# Lesson 15 Matthew 12:1-50 Pharisees React – Sign of Jonah

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

1. A Under Jewish Law it was permissible to pick grain from a neighbor’s field with your hands. But under the Sabbath rules, picking was harvesting and separating chaff was threshing, both impermissible work on the Sabbath. Jesus notes two exceptions, King David and his band eating the bread of offering and the priests preparing the bread of the offering in the Temple on the Sabbath. King David’s band was on a military expedition which granted them an exemption. Who was allowed to eat the bread of offering? See 1 Samuel 21:5-6.

Matthew 12:1-5

1 At that time Jesus was going through a field of grain on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat them.

2 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “See, your disciples are doing what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.”

3 He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry,

4 how he went into the house of God and ate the bread of offering, which neither he nor his companions but only the priests could lawfully eat?

5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests serving in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent?

1 Samuel 21:5-6

5 But the priest replied to David, “I have no ordinary bread on hand, only holy bread; if the men have abstained from women, you may eat some of that.”

6 David answered the priest: “We have indeed stayed away from women. In the past whenever I went out on a campaign, all the young men were consecrated

B The second exemption is for priests working in the Temple preparing the bread of offering. To the First Century Jew, what could be greater than the Temple?

Matthew 12:5-6

5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests serving in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent?

6 I say to you, something greater than the temple is here.

1. Look again carefully at the exceptions and Jesus’ claim in the verses given. (Hint: The bread of offering consisted of twelve unleavened flat wafers of bread offered on a table with wine. Bread of offering can also be translated “bread of the face of God”.) What is Jesus saying about

* Himself?
* Those serving Him?
* Those who will be serving Him in the future to this day?

1. A. Challenge question: Early in His ministry, Jesus provokes a deliberate confrontation with the Pharisees. There are three points in Mark 3:3-5 (underlined) that heighten the drama. Why do you think Jesus so openly challenged the Pharisees?

Matthew 12:9-14

9 Moving on from there, he went into their synagogue.

10 And behold, there was a man there who had a withered hand. They questioned him, “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?” so that they might accuse him.

11 He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep that falls into a pit on the Sabbath will not take hold of it and lift it out?

12 How much more valuable a person is 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 took counsel against him to put him to death.

Mark 3:3-4

3He said to the man with the withered hand, “Come up here before us.”

4Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?” But they remained silent.

5 Looking around at them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart, he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out and his hand was restored

B In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to be angry was to commit murder. When Jesus became angry at their refusal to answer His question (Mark 3:5), is Jesus violating His own commandment about anger? Why or why not?

Matthew 5:22

22 But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

1. In response to the scribes and Pharisees request for a sign, Jesus tells them. “No sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.”(Repeated in Matthew 16:4) This sign is usually interpreted in reference to verse 40. However, if you read Jonah 2:1-7, there is a much more powerful sign that Jesus will give.

Matthew 12:38-42

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher,\* we wish to see a sign from you.”

39 He said to them in reply, “An evil and unfaithful\* generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.

40 Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

41 At the judgment, the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and there is something greater than Jonah here.

42 At the judgment the queen of the south will arise with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than Solomon here.

Jonah 2:1-7

1 But the LORD sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

2 Jonah prayed to the LORD, his God, from the belly of the fish:

3 Out of my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me; from the womb of Sheol I cried for help, and you heard my voice.

4 You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the flood enveloped me; All your breakers and your billows passed over me.

5 Then I said, “I am banished from your sight! How will I again look upon your holy temple?”

6 The waters surged around me up to my neck; the deep enveloped me; seaweed wrapped around my head.

7 I went down to the roots of the mountains; to the land whose bars closed behind me forever, but you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD, my God

A. What does Jonah 2:3, 5-7 say about Jonah’s actual condition?

B What does the last half of Jonah 2:7 tell us is the “sign of Jonah” and how is it a sign of Jesus at the end of the three days and three nights in the tomb?

C Challenge question: Jesus died on Friday afternoon and was raised up on Sunday morning. How is that consistent with “three days and three nights in the tomb?”

1. A. What is Jesus saying about one who has had his sins forgiven and, then, relapses back into his old sinful ways?

Matthew 12:43-44

43 “When an unclean spirit goes out of a person it roams through arid regions searching for rest but finds none.

44 Then it says, ‘I will return to my home from which I came.’ But upon returning, it finds it empty, swept clean, and put in order.

45 Then it goes and brings back with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they move in and dwell there; and the last condition of that person is worse than the first. Thus it will be with this evil generation.”

B When one lapses back into sin after being forgiven, what does that say about our acceptance of God’s Grace?

Catechism 678

678 Following in the steps of the prophets and John the Baptist, Jesus announced the judgment of the Last Day in his preaching. Then will the conduct of each one and the secrets of hearts be brought to light. Then will the culpable unbelief that counted the offer of God's grace as nothing be condemned. Our attitude to our neighbor will disclose acceptance or refusal of grace and divine love. On the Last Day Jesus will say: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."