



# **MATTHEW**

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

## **The King of the Sabbath!**

**Matthew 12:1-21**

Message #32 of 80 – S1062

**Sermon given on September 10, 2023**



Sunday Morning Service

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# The King of the Sabbath!

*Matthew 12:1-21*

## Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 12**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

## Teaching

- **The King of the Sabbath!**
- Let's read a few verses out of the last chapter because they set the stage for the beginning of chapter 12.
- **Matthew 11:28-30**
- No matter how restless this world become, we can find rest in Christ.
- He is the source of our rest.
- **Matthew 12:1a**
- Sabbath is mentioned 172 times in the Bible, but interestingly only once after the book of Acts.
- The Sabbath is a remembrance of God resting on the seventh day of creation.
- God then gave the descendants of Abraham through Moses the Sabbath as a day of rest from their regular work so that they could think about and worship God.
- Over time the Jews shifted the focus more heavily to worship and then increasingly made Sabbath a religious exercise.
- The Sabbath rules became so burdensome that it became difficult to rest or worship.
- AOne of the rules involves something the disciples are about to do.
- **Matthew 12:1b**
- The Law of Moses allowed for this kind of thing (**Deuteronomy 23:24-25**).

**When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put *any* in your container. <sup>25</sup> When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.**

- If someone was hungry and away from home, they could eat their fill from the fields of others.
- The Pharisees are not happy.
- **Matthew 12:2-5**
- The Pharisees were a sect of Judaism that insisted on strict adherence to the Law of Moses.
- They developed a list of 613 rules that had to be followed to be considered a good Jew.
- Jesus came along and turned many of those rules on their head because they did not come from God (**Mark 7:6-8**).

He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. <sup>7</sup>And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

- According to the Law of Moses no regular work was allowed on the Sabbath.
- Someone interpreted the plucking of a handful of grain and rubbing it between your hands as harvesting and threshing.
- Jesus is reminds them of the time David, while he was fleeing from King Saul, asked the priest Ahimelech for something to eat.
- All the priest had was the showbread that had been replaced.
- David was hungry and the priest gave him the only thing he had.
- Jesus is saying that what Ahimelech did was good and right, even though it wasn’t ‘lawful’.
- Then Jesus says something that would have shocked the Pharisees.

- **Matthew 12:6**

- The Jews associated God’s presence with the tabernacle/temple.
- The temple existed as a place where people could focus their worship of God.
- It was not God! Most Jews would never have an encounter with God, not even in the temple.
- Jesus, God in the flesh, was right there.
- As believers, we are the temple of God and God the Holy Spirit dwells within us (**1 Corinthians 3:16**).

**Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?**

- For the Jews, they had to travel to Jerusalem to the temple in hopes that they might have an encounter with God.
- As Believers, everywhere we go, God is with us – and by faith we can have an encounter with the living God any time we desire.
- Jesus then tells them where their error is.
- **Matthew 12:7**
- He had quoted this verse from Hosea 6:6 a couple of chapters ago.
- The Pharisees were judging the disciples as lawbreakers.
- Jesus then accuses them of not understanding the meaning of the Scriptures.
- This ought to serve as a warning to anyone who might be tempted to judge or condemn others.
- In humility we ought to seek the Lord for His wisdom and discernment.
- We also ought to ask God if mercy is the right response – which it usually is.
- Then Jesus makes a statement that was very controversial.
- **Matthew 12:8**
- ‘Son of Man’ is a title associated with the Messiah from Daniel 7:13.
- In essence Jesus is saying that man has no authority to make the rules regarding the Sabbath – that is God’s authority.
- This account leads right into another confrontation with the religious Jews.
- **Matthew 12:9-10**
- They had no interest in healing the man.
- Their only thought was trapping Jesus into doing or saying something they could accuse Him of.
- They do not appear to express any compassion for the suffering of this man.
- In their minds, this healing was an impossible thing, and so may have felt justified to use this man’s suffering as a weapon against Jesus.
- Jesus uses these encounters to challenge their wrong ideas and call them to repent and return to God.
- **Matthew 12:11-13**

- This was a deliberate act on Jesus' part to confront the Pharisees with their hard-hearted legalism that was contrary to God's heart.
- Jesus didn't have to heal the man on the Sabbath, but He did to expose their wrong understanding of God and His Word.
- **Matthew 12:14**
- Religious legalism always leads to hardness of heart toward the suffering of others.
- The unconverted person hates God.
- They may or may not express that hatred but when confronted with holiness and godliness, that hatred will present itself.
- It should surprise no true believer in Christ when someone objects to your example of Christ.
- They are not responding to you but to the God who is living out of you.
- Jesus warned us that being hated was one of the costs of being one of His disciples (**John 15:18-19**).

**If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**

- Jesus doesn't hang around and wait for them to do something – He has more work to do.
- **Matthew 12:15-21**
- Notice - All three persons of the Triune Godhead are mentioned in verse 18.
- A 'bruised reed' is weak. Jesus will not put so great a burden on someone that believing in Jesus will crush them.
- With the weak, Jesus is tender and gentle.
- A 'smoking flax' is a picture of someone whose faith is weak.
- This could be a believer who struggles with sin and repentance.
- Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to blow gently on that ember until it bursts into flame.
- Weak faith is better than no faith. Because Jesus is so compassionate, He reaches out to the weak ones more than the strong ones.
- This should be an exhortation to us all – be careful with those who are spiritually weak – be tender and gentle.

- This should be a comfort to anyone who might despair over the quality or measure of their faith.
- It should encourage those who struggle to gain a victory over the sin in their lives.
- Jesus is going to work with what you have until He achieves the victory.
- The tiniest spark of faith is better than the utter darkness of unbelief.
- Don't let the great deceiver, Satan tell you that you are not good enough for Jesus.
- The tiniest bit of faith can move mountains and it moves the heart of God.
- Let's pray and ask God for more faith. **Pray!**
- We are going to partake of Communion this morning.
- Communion is for anyone who has even the tiniest, weakest, most stumbling faith.
- It is a time to remember what Jesus did for us.
- He came as a man, just like us, so that He could die for our sins.
- When we believe that and repent of our sins, He forgives us and makes us one of His people.
- And then all the promises of God are available to us – including the promise of rest.
- As David comes up and the men pass out the elements, take a few moments to examine your heart.
- Are you experiencing God's rest? If not – ask God to help you to find His rest in your life.
- Take a few moments and examine your heart.
- **1 Corinthians 11:23-24**
- Pray over the bread. Partake.
- **1 Corinthians 11:25-26**
- Pray over the cup. Partake.
- Jesus is your rest.
- If you are struggling to find that rest – come, let us pray with you.
- Otherwise – have a radical week in Jesus!