

Friday, June 12, 2020 ▫ Read Luke 6:6–11

Questions from the Scripture text: What day of the week was it in v6? Where did Jesus go, and what did He do? How was one of the men there afflicted? Who were watching Jesus closely (v7)? What did they expect that He might do? What did they want to do? What did Jesus know (v8)? What did He tell the man with the withered hand to do? What did Jesus ask the scribes and Pharisees in v9? What does He do first in v10? Then what does He do? How do the scribes and Pharisees respond in v11a? What do they discuss?

Perhaps it is because his gospel most particularly targets the Gentiles, who had not previously had God's Word and its instruction about the Sabbath, that Luke focuses so much upon our Lord's keeping of the Sabbath (His custom of always attending public worship on the Sabbath), and the glorious development brought to our Sabbath-keeping by His coming and redemptive work.

In vv1–5, the Spirit emphasized to us that the Sabbath is kept holy by spending it in fellowship with the Lord of the Sabbath, on His day—that the Lord's Day is especially for communing with Jesus. At one point, that meant that if He was in a grainfield, you should be in that grainfield. Now that He sits on the throne of glory, it means that we ought to spend the day especially in the means by which He most draws near to us, and by which He gives us to draw near to Him—especially that holy assembly that He leads from His seat in glory!

Now in vv6–11, the Spirit focuses not so much upon the content of the day as upon the pleasantness of it. Because Jesus is the ever-blessed God, who gives Himself to us to bless us, and gives all other blessing to us, we must see the Lord's Day as a day in which He is seeking to do us the greatest good, and in which we should rejoice both to receive that good and be an instrument by which it comes to others.

The scribes and Pharisees began this particular Sabbath day looking for an opportunity to accuse Jesus (v7) and ended it looking for an opportunity to harm Jesus (v11). But they knew our Redeemer to be One who was always looking for an opportunity to do good to others. They knew that the sight of a man with a withered hand might be something that Jesus's compassion refused to resist (v6–7a, cf. Jn 11:5–6, 14–15, 21, 32).

The Pharisees saw the Sabbath as a burden that must be borne to show the greatness of their zeal. But the Scripture teaches that the Sabbath is a gift that has been given to dispense God's great goodness to us. Building upon what He had revealed about Himself on the previous Sabbath in vv1–5, Jesus now puts to them and to us the question: "just what do you think I, the Lord of the Sabbath, created it for in the first place? To heal or to harm, to save or to kill?"

If we have Pharisaical attitudes toward others that spend the Lord's Day looking for reasons to accuse them, let us grieve to observe that this goes hand in hand with the Pharisees' attitude toward the Lord of the Sabbath—viewing it as a burden that He has lain upon us rather than one of the greatest gifts that He gives us in this season of our walking with Him.

When we desire for others to keep the Lord's Day well, let us do so as those who see the Lord's law as something magnificently pleasant, and who wish for others to enjoy this pleasantness too!

How can we learn the pleasantness of keeping the Lord's Day as something sacred and holy? What will our attitudes about it be like, the more we grow in this? How might we describe it to others, or encourage them to keep the day, if this is how we feel about the 4th commandment?

Suggested songs: ARP92 "It's Good to Thank the Lord" or TPH153 "O Day of Rest and Gladness"