

### Jesus Healed on the Sabbath

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize that those who continually seek to condemn others rather than show mercy have wrong heart attitudes just as the Pharisees had in the time of Jesus. In this topic, we will see that the Pharisees began to plot to destroy Jesus because of these heart attitudes.

Jesus and His disciples had been confronted by the Pharisees as they walked through the fields. We go on to see that they were on their way to the synagogue. Matthew 12:9-10 says, “Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’—that they might accuse Him.” Here, we see that the Pharisees followed Jesus right into the synagogue. There happened to be a man at the synagogue that had a withered hand. The word translated “withered” speaks of a part of the body that is withered or of something that is dried up because of a lack of water. This second meaning is the way the word is used in Luke 23:31 where we read, “‘For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?’” Jesus used this illustration as He spoke to the women who were mourning for Him as He was led to the cross.

However, here the word speaks of an arm and hand that is much smaller than the other hand. Jesus knew that the Pharisees were watching Him closely. Luke 6:7-8 says, “So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, ‘Arise and stand here.’ And he arose and stood.” Luke mentioned that it was both scribes and Pharisees that were watching Jesus closely. Many of the Pharisees were also scribes and made their living by copying books of the Old Testament. They were considered experts on the Old Testament because they spent much time making copies of the various books.

Jesus knew that they were looking for an excuse to accuse Him because Luke tells us that He knew their thoughts. The fact that Jesus knew their thoughts was another proof that He is God and knows all things. 1 Corinthians 2:11 says, “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” This verse makes it clear that a man can only know his own thoughts. In contrast, Jesus is God and He knew the thoughts of each person that was in the synagogue that day. Jesus told the man to stand up so that everyone could see him. That gave the Pharisees the opportunity to ask Jesus their question so that they could try to trap Jesus. Jesus had just told them out in the fields that it was lawful for the disciples to break off kernels of grain and eat them. This time, they thought that they might be able to find an excuse to accuse Jesus. As a result, they asked, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

Instead of answering their question immediately, Jesus asked the Pharisees a question. Matthew 12:11-13 says, “Then He said to them, ‘What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if

it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.’ Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other.” Jesus just asked the Pharisees what they would do if they had a sheep fall into a pit on the Sabbath. Many times, a pit has water in the bottom of the pit. If a sheep fell into a pit with water in it, the sheep would drown if it was not pulled out of the pit very soon. Jesus knew that was exactly what the Pharisees would do in that situation and so He answered the question. He said that they would take hold of the sheep and lift it out of the pit immediately. They would not leave the sheep in the pit until the next day.

Jesus then went on to point out the fact that a man has much more value than a sheep. In fact, Mark 8:36-37 points out the fact that God places a very high value on the life of each person. Those verses say, “‘For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” By this statement, Jesus made it clear that the value of one person is worth more than all of the riches in the world. However, Jesus did more than just speak about the value of each human life. He paid the penalty to make it possible to save each of us for all eternity. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” This verse reminds us that Jesus paid the price to provide spiritual life for each one who will repent of their sin of unbelief and receive Jesus by faith.

Then, Jesus taught a very key principle not only for the Pharisees that day but for every person since that time. Jesus said, “Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” This word that is translated “good” means *the things that are excellent, right or well*. It is the word used in Matthew 5:44 where we read, “‘But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.’” In this verse, we see that we are to do things that are excellent and right even to those who hate us.

In Galatians 6:10, we have an even stronger word for “good”. Galatians 6:9-10 says, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” This word translated “good” means *that which is upright, honorable, or good in its character and beneficial in its effect*. Here, we see that Christians are to do good to all, including those who are not Christians. The word that is translated “opportunity” means *a fixed period of time*. That fixed period of time refers to the length of our lives. Together, these passages and the two different words for “good” emphasize the fact that Christians have been placed on this earth to do that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects to all people, especially to Christians, as long as the Lord gives us time on this earth.

Jesus then showed the Pharisees that it is right to do good on the Sabbath. Jesus told the man with the withered hand to stretch out his hand. Jesus gave this man the opportunity to show his faith by obedience. The man immediately stretched out his hand and his hand was restored as whole as the other. The word translated “restore” means *to restore or to be in its former state*. In this verse, we see that it has a somewhat different meaning. This verse says that it was restored so that it was

as whole as the other hand. The word “whole” means *sound*. As a result, this man had his hand and arm restored so that both hands and arms were completely normal.

However, the Pharisees were not happy at all because Jesus had shown them twice in one morning what the Old Testament really means and that their interpretations were wrong. Matthew 12:14-15 says, “Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew *it*, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.” Here, we see that the Pharisees now had one goal. The word translated “plotted” is usually translated “council” and means *to have an assembly to deliberate and reach a decision*. The verse says that the reason for their council was to reach a decision about the way that they would destroy Jesus. The word translated “destroy” means *to put an end to, to kill, to declare that one must be put to death or to speak of eternal judgment*. This is the same word that was used the night before Jesus was crucified. John 18:13-14 says, “And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” The Sanhedrin meeting as a council condemned Jesus to death that night.

However, at this time, it was not yet the time or the place for Jesus to die. We see that Jesus withdrew from that area because Jesus knew what the Pharisees were planning. We see that there was a great difference between the attitude of the Pharisees and many of the other people. Jesus left that area and great crowds of people followed Him. We will see in the next several chapters that Jesus had many more things to do before the time would come for Him to die. He was going to die at the exact time that the Father planned for Him to die and not at the time the Pharisees and other religious leaders wanted Him to die.

We read that as Jesus went to another area, He healed all that came to Him. In the Old Testament, there had been some miracles including healing, especially involving three people: Moses, Elijah and Elisha. A short time before Elijah was taken to heaven, he asked Elisha a question. 2 Kings 2:9 says, “And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?’ Elisha said, ‘Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’” God honored the request of Elisha. The Old Testament records seven miracles during the time that Elijah was a prophet. It records fourteen miracles during the time of Elisha. That was the period that the greatest number of healings in the Old Testament are recorded. In contrast, we see that Jesus healed all those who came to Him. In our next topic, we will see that this was to fulfill a promise in the Old Testament made by Isaiah.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that one of the things that Jesus did was to make sure that He fulfilled all of the prophecies that had been written about His first coming to earth. Throughout His ministry, Jesus made certain that everything He did was to carry out the will of the Father. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why it is also important for us to do His will.