

## **Rediscover Jesus (Luke 4-9)**

### **Part 9: “Jesus and the Sabbath” | Luke 6:1-11**

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[SERMON MANUSCRIPT]

### **Introduction**

Today's sermon is called “Jesus and the Sabbath” and it's from Luke 6:1-11. We are in this sermon series this year called “Rediscover Jesus,” where we are studying the life and ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Luke from chapters 4-9. We want to see Jesus from a fresh perspective of Jesus that will lead to a fresh perspective of who we are as a church of disciples of Jesus.

So now we're going to look at this narrative in which Jesus challenges people about the purpose and heart behind the religious rules that they held onto. In light of this, I wanted to share a well-known story about a young woman who was hosting a holiday dinner party in her own house for the first time ever. She planned on cooking her family's traditional holiday meal: a nice roast beef.

The recipe that she had was passed down from mother to daughter for generations. As she prepared and looked over the recipe, she noticed that the last step said to cut the end off of the roast before putting it in the oven. This didn't make any sense to her, so she called her mother. “Mom, I'm cooking the family holiday roast beef and the recipe says to cut the end off of the roast before putting it in the oven. Why are we supposed to do this?”

Her mother replied, “That's just the way my mom always did it and what she taught me to do, but I don't know why. Why don't you ask your grandmother?” So the young woman called her grandmother and asked her the same question regarding the roast beef. After a long pause, her grandmother signed and thought long and hard about it: “It's because we had a small oven.”

This story illustrates how sometimes the true purpose of why certain things are done a certain way gets lost. People will often follow the forms that they've inherited, but don't always understand the heart behind why it's done. This happens as Christians all the time! And this is what Jesus tackled in today's Scripture.

### **Scripture Reading**

Let's go ahead and find Luke 6:1-11 in your Bibles. Jesus declared that he was the King that God's Kingdom as promised in the Scriptures (4:16-30). He taught from the Scriptures about this and did many miracles that were signs verifying this. He also called his first disciples, including Simon Peter the fisherman (5:1-11) and Levi the tax collector (5:27-32). Along with his growing fame and popularity, Jesus also started to get some enemies- religious leaders- who questioned why Jesus and disciples associated so closely with “sinners” and why they didn't fast (5:33-39). Jesus explained that the New Covenant was both the fulfillment of the Old Covenant and a different movement than Judaism. Let's go ahead and read now from God's Word.

#### **Luke 6:1-11 (ESV):**

1 On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”

3 And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" 5 And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

6 On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there.

9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" 10 And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Amen!

## **Proposition**

Here's the "one thing" from Luke 6:1-11- the main point of this passage of Scripture:

### **Obey the heart of our Lord Jesus.**

## **Organizational Statement**

There are two incidents that had to do with the Sabbath rules that Luke recorded here: first, picking grain (1-5) and second, healing a man (6-11). These will be the two main parts of my sermon.

**Transition:** Here's the first part...

## **Sermon Outline**

### **I. [Verses 1-5 recorded...] The 1<sup>st</sup> Incident: Picking Grain**

A. Jesus' disciples were accused of breaking the rules of the Sabbath when they picked grain to eat as they walked.

1. [Here's the first lesson from this narrative...] Lesson #1: **Be careful of binding yourself to burdens that Jesus came to bear** (1-2).

Luke 6:1-2 (ESV): 1 On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

- a) The question that we have to answer here is this: Did Jesus disobey God's command to keep the Sabbath? The Sabbath was a very, very important part of the Old Testament. It was a part of the famous "Ten Commandments," the building blocks of everything else that was written in the Law of Moses. So this is the command as specifically stated in Exodus 20:8-10.

- o Exodus 20:8-10 (NLT): 8 “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you.

There’s a lot here but the bottom line is that the people of God were to dedicate every seventh day of the week (which was a Saturday) to the Lord by not doing any ordinary work. This was such a big deal that if anyone was caught breaking the Sabbath, they would be put to death (Exodus 31:13-14).

