



**CAPITOL[®]
COMMISSION**

Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders



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Then he [Jesus] told them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” Luke 6:5

Luke 6:1-19 - Jesus is Greater than the Law

By the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry there were many traditions laid on the people of Israel, enforced by the Pharisees, a religious sect which held the highest spiritual authority in the land. This exercise of authority began during the Hellenic rule over Israel (somewhat in response to Greek philosophy) and maintained under Roman and Herodian leadership. They acted essentially as the Jewish culture police, determining who was keeping the law of God and who was not--similar to Afghanistan’s Taliban of today, but not quite as vicious.

Enter upon this setting Jesus, the Son of God, who was present when the Law was given to Moses at Sinai. He continues to establish His own divine authority which clashes with that of the self-appointed Pharisees, the scribes, and the lawyers of the time. Look back at Ch. 5 to see how His teaching increasingly conflicts with theirs (He is the new wine in their old wineskins, for example). This dissonance grows over the three-year period of Jesus’ ministry, climaxing at the cross. However as we know, Jesus’ resurrection proves Jesus’ truth claims.

In Luke 6:1-11 we have two incidents taking place on the Sabbath, the day set aside by the Lord at Creation and codified in the Ten Commandments as a day of rest, a recognition of the pattern of Creation. The first involves a charge of “harvesting” when Jesus’ disciples take the grain, rub the husk off of it and eat it. They are not stealing as Jewish law commanded farmers not to glean to the edge of the fields so that people passing through may eat. Note also they are in the fields, in a rural area, so how did the Pharisees observe this offense? Likely Jesus is being stalked by them. What the Pharisees call “unlawful” is the work being done to eat a few handfuls of grain, which is untrue according to Deuteronomy 23:25. Jesus responds by referring to their history, an incident in 1 Samuel 21. David, on the run from King Saul, stops at Nob and requests bread of the priests there, led by Ahimelech. The only bread available was the show bread from the altar, which was only to be eaten by the priests in the normal course of action. This time, the priest allows it out of necessity because the men with David are on mission and have not been with women (in the Biblical sense). By using this reference, Jesus asserts Himself as a greater priest than Ahimelech

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those in our state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office, are available online at capitolcom.org, and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Rom 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Tim 2:1-4).

Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.

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and dares the Pharisees to say anything against King David. Additional insight is given by Matthew's version (see Matt 12:1-8): The temple priests worked every day, by the Law, but are not guilty. There Jesus reveals to them He is also greater than the temple itself, going further to state He is the Lord of the Sabbath! This is a claim to deity. Do not miss a great truth here: the Law was given for us and our good, as the next account illustrates.

At verse 6 we see that on a different Sabbath Jesus enters the synagogue to teach and there just happens to be a man with a withered hand, surrounded by scribes and Pharisees watching very closely. This is clearly a set up by these skeptics and Jesus knows it. Jesus knows their thoughts, and ours, so He calls the man forward, and poses a legal question to these experts: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save life or destroy it?" Luke tells us that only after He stares them all down, and they give no answer, does He command the man to stretch out his hand, now fully restored. Another amazing miracle, which actually required no work on Jesus' part, but their response is irrational rage. Jesus just showed them up again publicly and they know it. And we clearly see a lack of compassion for the man who was healed!

In verses 12 through 19 we shift to the formation of the Apostolic offices, with the first 12 men to hold that title. There are two sets of brothers who were fishermen, a tax collector, an activist of the Zealot party, and one who became the traitor. Note: Judas Iscariot, when listed by a gospel writer, is always named as the one who betrayed Christ. The number 12 likely parallels the 12 sons of Jacob, but these men are not chosen by tribe. It follows from the flow of the text that Jesus institutes a new law, a new teaching (for next week's lesson), and, in essence, a new Israel. The 12 (except Judas) become the foundation for a new community, the church. Only after Jesus spent a full night of praying does He select them. By naming these men apostles, Jesus is designating them with a particular mission. The Greek *apostolos*, meaning "delegate", indicates these 12 were chosen from all the other disciples to represent Jesus, with His message, and even given the power to heal and cast out demons (see 9:1-6).

Having made these appointments up on a high terrain, He comes down with them to a plateau—much like Moses did when he received the Law—where a large crowd waits. This crowd seems to include many of those following from the southern part of Israel (Judea) but now also includes Phoenician residents of the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon (modern-day Lebanon). Dr Luke continues to emphasize the physical healings and releases of people from evil spirits, with power "coming out from Him and healing them all".

Applications

1. When you hear the word "church", do you immediately think about rules and prohibitions? I hope you rather think of a community bound by the love of Christ, instead of legalism. Pray about how you might begin changing that if this is the case in your home church.
2. Is your interest in Jesus driven by what He can do for you, or have you developed the love for Him and His word? The people followed Him for healing but when He taught, the numbers dwindle. Don't let that be said of you!

My desire is to continuously highlight Jesus Christ to you. Toward that end, I am available to discuss any biblical topic or question you may have. I especially want to ensure all who read the studies understand how Jesus Christ is distinctively important to the entire world and to each of us individually. Lastly, all Bible studies are available at Capitol Commission's Alabama page: <https://capitolcom.org/state/alabama>.

Plan to attend our in-house Bible Study during session: Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. in Room 602 of the State House.

A key facet empowering our ministry is prayer, especially prayer for our elected leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 commands Christians to obediently pray for all in authority. A tool for America's churches to help consistently pray for you, our elected leaders, is available to all via: www.Pray1Tim2.org - Select Alabama and sign up for daily email reminders, courtesy of Capitol Commission.

Share this link with your home church!