

January 31

Luke 6:1-16

Healing on the Sabbath

Children's Message: Remember that with great power comes greater responsibility. When you have an amazing ability or talent you have to be very careful where and when you use it.

Jesus has the power to heal people and to make them better. He can open the eyes of the blind, make the deaf hear, the lame to walk and to make the lepers clean. We would think that this is very wonderful and good. However there were some self-righteous or judgemental people who did not want Jesus to do any of that on the Sabbath. For the Jews the Sabbath was Friday evening until Saturday evening. This time was considered holy and had a lot of restrictions about what you could and could not do. Work was something you could not do. So these people wanted to restrict when Jesus could heal somebody, because they considered that work. These people had no idea that Jesus was the Son of God. Yet Jesus tells them that He is in verse five.

Let's think outside of the box this Sabbath. What an amazing way to praise God that to heal the blind, deaf, lame and lepers. It is a beautiful way of giving praise to God. Jesus is praising His Father by restoring these people to the way God intended them to be. Doing this on the Sabbath is the most appropriate and fitting day. On the very day God rested, His creation is continuing on and repairing itself. This all points

to God and gives glory to Him. However the Pharisees could not see this. Their vision was blinded by their understanding of the law.

Jesus said that He came to serve and not to be served. He is serving by healing people. To Him the day does not matter. Everyday could be the Sabbath and He would still serve humanity by healing people. Maybe we should consider everyday as the Sabbath. That all days are holy regardless of what we call it.

God's grace, power and energy really flowed through Jesus. The Pharisees wanted to restrict and stop that. Thankfully Jesus would not allow that to happen. He continued to heal people. Ask yourself, how do I keep God's energy, grace and power flowing in my life and to those around me? Do you ever stop and think about the gifts and talents God has given me and how do I use them?

Adult's Message: This story is a continuation of the Three Sabbaths stories in Luke. They all are concerning the proper observation of the Sabbath and the challenges Jesus receives from the Pharisees.

This morning's story of Jesus and His followers going through a grain field is told also in Mark and Matthew. Jesus was open and welcoming to all. Even to have Pharisees in His travelling company.

What we might see as a trivial violation of the Sabbath this morning is a concern for these Pharisees. We would not think anything of what the disciples did. They were hungry. The grain was available and they ate. Jesus knew that the Pharisees were being petty and making mountains out of mole hills. The plucking of a few heads of grain in a neighbor's field is permitted by the law. Deut 23:25, "If you go into your

neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hands, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbors standing grain." Using a sickle then becomes work. Jesus knew this and He knew the Pharisees knew it too. What His disciples were doing was eating and not reaping.

Then Our Lord reminds the Pharisees of what David did with the show bread in the temple. How he and his men ate the bread that only the priest could eat. This is in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. Abiathar was appointed the High Priest during David's reign. Yet his father Ahmielech was the one who provided David and his men who were starving with the show bread. In Mark's account of the story, Jesus quotes a rabbinical passage from their literature. The Sabbath has been given to you, you have not been given to the Sabbath. These Pharisees have just been schooled by the Master. Jesus interprets the law with authority. That is why He can say that He is Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus reminds them about who He is. They do not understand because they are blinded by their understanding of the Sabbath.

Now we can get into the issue of healing on the Sabbath. From a Pharisee's perspective healing was considered work and was not permissible on that day. They firmly believed that they were serving God by being zealous for traditions they created around the Sabbath. It is not about God any more but their laws and understanding of what the Sabbath is. Naturally they saw Jesus as a lawbreaker. Their dedication to their rigid legalisms made them insensitive to God's priorities. They lost their compassion.

It is in these stories of healing on the Sabbath that we see Jesus's true human nature. Our Lord cares about people and making them whole. People are more important. Showing mercy and compassion is more

important than man made traditions. In ministry we call it pastoral common sense. To be able to meet the needs of God children and ease any suffering. There are times when the institutional church rules need to be stretched if they prevent people being made whole or healed. Many times it is easier to ask for forgiveness than it is to get permission. This is exactly what Jesus is doing when He restores the man's withered right hand. There are times tradition gets in the way and may need to be stretched. It usually comes back to true.

This morning's stories are about being human. The greatest human qualities are mercy and compassion. Jesus gives us great examples of this. That as God is merciful and compassionate to us, so we should be to those around us. Traditions are there to guide us. They are not God, who is merciful and compassionate.

God Bless and stay warm, Pastor D