- b) So that was the *command*. Now this was the situation in this first incident. Jesus and his disciples walked through the fields, along with others who were following along, including some Pharisees. It says in verse 1 that “his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.” These were the stalks still standing after the field was harvested, left over intentionally for the poor and needy to gather their own food. This was prescribed as part of the Law of Moses, as long as no tools like a sickle were used (Deuteronomy 23:25). But Jesus’ disciples (and probably Jesus) picked the heads of grain, rubbed the grains in their hands to take off the outer layer (called the chaff), and popped them in their mouths. While this would’ve been harmless on any other day of the week, that day was the Sabbath. So was picking grain and rubbing off the chaff considered “work”?
- c) The Pharisees and scribes created a whole set of rules- called the “tradition”- where they interpreted the commands of the Law to very specific situations. For example, the law said to “observe the Sabbath day” and “no one in your household may do any work.” The Pharisees and scribes created a set of rules interpreting what it meant to “observe” the Sabbath day and what counted as “work” that was not allowed to be done on the Sabbath. In this case, plucking grain and removing the chaff with one’s hands was considered work and therefore not permitted on the Sabbath. But this was a man-made rule about the Sabbath- and Jesus might’ve broken the scribes’ and Pharisees’ rule, but he wasn’t disobeying the command of God from the Scriptures.
- d) Later in Luke’s gospel, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees because of the great burden that the rules of their “tradition” was on the people of Israel. They were so strict about ceremonial cleanness but ignored the wickedness in their own hearts (11:39-40); they required tithing all the way down to their herbs and spices but neglected doing justice and loving God (11:42); they sat in seats of honor at the synagogue but were in truth just like walking dead people (11:43-44). Just imagine this with me: their covenant relationship with God was reduced to a religion of tons and tons of specific “do’s” and “do not’s.” This became an overwhelming burden that no one could bear and terribly missed the mark of what was truly God’s heart! In contrast to these rules- specifically about Sabbath rules- Jesus said this powerful statement about himself.
  - o Matthew 11:28-29 (ESV): 28 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Jesus said that *in him* is the perfect rest that the Sabbath of the Old Covenant pointed to! This is the kind of rest that quenches the soul in a

way that no quantities of man-made rules and human effort to be good could ever fulfill!

- e) Context: [Let's go back to the first lesson from verses 1-2...] **Be careful of binding yourself to burdens that Jesus came to bear.** Let me make sure to clarify that Jesus' heart is for obedience, for sure. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). With this in mind, the *big picture* is that the heart of obedience is love for God. That's why Jesus answered this way when he was asked to name the most important command in the Law:
- o Matthew 22:37-40 (CEV): *37 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. 38 This is the first and most important commandment. 39 The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, "Love others as much as you love yourself." 40 All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.*

The scribes and Pharisees were obviously missing something with all their rules: they developed a very detailed and strict system of do's and do not's, but they lost sight of the heart of their covenant relationship with the Lord.

- f) Context: As I mentioned before, these rules became a huge burden for themselves and others. And for those who could successfully follow all these rules, it created a false sense of security and righteousness based on their own merit. For those who couldn't successfully follow all these rules, it created a great burden of guilt and shame. Throughout the gospels, Acts, and the letters of the apostles, the Bible warns that this is *not* Jesus' heart or the gospel- it was heresy! For us today, we are generally driven, performance-oriented people. It's natural for us to focus on "I need to keep getting better." That's why we have grand plans for Lent: fasting from (blank); reading through the Bible in "x" weeks; praying for "y" length of time. These are all good things, but if these are ways we try to achieve apart from Christ, they will become burdens for us.
2. [Here's the second lesson from this narrative...] Lesson #2: **The goal of Jesus' disciples is to know his heart from his Word** (3-5).

Luke 6:3-5 (ESV): 3 And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" 5 And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

- a) As the authority over the Sabbath, Jesus knew the heart of the Law exactly. Jesus brought up the Scriptural case study of David when he was on the run from Saul- this was from 1 Samuel 21 (21:1-7). David was God's chosen king, but at this time he and his loyal followers were fugitives. They ended up at the house of God and asked Ahimelech the priest if there was any food for them to eat. At that moment, Ahimelech had to discern the heart of the Law in light of helping God's chosen king, David.
- b) So the Scripture says that Ahimelech inquired of the Lord first (1 Samuel 22:9-10) and then freely offered the bread of the Presence to eat. The bread of the Presence were twelve loaves of bread that were presented at the house of God, representing God's provision of life and nourishment over the twelve tribes of Israel. It was replaced every week, and only the priests serving there were allowed to eat the replaced bread. But in this case, the

*heart of the law* allowed for the provision of feeding David and his men in their extenuating situation.

