

Having a Heart Like Jesus

March, 2014

We all need constant attitude adjustments.

Seven of the nine beatitudes focus on the condition of our heart.

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

(Hebrews 4:12, ESV)

Jesus' attitude toward the Law

This week's readings focus on Jesus and the Sabbath.

In them we learn about

- ▶ Jesus' authority
- ▶ His merciful application of the Law
- ▶ His common sense approach to teaching the Law.

But first, some history . . .

The Sabbath law was pretty simple

"Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord.

Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.
You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day."

(Exodus 35:2–3)

*"... but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. **On it you shall not do any work**, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."*

(Deuteronomy 5:13–15a)

God took the Sabbath law seriously

*While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. 34 They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him. And **the Lord said to Moses, “The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” 36 And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the Lord commanded Moses.***

(Numbers 15:32–36)

39 Activities Defined as Work by the Mishna

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| ▶ Planting | ▶ Combing wool | ▶ Skinning |
| ▶ Plowing | ▶ Dyeing | ▶ Preserving |
| ▶ Reaping | ▶ Spinning | ▶ Smoothing |
| ▶ Gathering | ▶ Warping | ▶ Scoring |
| ▶ Threshing | ▶ Threading | ▶ Cutting |
| ▶ Winnowing | ▶ Weaving | ▶ Writing |
| ▶ Sorting | ▶ Separating | ▶ Erasing |
| ▶ Grinding | ▶ Tying | ▶ Building |
| ▶ Sifting | ▶ Untying | ▶ Demolition |
| ▶ Kneading | ▶ Sewing | ▶ Extinguishing |
| ▶ Cooking | ▶ Tearing | ▶ Igniting |
| ▶ Shearing | ▶ Trapping | ▶ Finishing |
| ▶ Laundering | ▶ Slaughtering | ▶ Carrying |

Who cares about the Sabbath?

It was clearly important to God.

It was not a very specific command.

It caused the Jews to treat others poorly.

Are there commands like that in the New Testament?

What should my attitude be toward such commands?

I Require Mercy and Not Sacrifice

Jesus is diety

Jesus is merciful

Jesus appeals to reason

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Jesus' works proclaim His Lordship

John 5:1-18

Jesus healed a lame man on the Sabbath
in front of many people.

The Jews knew that He was
claiming equal authority with God.

This made the Jews
want to kill him

Jesus unmistakably says He is from God

John 5:19–47

Jesus has authority

The Son does what He sees the Father doing.

The Father gives life, and the Son gives life.

The Father has given the power of judgement to the Son.

Jesus has witnesses

John the Baptist

Jesus' works

The Father through the Scripture

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me”

(John 5:39)

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Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

Matthew 12:1–8

The disciples pick grain on the Sabbath,
a clear (if small) violation of the Mishna.

But, is it work?

Jesus proves He is Lord
not because He *changes* the Law,
but because He *interprets* it.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

(Matthew 5:17)

Why was David not punished for eating the priests' bread?

Jesus says that it was unlawful.
But, God is merciful.

Think about how many sins Jesus saw every day.

I Require Mercy and Not Sacrifice

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Jesus is merciful

Jesus appeals to reason

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

Matthew 12:9–14

Healing didn't fall exactly in the 39 categories of work.

Jesus heals a man's withered hand.

He appeals to common sense to determine that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath

Correct interpretation of the Bible depends on a proper attitude.

“Helping” Christians apply God’s commands.

These Sabbath traditions were originally designed to help people make application of God’s commands.

This is a dangerous trap for those of us who take God’s commands seriously.

Example:

The New Testament is not very specific “modest” dress. So, well-meaning Christians devised a number of convoluted arguments to tell Christians what modest dress looks like using:

- ▶ The definition of the word *tunic*.
- ▶ The garments that preists wore.
- ▶ Garments worn at the time of Abraham.

I Require Mercy and Not Sacrifice

Jesus is diety

Jesus is merciful

Jesus appeals to reason

Some newer translations leave out John 5:4

For example: ESV, NIV

³ *In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, **waiting for the moving of the water.*** ⁴ *For an angel **went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*** ⁵ *And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*

(John 5:3–5, KJV)

Newer translations are probably right for the following reasons.

- ▶ KJV is from the *Textus Recepticus* whose compiled manuscripts date from 1100 A.D. or later.
- ▶ No manuscripts prior to 500 A.D. contains verse 4.
- ▶ Multiple Greek manuscripts around 900 A.D. have marks questioning the validity of this verse.
- ▶ The verse has multiple words occurring nowhere else in John.
- ▶ The verse has a large number of variants in manuscripts.

Where does “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” come from?

Matthew 1:6

For I desire *steadfast love* and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.
(Hosea 6:6,ESV)

Jesus quotes the LXX, which says *mercy*,
But, the earliest manuscripts say *steadfast love*.

Think about how Hosea had to show mercy;
by taking back a cheating wife.