

## The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S6E19

### Sabbath Breaker Or Sabbath Maker? - Matthew 12:1-8

**Description – Today we examine the encounter with Jesus and the Pharisees, who were accusing Jesus of breaking the Sabbath because his disciples were eating from a grainfield.**

Welcome to the last season of season 6! We'll kick off season 7 and are excited to be going into the sermon on the mount!

#### Matthew 12:1-8

At that time Jesus passed through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat some heads of grain. <sup>2</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "See, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

<sup>3</sup>He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry: <sup>4</sup>how he entered the house of God, and they ate the bread of the Presence—which is not lawful for him or for those with him to eat, but only for the priests? <sup>5</sup>Or haven't you read in the law that on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent? <sup>6</sup>I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. <sup>7</sup>If you had known what this means, I **desire mercy and not sacrifice**, you would not have condemned the innocent. <sup>8</sup>For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Remember, breaking the Sabbath was a huge deal. It was one of the 10 commandments. It was up there with murder and adultery. This is why the religious elite, scribes and pharisees were so upset last week with the man carrying his mat, and now with Jesus's disciples who are picking and eating heads of grain.

#### Exodus 31:12-14

<sup>12</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>13</sup>"Tell the Israelites: You must observe my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, so that you will know that I am the LORD who consecrates you. <sup>14</sup>Observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Whoever profanes it must be put to death. If anyone does work on it, that person must be cut off from his people.

The Pharisees were so bent out of shape over Jesus and his disciples. They thought that if they could prove that his disciples didn't keep the Sabbath and that He, as their Rabbi, had the gall to allow him to do this, then he was a heretic, and worthy of death.

Put yourself in a Jewish person's shoes or sandals. Could they even tolerate a Jewish Rabbi who broke the law and allowed his disciples to break the law? Never. He would be a false teacher, a false messiah, and a heretic.

In the moment, guess how many laws the disciples broke? They were rubbing the heads of grain in their hands, after they had pulled and plucked or harvested the grain. All of it work, on top of traveling/walking.

They broke 4 of the 15 main laws of the Mishna, the oral tradition, oral law of the Pharisees: Reaping, threshing, winnowing and storing.

Were you allowed to take randomly / freely from another persons field? Yes, if you were traveling and not at home.

### **Deuteronomy 23:25**

<sup>25</sup> When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck heads of grain with your hand, but do not put a sickle to your neighbor's grain.

The Torah does suggest that owners of farms leave the corners of farms for the poor, for the needy, and for those who were traveling.

It was taking care of those in need, being and living generously, and taking care of your fellow jewish brothers.

Jesus doesn't debate with the Pharisees about what his disciples were doing. He appeals to two previous legal events.

### **Matthew 12:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry: <sup>4</sup> how he entered the house of God, and they ate the bread of the Presence—which is not lawful for him or for those with him to eat, but only for the priests?"

### **1 Samuel 21:1-6**

David went to the priest Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech was afraid to meet David, so he said to him, "Why are you alone and no one is with you?"

<sup>2</sup> David answered the priest Ahimelech, "The king gave me a mission, but he told me, 'Don't let anyone know anything about the mission I'm sending you on or what I have ordered you to do.' I have stationed my young men at a certain place. <sup>3</sup> Now what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever can be found."

<sup>4</sup> The priest told him, "There is no ordinary bread on hand. However, there is consecrated bread, but the young men may eat it only if they have kept themselves from women."

<sup>5</sup> David answered him, "I swear that women are being kept from us, as always when I go out to battle. The young men's bodies are consecrated even on an ordinary mission, so of course their bodies are consecrated today." <sup>6</sup> So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, for there was no bread there except the Bread of the Presence that had been removed from the presence of the LORD. When the bread was removed, it had been replaced with warm bread.

One of the 7 pieces of furniture in the holy place was a table that held fresh baked bread. They would bake 12 loaves of bread.

David and his men eat the bread, even though it's not the normal pattern. Jesus is pointing out that God allows this to help preserve life on the Sabbath.

But the second legal precedent Jesus points out is here in v. 5

### **Matthew 12:5**

<sup>5</sup> Or haven't you read in the law that on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent?

There are certain commands that supersede other commands. The priests were always technically working, because the temple had to be maintained every day.

If you were ever captured in battle, you could break all 613 commandments, except the "big 3"

1. Idolatry
2. Murder
3. Adultery

Culture / oral law said in a life or death situation you could break these laws, minus the big 3.

God said himself the sacrifices have to be offered continually, daily at 9am and 3pm. So the priests in the temple had to work, even though working on the Sabbath was against the law. Here we see an example of some commands superseding other commands.

The point Jesus is making on these two precedents is that there was a greater need being fulfilled. Human need (hunger) was greater than the sabbath.

### **Matthew 12:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> If you had known what this means, **I desire mercy and not sacrifice**, you would not have condemned the innocent. <sup>8</sup> For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6,

### **Hosea 6:6**

For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

There's a parable here that Jesus taught, about the Hesed, the lovingkindness of God.

Jesus teaches this in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. That the love, kindness, compassion of the Samaritan, overruled the technical law that the Priest and Levite were keeping.

**Luke 10:30-37**

<sup>30</sup> Jesus took up the question and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.'

<sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

<sup>37</sup> "The one who showed mercy to him," he said. Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

Remember, Jesus said he did not come to nullify the law. He said that He had come to fulfill or fill full the law, to complete it to perfection.