- c) What Jesus said to the disciples and Pharisees there in verse 5 is really important: “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.” Later in Luke’s gospel, Jesus claimed that he was greater than David. In fact, in using the specific title, “Son of Man,” Jesus alluded to a vision that God gave to the prophet Daniel in Daniel 7:13-14.
  - o Daniel 7:13-14 (NLT): 13 As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

Jesus is the Son of Man who was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over the entire world. He would be the king not just of Israel, but *the King* of people from every race and nation and language. Jesus is the eternal King! And along with the “Ancient One,” Jesus claimed that he was actually the one who established this covenant relationship with Israel and gave them the Law of this covenant, including the rules concerning the Sabbath. Jesus obeyed the Law perfectly and he also understood the heart of the Law perfectly because he’s the one who *made* the Law in the first place!

- d) Context: [Let’s go back to the second lesson from verses 3-5...] **The goal of Jesus’ disciples is to know his heart from his Word.** As we’ve saying, a very basic part of being Jesus’ disciples is obedience- it’s to learn to obey all that he commanded us (from Matthew 28:19-20). That lifelong process is to get to know our Lord’s heart by studying his words- not like reading a textbook for just head knowledge, but like obsessing over love letters from God to us. So we meditate on it, pray through it, reflect on how to implement it into our lives, and try constantly to do it in order to please him. Maybe I can explain this more from my perspective as a parent with my kids. I’m nowhere near a perfect parent, but I can say that I really love my kids.
- e) Context: And what I want for them is to learn to listen carefully and take to heart what Nickey and I tell them. But I don’t want them to just follow our rules just because we tell them to, but because they trust that we love them and want what’s best for them *and* because they love us and know our hearts for them. And what I want more than anything else is that they internalize our hearts so much that when they are older and on their own, they can make the best decisions in their lives- knowing our heart for them. Also let me tell you, *when* they make mistakes (and I completely expect them to make mistakes), I want our kids to trust enough in our steadfast, unconditional love for them that they can come to us whenever they mess up. This is also our heart for them!
- f) Context: This is God’s heart for his children in an infinitely more perfect way! God’s heart is that even when we mess up (not *if* we mess up but *when* we mess up), we’ll trust him enough to go to him! God’s heart is that we fully jump into the process of learning how to obey Jesus’ heart! May our heart’s cry be the same as David’s in Psalm 86:11:
  - o Psalm 86:11 (NIV): 11 Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

I believe that God will *always* answer this prayer when his children ask him, as they desire **to obey the heart of our Lord Jesus!**

**Transition:** Now here's the second part...

## II. [Verses 6-11 recorded...] The 2<sup>nd</sup> Incident: Healing a Man

A. Jesus was accused of breaking the rules of the Sabbath when he healed a man with a withered hand at the synagogue.

1. [Here's the third lesson from this narrative...] Lesson #3: **Be careful of judging others and not seeing what Jesus is doing** (6-8).

Luke 6:6-8 (ESV): 6 On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there.

