

THE FORGOTTEN JESUS PODCAST

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Season 6, Episode 19

Sabbath Breaker or Sabbath Maker?

Matthew 12:1-8 (CSB)

Episode Summary

In this episode, Pastor Robby unpacks a pivotal moment when Jesus confronts the religious elite on their rigid interpretation of Sabbath law. The Pharisees accused Jesus and His disciples of breaking the Sabbath by picking grain. In response, Jesus references David's actions in 1 Samuel 21 and the ongoing temple work by priests as legal precedents. Jesus reveals that mercy, compassion, and human need outweigh ritual compliance—and declares Himself as **Lord of the Sabbath**. Explore Jesus' response to the Pharisees' accusation about Sabbath-breaking and His deeper teaching on mercy, law, and the heart of God.

Discussion Questions (Observation & Interpretation):

1. Why were the Pharisees so upset that Jesus' disciples picked grain on the Sabbath?
2. How does Deuteronomy 23:25 help clarify the disciples' actions?

3. What significance does Jesus' reference to David eating the bread of the Presence (1 Samuel 21) have in this passage?
 4. How do the temple priests "break" the Sabbath law, and why are they considered innocent?
 5. What does Jesus mean by "something greater than the temple is here" in verse 6?
 6. Why does Jesus quote Hosea 6:6 ("I desire mercy, not sacrifice") in response to the Pharisees?
 7. What do we learn about Jesus' authority from His statement, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"?
 8. In what ways were the Pharisees more committed to rules than to people?
 9. How does this passage demonstrate Jesus' heart for human need over religious ritual?
 10. How might Jesus' teaching here have challenged or even offended the religious mindset of His time?
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Application Questions (Reflection & Action):

1. Are there times when I've valued religious practices over showing compassion? What were the results?
2. How can I practice "mercy over sacrifice" in my relationships this week?
3. What legalistic tendencies might I need to repent of?
4. In what ways am I tempted to judge others for not following my religious expectations?
5. What does it look like in our modern context to "work" on the Sabbath, and how should we approach that?
6. How can I better prioritize human need in my small group, church, or community?
7. Who in my life needs to experience God's mercy through me this week?

8. What are some ways I can reflect the compassion of Christ in how I serve others, or ways we as a group can serve others?
 9. How can I begin to see Sabbath not just as a rule to follow, but as a gift from God?
 10. In what ways can we help each other walk in grace rather than performance-based religion?
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Prayer Prompt

“Lord Jesus, thank You for being the Lord of the Sabbath and the perfect embodiment of mercy. Help us to lay down our religious pride and pick up Your heart for people. Teach us to prioritize love over legalism, compassion over tradition, and mercy over sacrifice. Show us where we’ve condemned the innocent and grant us the humility to walk in Your grace. Amen.”



Additional Resources:

1. **CSB Study Bible Notes on Matthew 12** – helpful for understanding context and legal references
2. **The BEMA Discipleship Podcast** – episodes discussing Pharisaic traditions and Sabbath law and Marty’s family value statement for observing the Sabbath
3. **Book: *The Forgotten Jesus* by Robby Gallaty** – especially chapters on Jewish customs and Sabbath
4. **Replicate Ministries Resources** – tools for disciple-making that highlight grace and obedience.
5. **Sermon on Luke 10:25-37 (The Good Samaritan)** – Connects Jesus’ teaching on mercy to action
6. **Exodus 31:12-14** – key text on Sabbath law seriousness
7. **Hosea 6:6 Commentary** – explore the Hebrew concept of *chesed* (faithful love).

8. **Matthew 23** – Jesus’ direct critique of Pharisaic legalism
 9. **Bible Project Video on “Sabbath”** – short visual explanation of Sabbath as rest, not restriction.
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