

Session 9 Jesus' Ministry (Jn. 5; Mt. 12; Mk. 3; Lk. 6)

I. JESUS' SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM (JN. 5)

- A. Jesus returned to Jerusalem for a feast, often seen as His second Passover—April AD 28 (Jn. 5:1). There were three feasts that the Mosaic Law required Jewish males to attend: Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles. John connected his narrative to the Jewish feasts in Jerusalem—Passover (2:13; 6:4), Tabernacles (7:2); Dedication (10:22); and Passover (12:1). This is the only feast that he did not identify. On other occasions, John identified the feast since the teaching that Jesus gave there was relevant to that feast (Jn. 2:13; 6:4; 7:2; 10:22; 12:1). Jesus left Galilee, having just finished this first ministry tour of Galilee (Lk. 4:44).

¹*After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (Jn. 5:1)*

- B. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath in Jerusalem (Jn. 5:2-9). This caused great hostility among the Pharisees. John intentionally developed this hostility in John 5-10. Then Jesus used their opposition to Him healing on the Sabbath to explain His relationship to the Father (Jn. 5:19-47).
- C. Jesus healed an infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath (Jn. 5:2-9). On various occasions, when an angel stirred up the waters, the first person to enter this pool would be healed. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would heal the lame (Isa. 35:6).

²*Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda...*

³*In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴For an angel...stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well...⁵A certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.*

⁶*When Jesus saw him lying there...He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"⁷ The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up..."*

⁸*Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." ...⁹And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. (Jn. 5:2-9)*

1. ***Do you want to be made well?***: This question was an important part of his healing. One of the first steps in receiving healing and living in wholeness is a sincere desire for it. Some people find their identity in their sickness—seeking sympathy or providing an excuse to not attempt something that they might fail at. If they are sick, they have an excuse not to attempt things.
2. ***Take up your bed***: Jesus told him to carry his bed, knowing it was the Sabbath (5:9). By doing this, the man ignited a controversy.
3. ***Sabbath***: Breaking the Sabbath was a capital offense; it could result in being stoned to death.
 - a. God's intention behind the fourth commandment was that people not work on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:9). It was associated with earning a living from one's employment.
 - b. This man did not break the intent of the law, but violated the rabbinic interpretation of it. Rabbinic tradition identified 39 categories of work—including carrying things.

- D. The religious leaders sought to kill Jesus (Jn. 5:10-18). Jesus used this occasion to describe His relationship to His Father (5:17-30). These leaders were not moved by the healing, but only by the fact that their religious code was not being upheld.

¹⁴*Afterward Jesus found him and said, "...Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you"...*

¹⁶*The Jews...sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." ¹⁸Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because... [He] also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (Jn. 5:10-18)*

1. Jesus warned the man not to see his healing as an opportunity to continue in sin (5:14). This man's sickness was related to his sin. Specific sins if persisted in can affect our circumstances (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 Jn. 5:16). This does not mean that everyone who sins will be struck with sickness. John clarified that some sickness isn't the result of someone's sin (9:3).
 2. Many rabbis taught that God works on the Sabbath to uphold creation. Jesus understood that God was constantly at work. God's work includes healing and restoring lives, not just maintaining the material order of the universe. Jesus' point was that since God works on the Sabbath it validated Jesus working on the Sabbath with the Father.
 3. God did not cease His work on the Sabbath, and neither did Jesus. Jesus worked with God. Jesus claimed that His relationship to the law of Moses was the same as God's, not the same as fallen man's. He spoke of His Father, emphasizing their unique Father-Son relationship
- E. Jesus clarified His relationship to God as a Son fully dependent and submitted to Him (Jn. 5:19-21). Jesus does nothing of Himself or on His own initiative. He taught that the Father was greater than the Son (Jn. 14:28). The Father's love for Jesus is manifested in His continuous revealing to the Son all that He does (5:20). Jesus doing whatever the Father does is seen in Jesus having authority to give life to the dead (5:21) and to be the judge who evaluates everyone's life on the last day (5:22).
- ¹⁹*Then Jesus...said to them, "...the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does...²¹For as the Father raises the dead...even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²²For the Father...has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³that all should honor the Son..." (Jn. 5:19-23)*
- F. Jesus will call forth the dead (Jn. 5:24-29). Receiving spiritual life as the new birth now and resurrected physical life at His coming are aspects of His work in the "dead hearing His voice."
- ²⁵*Most assuredly...the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live...²⁸for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Jn. 5:25-29)*
- G. Jesus returned to Galilee by the sea (Jn. 6:1). This probably occurred in May AD 28.
- ¹*After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. (Jn. 6:1)*