- a) If you think about it, what was about to happen with Jesus healing this man should've been awesome news to people. To many, it was reason to praise God, but for the scribes and Pharisees, their reaction to who Jesus was brought out the worst in them. Let's paint the picture of this scene a bit. The Jews in this town gathered together in the synagogue to worship the Lord on the Sabbath day. Among the people there was a man whose right hand was withered- he suffered from some sort of disability with his hand. But there was a buzz on this particular day because this man Jesus- who had been teaching powerfully and doing miracles all over the region- was there in that synagogue that morning! What divine providence here!
- b) So in his mind and probably others in the synagogue, he probably couldn't help but wonder if Jesus would be open to healing him. Maybe he was waiting for just the right time after Jesus was finished teaching from the Scriptures. And wow- was Jesus' teaching different! It wasn't like what the scribes and Pharisees talked about when they spoke at synagogue; Jesus' teaching had this authority to it that was unique. Jesus said that he was the King of God's kingdom and the one sent to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, and forgiveness for the debtors! For this man whose right hand was withered, this was good news for *him*. He was filled with hopeful anticipation of Jesus' ministry to him!
- c) But look at the scribes and Pharisees in light of all this eager anticipation and hope. Verse 7 says, "And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him." When it says that they *watched* him, it meant that they kept their eyes on Jesus with the desire of catching him doing something that could get him in trouble. Once again, they had their "tradition"- their system of rules- about what was allowed to do on the Sabbath and what wasn't. Their man-made tradition specified that medically treating someone was "work" and thus a violation of the Sabbath. They were just *waiting* for Jesus to heal this man with a withered man- so they could blame Jesus of something wrong.
- d) Verse 8 says that Jesus knew their thoughts and *therefore* brought this man whose right hand was withered to the front and center of the synagogue. Jesus was done with his teaching now- what was he going to do next? What's important to notice is that Jesus was did this just as much

for those scribes and Pharisees watching him as much as he was doing it for the man who needed to be healed. They stubbornly held onto their own man-centered authority over the authority of Jesus Christ; they saw Jesus as a threat to own way of doing things and refused to submit to Jesus' way. There was this unseen, insidious, dangerous condition in the hearts of these scribes and Pharisees that needed to be exposed for their own good.

- e) Context: [Let's go back to the third lesson from verses 6-8...] **Be careful of judging others and not seeing what Jesus is doing.** Judging works this way, doesn't it? We have our own standards of righteousness and goodness, but when we're so focused on measuring ourselves and others to them, we miss out completely on the joyful things that Jesus is doing around us and we miss out completely on our Lord's heart for us. Let me share a personal example that the Holy Spirit has revealing about me. Sometimes I hear indirectly that people I don't know say things about me or our church that are not true. I have to confess that this gets me mad! I think those things are really wrong, but there are also really fleshly things that come out of *me*- particularly, I start forming my own judgments towards those people that are just as bad. And I let it consume me for a while- it effects my mood and perspective and I lose sight of all the joyful things that God is doing in our church and in my life. By his grace, the Lord snaps me out of it eventually- but I realize that I need to continually surrender this heart of judging others out of my own anger or hurt.
- f) Context: Church, what I see here is that judging ruins our own hearts and relationships with others- but worst of all it causes us not to be able to see all the joyful things that Jesus is doing in us and around us (like in our church). This is why Jesus said this in Matthew 7:3-4:
- o Matthew 7:3-4 (NIV): 3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?"

When we judge, this big ol' plank in our eyes causes us to not be able to see right and we miss out on so much. For example, we might wonder, "Why doesn't this person come more regularly to LIFE group or Sunday Celebration?" And if we have a spirit of judgment, we'll question their desire or assume that they're lazy; and we won't be able to listen and learn that perhaps they're struggling with their mental health or that they're going through some serious family issues. We miss out on rejoicing with them when they *do* make it out to LIFE group or Sunday Celebration- praise the Lord that they came *that one* day- and how God can be at work in them. We miss out on helping them focus on Jesus and experiencing the gospel together. This is so different than Jesus' perspective, as we'll see next.

2. [Here's the final lesson from this narrative...] Lesson #4: **The New Covenant is based on Jesus doing good and saving life** (9-11).

