



Sermon, Sunday January 8, 2023 "Jesus Christ Is Lord of the Sabbath"

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 12:9-21 ⁹ He left that place and entered their synagogue; ¹⁰ a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. ¹¹ He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹² How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³ Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him. ¹⁵ When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many followed him, and he cured all of them, ¹⁶ and he ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁸ "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the gentiles. ¹⁹ He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. ²¹ And in his name the gentiles will hope."

Introduction: What is a Christian?

Today is the first week after Epiphany. Epiphany is derived from the Greek word "Epiphania," which means "appearing."

Also, Epiphany, a Christian holiday older than Christmas, focuses on the birth of Jesus, God's incarnation as Jesus Christ, and Christ's baptism. As the word epiphany shows, the focus of the Christian life of faith is the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

As you know, a Christian is someone who believes in Jesus. Believing in Jesus does not stop at knowing about Him intellectually, but it is to imitate the life of Jesus. So, for the Apostle Paul, his goal throughout his life was "to become one with Jesus." (Philippians 3:10-14)

Our imitation of Jesus is accomplished through participation in Christ's character and union with Him. **So, 1 Corinthians 11:1 says; "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."** To imitate Jesus in this passage is to become like his character.

However, sometimes we try to achieve sanctification through our will and effort. However, sanctification does not come about through our will and effort alone. In other words, through our willingness and effort we are spending a lot of time reading the Bible, taking regular prayer time with the Lord, and doing good to our neighbors, but sanctification will not be accomplished through only these.

Sanctification is what the Lord accomplishes in us when we realize that we are sinners through the grace of the Holy Spirit, confess that there is no true peace and rest in our lives without the love of Christ, and accept Jesus as our Savior.

By the way, please don't misunderstand me. The fact that the Lord is sanctified in us does not mean that our efforts and labor are meaningless. Furthermore, I am not saying that there is no point in trying to live a good life ethically and morally.



Our efforts to imitate Christ through our will to live the ethical and moral life that Jesus lived, are not enough for sanctification. The appearance of trying to achieve an ethical and moral life through our will and efforts may also be found in other religions and non-Christians with strong will.

Sanctification begins when the grace of the Lord exposes our sin and through it convicts us of sin. Also, we must acknowledge the size of the grace of the Lord who forgave our sins. Sanctification is accomplished when the Holy Spirit within us unites us with the Lord. Christians are not slaves to sin and living a legal life, but we are people who enjoy true freedom in Christ. Through the life and character of Jesus shown in today's passage, I hope that we will have the grace to open our hearts to Jesus more widely.

Body: Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath

Today's text is the second Sabbath argument between the Pharisees and Jesus. Matthew 12:1-8 describes the Pharisees' criticism of Jesus' disciples for picking grain and eating it because they were hungry as they passed through the wheat fields. The Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of not keeping the Sabbath law. Jesus and the Pharisees have an argument over this issue, and this is the first Sabbath argument.

In today's passage following the first Sabbath argument, Jesus' action is described as going to the synagogue on the Sabbath and healing a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees accuse Jesus of not keeping the Sabbath rules because of these actions and conspire to kill Him.

By the way, through the Sabbath argument between Jesus and the Pharisees, we see the character of Jesus that we should imitate. We must clearly realize that Jesus is the object of our complete faith through the life of Jesus.

In today's text of Matthew 12, Isaiah 42:1-3 is quoted. This verse expresses well the character of Jesus Christ. **In particular, the phrase “He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory.” in Matthew 12:20.**

There are many verses in the Bible where the Lord expressed His character and what His disciples said about Him. **Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” The apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 2:23 about Jesus, “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”**

The words **“a bruised reed he does not break, and a smoldering wick he does not quench”** in today's text clearly show the meek character of Jesus.

We know that Jesus bore the cross alone and died in agony. The Lord chose this path not because He was weak. He endured the cross because he loved us and was humble and meek.

Matthew 12:20 shows the meek nature of Jesus, but also describes human weakness. This verse describes us as a **“bruised reed”** or a **“smoldering wick”**

As in today's passage, the Lord's character is merciful and does not break a bruised reed. Nor does he quench the smoldering wick. However, the world is different from the Lord and breaks us, who are like a “bruised reed.” Also, the world turns off the wick of us, the light that should light the world, but Jesus protects us so that the wick can shine again.

The Lord's character is kind and reawakens our dying reason, conscience, and soul and uses it as a light that can shine brightly in a dark world. The reason why Jesus came to this earth is to achieve this purpose. The Bible describes many stories of Jesus not breaking a bruised reed or quenching a smoldering wick.

The Gospel of John, chapter 8, describes the teachers of the law and the Pharisees when they brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group



and said to Jesus, "**Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?**" (John 8:5). Regarding this, Jesus said, "**If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.**" (John 8:7) At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus said to the woman, "**Neither do I condemn you; Go now and leave your life of sin.**" (John 8:11)

Jesus does not condemn. However, the world and people use their righteousness as an excuse to condemn others, break the bruised reed, and quench the smoldering wick.

In today's text, the Pharisees and Jesus argue about the Sabbath. For the Pharisees, who consider themselves godly, keeping the law takes precedence over saving lives. The Pharisees keep the Sabbath as a rule, condemning themselves as righteous people and Jesus and His disciples as unrighteous people. Examples of this can be found in many of our lives and beliefs today. Those who live in captivity of the law wrap their righteousness in God's righteousness and condemn people. In such a place, true love of the cross does not exist. Who is Lord of the Sabbath? Is it our own righteousness or the love of Jesus Christ?

Conclusion: Who owns our lives?

Now let's summarize today's message. Ecclesiastes 1:8 says: "**All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.**"

As in this verse, our eyes are not satisfied with seeing, and our ears are not filled with hearing. Rich people want more money, and powerful people want more power. Also, those who live honorable lives desire greater honor. We are not satisfied. However, when we, like a bruised reed or a smoldering wick, look to the Lord, see our sinful nature reflected in His grace, and entrust our lives to Jesus, we can experience true rest. What I sincerely hope is that the owner of our lives is not our desires, but Jesus Christ, the source of love.

