

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.
 - a) Slide8 Thus [1] Circumstances justified practice [2] Larger obligations overruled lesser [3] Ceremonial observance is less important than meeting human needs.
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.
- 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.**
- 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.*
- May it be our **new goal** to never leave anyone how you found them.
 - 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?*
- Does it feel like *compromise* to ask **is it loving?** Does it feel *more holy* to ask **Is it lawful?**
 - 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]
- 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*.
 - God gave it for the good of humanity.
 - 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** than 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*