Luke 6:9-11 (ESV): 9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" 10 And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

- a) What Jesus said in verse 9 is the crux of this scene in the synagogue- what he said specifically to the scribes and Pharisees: “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” He asked what was truly lawful- what was on the heart of God as he gave the command to observe the Sabbath? The heart of the Sabbath was that it was a *sign*- it signified the covenant relationship between God and Israel. On the Sabbath, the people of Israel were to remember that the Lord created the earth in six days- completed everything perfectly- and then rested on the seventh day. They were to remember the Lord’s good work in creation; they were to exercise faith and dependence upon the Lord for his provision that day and every day of their journeys with him.
- b) So going back to Jesus’ question in verse 9, did the scribes and Pharisees embody God’s heart for the Sabbath as they wanted so badly to do harm to Jesus and to destroy him? Or did Jesus embody God’s heart for the Sabbath by doing good for this man in need standing in front of him, healing his hand from the crippling effects of living in a fallen world? What’s important to see here is that in healing this man, Jesus was reversing the curse of the fall in the world and putting back into place the created order in a very small and personal way. He was also pointing people to remember the Lord’s good work in creation and to exercise faith and dependence upon the Lord in their journeys of life.
- c) Now let’s look at what Jesus did in verse 10: “And he said to him (the man whose right hand was withered), ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he did so, and his hand was restored.” Notice that it is arguable if Jesus technically even “worked” here because all he did really was that he spoke and it happened! And for most people there, this was a reason to rejoice, right? But for the scribes and Pharisees, verse 11 says that this caused them to be “filled with fury.” They were angry because of all that happened on that Sabbath. So they began to discuss together “what they might do to Jesus,” hinting at the fact that they began to plot to end Jesus after this. At least this was the beginning of their secret plotting about killing Jesus.
- d) Context: [Let’s go back to the final lesson from verses 9-11...] **The New Covenant is based on Jesus doing good and saving life.** This is the heart of Jesus and his New Covenant! Jesus exemplified doing good and saving life! You see, even though they intended to harm Jesus, God intended it for good to accomplish his plan to save the world (Genesis 50:20). They plotted to kill Jesus, which they succeeded in doing at the end- they got Jesus executed on a Roman crucifix. But this was actually the plan of God from the very beginning of time, as the prophet Isaiah spoke about in Isaiah 53:5-6.
- o Isaiah 53:5-6 (CEV): 5 He was wounded and crushed because of our sins; by taking our punishment, he made us completely well. 6 All of us were like sheep that had wandered off. We had each gone our own way, but the Lord gave him the punishment we deserved.

Jesus paid the penalty for our sins- he was the substitute sacrifice in our place. And in perfectly obeying and suffering on the cross, we are no longer condemned but are made right with God when we trust in Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Let me just pause here for a moment so I can give anyone the opportunity to receive this gift of salvation from God. If you want to trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord and you sense him calling you to follow him, respond today! We rejoice that you are here and please make sure to let me or a friend here know so we can help clarify this decision.



- e) Context: I want to tie this back into the “one thing” from this narrative again. When we surrender our own rules and judgments to Jesus, we are really ***obeying the heart of our Lord Jesus!*** I really believe that Jesus was appealing to the scribes and Pharisees to realize this! The first step is to surrender their own rules and judgments to Jesus, admitting that they are sinners and repenting to Jesus. We need this too! We are naturally rule-bound and judgmental. But obeying the Lord Jesus is a life-long process of learning and obeying his heart- learning from his Word in our personal lives and together in our corporate life as a local church.

**Transition:** I’ll conclude now with the next steps that we can take- this is the...

## **Conclusion**

### **III. Life Application**

- A. Here are two “next steps” we can take to ***obey the heart of our Lord Jesus.***
1. First, surrender your own rules and judging to Jesus the Lord.
    - a) Remember, be careful of binding yourself to burdens that Jesus came to bear. And be careful of judging others and not seeing what Jesus is doing. Evaluate this in your own life. Talk about it and discuss with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in the church. This is a great way to disciple one another. Surrendering your own rules and judgmentalism to Jesus are key steps in obeying the heart of Jesus Christ.
  2. Set aside time to focus on Jesus, who gives rest and saves.
    - a) This Lent season, may we be intentional about doing this. Let him take you further in this process of knowing his heart from his Word- this is our goal as his disciple! Let’s make sure to soak in the good news that the New Covenant is based on Jesus doing good to us and saving us through his crucifixion and resurrection. Let’s experience the rest that Jesus wants to give us by receiving grace in our personal times with Jesus and in our times together when we’re in LIFE group and Sunday Celebration!

**Transition:** Let’s respond to God’s Word now with some time to pray personally. Let’s pray.

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