what Jesus is *constantly trampling over…human traditions*. They usually start off *w/good intentions* but always end up *missing the heart of God*.

**C. He referred His critics to the example of David.** When David was desperately hungry, he broke the law by eating the bread of the presence.

1. The OT itself *never* interprets Sabbath Law to demand *going hungry*.
2. If David could do this, *how much more the Son of David?*
3. In the interest of survival David and his companions were allowed to be above the Law with the priest’s blessing.

4. Christ and His companions were also above the man-made law which the Pharisees proclaimed.

5. Wycliffe, “A merciful attitude toward the spiritually needy is far better than the mere formality of religious duties/sacrifices w/o concern for others.”

D. Slide9a (7) I want mercy and not sacrifice - Jesus quotes Hos 6:6 for a second time (9:13).

E. In Hosea 6:4 God has divine doubts about their sincerity to follow Him.
   1. It was a shallow religious revival. Their loyalty drifted like a morning cloud, & dried up like the dew. Here one minute, gone the next.

F. Slide9b(6) Mercy/hesed 275 in OT - Means covenant, loyal, steadfast love. It is a steel-ribbed love
   1. “It’s your stubborn love that never lets go of me.” Kathy Troccoli’s song 1982

G. This scripture must have been one of Jesus’ favorites. He quotes it 2 times & even adds a Go & learn this (Mt.9:13) & here if you only knew what this means (12:7).

H. Mercy to the tax-collectors/sinners (Mt.9). Mercy to the hungry disciples (Mt.12).

I. Slide10 Key: The inner quality of Mercy is far more pleasing to God than the correct performance of rituals.

J. (6b) And the knowledge of God - It’s not what you do or know, it’s who you know.

K. The Pharisees tried to keep the Sabbath by restricting what a person could do on that day.
   1. How do we avoid this sterile approach to worship. Instead of what we don’t do, what do we do to make it a worshipful day/week/life?
   2. In what way are we guilty of phariseeism? Legalism misses His heart every time. His grace is still sufficient for us.

IV. Slide11 HEALING ON THE SABBATH (9-14)
   A. Here Jesus teaches people’s needs trump legal observance.
   B. His actions provide an example of the Hosea passage He quoted in v.7.
C. **Other writings** let us know he was not born with this, but **some illness** had taken the strength from him.

1. We have a few fragments from *The Gospel according to Hebrews* (an Apocryphal NT book) [which were never deemed *canon*, but were quoted from the early church fathers] It said that this man was a **stone mason** & that he sought Jesus to heal him, for his livelihood was in his hands and he was ashamed to beg.

D. The law of the day was that you **couldn’t** give medical attention on the Sabbath unless their life was in danger. [He obviously wasn’t]

E. (10) Interesting, they just knew this man is who he would be attracted to. The one person that was hurting the most.

   1. They just knew He couldn’t pass up **compassion**. What an **unconscious compliment** to our Lord.

F. I believe Jesus is saying here, you are either acting in some way for the person’s recovery, or you are acting for the perpetuation of his misery.

   1. May it be our **new goal** to never leave anyone how you found them.

   2. When we depart from them may their soul be lifted up, encouraged, or brought before the throne of God (in prayer).

G. Slide12 (11,12) Jesus, armed w/*principles* goes to the **heart** of the subject.

H. Which principle do you live by? Do you live by the Pharisees principle *Is it lawful*, or Jesus’ principle *Is it loving*?

   1. Does it feel like **compromise** to ask **is it loving**? Does it feel **more holy** to ask **Is it lawful**?

   2. Does it feel **wimpish** to ask **Is it loving**? Do you feel **more bold** to ask **Is it lawful**?

I. The Pharisees had transformed a day of **blessing** into a day of **bondage**. [It takes great skill to do]

   1. **Original intent?** To provide a day of rest for the children of Israel that would free the people from the tyranny of a life of unending toil.
      a) God gave it for the good of humanity.

   2. It was a principle that is far older than **Judaism**. It goes back to Genesis, to the 7th day in the creative process.
3. But notice if man was made on the 6th day, than this was the 1st day of human existence. Thus, man’s 1st day, was his Sabbath day.

J. Slide13 Know it is always right to do good, & to meet human need, for love fulfills the law. Rom.13:8 he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

K. Christ makes their intention public & whets expectation.

1. Thus He heals him, relieving the man’s suffering & exposing the enemies nastiness.

L. (12) Jesus argues that people’s needs outweigh the needs of animals, for whom their owners could do work on the Sabbath. If Jews were permitted to care for animals in extreme situations on the Sabbath, they should be allowed to do the same for people.

M. (13) In Mark 3:3 Jesus had also asked him to step forward, lit. arise into the midst.

1. Maybe to try to awaken, one last time, sympathy for this man.

2. And probably to make sure everyone could see what was about to take place.

N. (14) The 1st mention in Matthew that the Pharisees want to destroy Jesus.

1. Now the Pharisees were more than critics...they were enemies.

O. Their rigidity to keep the law actually led them to abuse it far worse then they even think Jesus did. (their rigidity led to hate & murder)

1. Jesus was able to look behind the law to see how they were intended for our benefit.

2. Slide14 Their religion was loving ritual. Jesus’ religion was loving God & loving man.

3. Jesus was people-centered. The Pharisees were law-centered.

P. Ps: Jesus did 7 such miracles on the Sabbath so they’d get the point. In short, Sabbath is for man & Christ is Lord of both.

V. Slide15 MY SERVANT, MY BELOVED (15-21)

A. In this brief passage, Matthew identifies Jesus as the servant of Isa 42. This is the longest fulfillment citation in the book.

B. Slide16 (20) Bruised reed He will not break - Emphasizes His kindness to the downtrodden/weak.

1. What’s weaker than a bruised reed or a smoldering wick?
2. NLT *He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle.*

3. Both examples, someone just barely bumps the reed that’s hanging on by a hair & it is dead, or the slightest breath on the failing wick & it’s extinguished.

4. **Weak things** is Jesus’ focus. [some of God’s children are **strong**, Samson relocating the city’s gates. Benaiah who killed 2 *lion-like heroes of Moab* & *Slide17 killed a lion on a snowy day*. **But** the majority of us are a timid, **trembling people**. We’re like the **little shorebirds**(*Sanderlings*) that easily spook playing tag with the waves.

C. We are **weak, feeble, frail, fragile** creatures... *YET* weak as we are, we have Jesus’ promise...He will not break us nor put us out. **Herein is grace & graciousness. Herein is love & lovingkindness.** We never need to shrink back from His touch.

D. *Slide18* We are **pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed.**
   
   *We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.*

   *We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God.*

   *We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.* 2 Cor.4:8,9