



Sabbath Breaker

Pastor John Klawiter

August 21, 2022

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

Luke 13:10-17

Grace and peace to you my friends in Christ,

We might not get it. What's the big deal, why is the leader of the synagogue upset?

Culturally, the Sabbath is not given its proper recognition anymore, but this guys reaction still seems a bit over the top, doesn't it?

Is the leader of the synagogue wrong?

Technically, no. This woman has been like this for 18 years and Sabbath is a big deal! Come on, Jesus, do it on a Wednesday!

Why does he do this? It's so easy for us to point our finger at him in shame—how dare you criticize MY JESUS for doing this miracle? Why are you so upset that it's on the Sabbath?!

Cultural context matters.

I asked one of our members, Dave Cagle, who has extensive life experience with an Orthodox Jewish family, about his impressions of this story.

I remember my Orthodox friends preparing for the Sabbath and it seemed a busy time to do the shopping, prepare the food and house for Sabbath (even to the extent of tearing sheets of toilet paper off the roll and ready for use). Some of them seem trivial but then to turn off all phones, computers, TV's and the like to simply enjoy one another during that 24 hour period is a real blessing.

This is truly a redefinition of our concept of work. The leader in the synagogue isn't mad at Jesus for writing in the scrolls or going to visit someone in the hospital. Jesus heals a woman. Transforms an ailment that's disrupted 18 years of her life.

The leader of the synagogue is oblivious to this miracle and is hung up on how it disrupts the Sabbath rules.

Here's what Dave said about that:



As to healing on the Sabbath, the law prohibits the work of preparing medications or performing surgeries (with the exception of circumcision and childbirth), but the healing that Jesus performed was, as he said, a spiritual freeing of this woman from the evil that had imprisoned her. An act of God, not man.

The leader of the synagogue doesn't believe Jesus is acting on behalf of God. Otherwise, he'd react to this act the same way that the crowd does. They get CRAZY excited when Jesus points out the hypocrisy, don't they?? Like Woodstock 1969, not 1999, crazy!

Jesus is showing a new way of looking at the world. Sometimes, we get so task-oriented and hyper-focused on solving our problems right in front of us. Jesus bends our minds—something as trivial to us as healing a woman on a day held as holy—just wasn't done.

I struggle with that. I love order and predictability. I want to know what's coming up next. I want the answers to make sense without creating more confusion.

Life rarely follows our step-by-step expectations. Does Jesus ever take us beyond what we know? You bet he does. What does that look like and how can we maintain trust in those moments?

It's like a famous math problem. I'm not gonna explain it, I'm gonna show you:

I remember when I first received the 9 dot challenge. I was stumped. Finally, after trial and error and perhaps a hint, it made sense.

Often, our minds can only solve what we know to be true.

Theologian Robert Capon makes a great observation about why this can be difficult, especially in a church or synagogue.

Whenever someone attempts to introduce a radically different insight to people whose minds have been formed by an old and well-worked-out way of thinking, he is up against an obstacle.

The new insight is always at odds with the old way of looking at things. Even if the teacher's audience were to try earnestly to take it in, the only intellectual devices they have to pick it up with are the categories of the old system with which it conflicts. Their minds will understand the new only insofar as it can be made to agree with the old -- which is not at all.

The leader of the synagogue can't see the new way. He can't see that God is at work... the same God he presumes to know about and teach about day in and day out at the synagogue.



Thus, he misses out.

Dave Cagle put it in a helpful frame of mind when he also told me that “we get too focused on the laws or rules surrounding the Sabbath and miss the great blessing that the Sabbath truly is. It is a time that is spent with family and friends that is uninterrupted by the troubles of the world which, in this day and time, is very rare.

Abraham Joshua Heschel in his book “The Sabbath” writes; “the Sabbath was given to us by God for joy, for delight, for rest and should not be marred by worry or grief.”

“The world which was created in six days was a world without a soul. It was on the seventh day that the world was given a soul.”

Basically, all work, no being. The 7th day gives us purpose for the rest of our days.

I love that reframing of the Sabbath, don't you?

Rest. Sabbath. Rejuvenation. We might not have to pre-tear our toilet paper or avoid all our responsibilities, but what if we reclaim our Sabbath?

What would that look like?

The funeral for Mary Mehus was on Friday. I loved to share stories of her time here at Faith. She was a Befriender, helped with the Hugo Family Shelter, and she provided a brilliant theological understanding of her preference off the new version of the Lord's Prayer because God doesn't lead us into temptation, but we do want to pray that God saves us from the time of trial.

As I was leaving the funeral home, one of her neighbors came up to me and said, “Mary loved to go for long walks every morning. Really long walks, like for 5 miles. I would ask her if I could come and she said no.”

This shocked me. Mary was known for being so friendly and willing to step up and help anyone!

“No?” I asked. “Why didn't she want you to come along.”

Her neighbor said it was her sabbath. That was her time with God. She would spend the whole 5 miles in conversation with God.

Wow, right???

Jesus is doing advanced calculus while we are doing basic addition. His teaching and explanation of the kingdom of heaven don't fully make sense to the audience of **his** day.

His teaching still causes vastly different responses to **this** day.



Most times, we love the law. We are like the leader of the synagogue. We want God's law to dictate how everyone else should behave.

Jesus, continues to disrupt our lives. Thank God. **This is how we encounter exponential growth.** This is how we learn and deepen our understanding.

God's grace is one of the most important reasons we participate with church. We have an active faith. To pray over the waters of baptism. To receive the body and blood. To be led by the Spirit to share God's grace.

I know what you're thinking, how could ANYONE love us that much??? It just doesn't add up! **Yet, here we are (vectors).** Our time of sabbath reminds us that the formula isn't about us, it's about God.

God's love. The Power of the Holy Spirit, the love of Christ, and our response to grace. God goes beyond the realm of our understanding to show us salvation. To bring us new life. To care for this beautiful creation.

Praise God for providing us that solution through the love of Jesus. Amen.