

The Gospel of Luke

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath: Scripture vs. Tradition (II)

Luke 6:6-11¹

Suggested Memory Verse: Titus 3:4-6

1. **The Occasion** (v.6)

Jesus' lifelong habit had been to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Following His baptism, He regularly taught in whatever synagogue He attended (cf. Luke 13:10; Matt 9:35; 13:54).

2. **The Trap is Set** (v.7)

The accepted orthodoxy of Jesus' day was that virtually any action done on the Sabbath that could be construed as 'work' was violation of the Law (cf. v.2). With very few exceptions, this included a prohibition on any actions to improve the health of someone whose sickness or injury would not immediately result in that person's death. If Jesus healed this man, the Pharisees could accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath and have witnesses to corroborate their story.

3. **The Trap is Sprung** (v.8)

Knowing the intention of the Pharisees perfectly (cf. Matt 12:10), Jesus initiates the confrontation by calling the man to Himself. This is the first of many occasions when Jesus seemingly walks right into an inescapable trap set for Him by His opponents (cf. Luke 20:20-22, 27-33).

4. **The Perfect Counter-Attack** (vs.9-10)

Jesus not only understood the question that the Pharisees were asking, but He also understood the wicked thoughts motivating their question (i.e. to accuse Him, v.7). Knowing His reputation for healing, the Pharisees presented a situation where Jesus had to choose healing this man while breaking the Law or to choose to not heal the man and not break the Law. In His response, Jesus shifts the focus of their challenge to the root issue: whether one should choose to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath (cf. Jas 4:17).

5. **The Aftermath of the Conflict** (v.11)

The Pharisees had now been publically shamed by Jesus in their interpretation of the Law, and they responded in an apoplectic rage that led them not only to conspire against Jesus in order to destroy Him (cf. Matt 12:14), but to do so immediately in conjunction with the Herodians (cf. Mark 3:6).

¹ Parallel gospel accounts for this passage can be found in Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6.