II. SABBATH CONTROVERSIES IN GALILEE (MT. 12:1-8; MK. 2:23-28; LK. 6:1-5)

- A. In Capernaum, Jesus gave a parable emphasizing the need to put new wine into new wineskins. This parable was recorded immediately before these next Sabbath conflicts (Mk. 2:18-22; Lk. 5:33-39). The disagreement between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning the way of righteousness and godly lifestyles was related to the principles seen in the parable of old and new wineskins.
- B. The opposition against Jesus began when He forgave sins (Mt. 9:1-8) and escalated when He ate with sinners (Mt. 9:9-13). Now it exploded because Jesus did not honor their legalistic traditions.
- C. Mark's gospel reported events as they occurred chronologically whereas, Matthew reports them according to themes. Matthew put miracles and teachings together without chronology as a priority.
- D. The disciples picked grain on the Sabbath, causing a strong Sabbath controversy in Galilee like that which had just happened in Jerusalem (Mt. 12:1-8; Mk. 2:23-28; Lk. 6:1-5). Jesus had three Sabbath confrontations in a row—one in Jerusalem and two in Galilee (Mt 12:1-8 and Mt. 12:9-14). The ripening of the grain suggests May, so just a few weeks after Passover in Jerusalem (Jn. 5:1).

¹At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ²And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!" ³But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry... ⁴how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?... ⁶I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple." (Mt. 12:1-6)

1. The law allowed people to glean a few ears of grain as they passed by a field (Deut. 23:25).
 2. Jesus appealed to a situation in David's life in the Scripture (1 Sam. 21:1-9). The house of God was the tabernacle that stood at Nob. David and his men ate consecrated bread that only the priests had a right to eat. Scripture did not condemn David for eating the consecrated bread because he was the Lord's anointed king who was fleeing from an evil state that sanctioned the military to kill him. God permitted David to violate the ceremonial law in the face of a life and death issue. Jesus appealed to a time in David's life when Israel's evil leadership was rejecting him. The Son of David was now experiencing similar rejection.
 3. The issue to Jesus was not mostly about understanding the application of Sabbath laws. Jesus made a shocking claim that *Someone greater than the temple is present*—that the Son of Man is with His people as their Messianic King and Lord. The temple was important because it was the place of God's manifest presence (12:6). The presence of God in the person of Jesus was vastly superior. This is a most remarkable statement.
- E. Several months earlier Jesus told the authorities to go and learn about mercy (Mt. 9:13). True spirituality is to result in compassion for people with mercy along with zeal for holiness.

⁷But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. (Mt. 12:7-8)

¹³But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." (Mt. 9:13)

- F. Mark put two significant statements together (Mk. 2:23-28)—the Sabbath was made for man and Jesus was the Lord of the Sabbath. As Messiah, He is the authoritative interpreter of the Law. God's laws are designed to bless and not hurt people. The Pharisees' rigid system condemned and hurt people. Pharisees "condemned people"—this had serious social, legal, and economic implications.

²⁷*And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*

²⁸*Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." (Mk. 2:23-28)*

1. As the Son of Man (v. 5), Jesus was vastly superior to David, and thus He could set aside a Pharisaic tradition for the welfare of His followers. We see Jesus' authority in a new way.
2. Jesus claimed as the Son of Man to be the Lord of the Sabbath. Thus, all the commands related to the Sabbath are under Jesus' authority.

III. JESUS HEALED A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH (MT. 12:9-14)

- A. Jesus used the Sabbath controversies to emphasize His message that the human need is more important than obedience to ceremonial laws and to clarify who has authority to interpret the law.
- B. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath in a synagogue in Galilee (Mt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11).

⁹*Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. They asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him. ¹¹Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored ... ¹⁴The Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. (Mt. 12:9-14)*

1. Rather than avoiding a conflict, Jesus intentionally provoked one to proclaim His message. Jesus offended the mind of these leaders to bring their evil heart intentions to the surface.
2. Jesus' view of the Sabbath was known, so His enemies watched for opportunity to accuse Him legally so to charge Him criminally in the courts.
3. They made a resolute decision to kill Jesus just as the leaders in Jerusalem had done earlier. The Pharisees were not interested in Jesus' argument, but in finding an excuse to kill Him.
4. Jesus justified healing a person on the Sabbath by appealing to a principle all agreed on—pulling an animal out of a pit on the Sabbath. "One" sheep points to a poor farmer. But if kindness can be shown to a sheep on the Sabbath, how much more to a human being!
5. Mark highlighted Jesus' anger and grief at their hardness of heart (Mk. 3:5).

⁵*And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." (Mk. 3:5)*

IV. THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (MT. 12:15–21)

- A. Jesus healed many people near the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 12:15-21; Mk. 3:7-12). Luke 6 does not record this episode in Jesus' ministry of His withdrawal from the hostility to avoid a premature arrest by the conspiring Jewish authorities before it was His time to go to the cross (Mt. 12:15-16).

¹⁵But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all...¹⁷that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah... (Mt. 12:15-17)

1. ***Great multitude:*** Jews and Gentiles gathered to Jesus from seven locations (Mk. 3:7-9).

⁷But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea ⁸and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon...⁹So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. (Mk. 3:7-9)

2. ***Healed them all:*** Jesus' nature and desire is to heal broken lives and bodies.

- B. Isaiah's prophesied of the Messiah coming in humility and even healing Gentiles (Isa. 42:1-4).

¹⁷...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ¹⁸“Behold! My Servant...My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased...He will declare justice to the Gentiles.¹⁹He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. ²⁰A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory;²¹and in His name Gentiles will trust.” (Mt. 12:17-21)

1. Jesus did not come the first time in the way that most expected Him—as a triumphant king, who used power to transform governments and the social order. He came as a humble servant.
2. Jesus came as Messiah in a way that was much more humble and friendly to Gentiles than any expected. He responded to conflict with humility and healed broken hearts more than cities.
3. ***My Beloved in whom My soul is pleased:*** The Father spoke these words over Jesus at His baptism (Mt.3:17) and His transfiguration (Mt. 17:5), declaring His delight in Jesus.
A voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Mt. 3:17)
4. ***He will declare justice:*** Justice is another word for victory. Jesus is committed to establishing justice until it triumphs over all the nations. Jesus did not release judgment on His enemies at His first coming as Isaiah prophesied (Isa. 42:1-4; 61:1-2a; Lk. 4:18-19).
 - a. Three uses of the word *judgment* in Scripture—to evaluate; to punish; and to deliver by making wrongs things right— thus, to deliver from sin, weakness, sickness, etc.
 - b. The judges in the Old Testament brought “deliverance” to God’s people.

5. ***He will not quarrel nor cry out:*** Jesus did not lift His voice in the streets to stir up a political or military revolution against Rome nor to protest the injustices against Him by the scribes and Pharisees. This leadership style was very different from the popular expectation of how the Messiah would come. Israel expected Him to crush Roman opposition at that time.

¹⁹***He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. (Mt. 12:19)***

- a. Isaiah prophesied that God's Servant would establish justice without using military force or violence. Jesus refused to support revolutionary groups such as the Zealots who fought Rome.
- b. At His first coming Jesus responded to mistreatment with great patience, humility, and entrusting the mistreatment against Him into God's hands (1 Pet. 2:23).
- c. He did not quarrel with the Pharisees or any of His enemies, but withdrew from them.
- d. Jesus did rebuke them for their sinful leadership over the people (Mt. 12:25-45); however, Jesus did not argue to convince His enemies to receive His leadership.

- C. ***Victory by compassion:*** Isaiah prophesied that "a bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory."

²⁰***A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax [smoldering wick, NAS, NIV, ESV] He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; ²¹and in His name Gentiles will trust.***
(Mt. 12:20)

1. ***A battered reed:*** This refers to areas of weakness in our life—those areas that are at the point of breaking beyond repair. This describes weak and hurting people who can be easily damaged even by a touch as a battered reed will break if touched by the slightest pressure.
2. ***Smoldering wick:*** This speaks of areas in our life that have not come to full brightness to the measure God ordained for us. A smoldering wick struggles to keep burning. It is flickering. The light is going out. The Lord declares that He will not let it go out, but will bring the fullness of His purpose in our life as we submit to Him leadership with faith and obedience.
3. ***The Gentiles will trust in Him:*** His miracles touched and transformed even Gentiles—this prophecy was to prepare the Jewish people for One who be "Savior of the world" (Jn. 4:42).
4. We see Jesus embracing the cross before wearing the crown. This is way that He called His people to live in the face of injustice and mistreatment— that is, to respond with humility, patience, looking to the Lord to vindicate us in His way and timing.