



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V21 N37 September 15, 2019

BRIDGES

“Invitation: Practicing Hospitality”

Matthew 12:9-14

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Evangelism

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8



Why don't people believe in Jesus?

Perhaps you can remember why you did not believe in Jesus until you did. Perhaps you know why a friend or family member doesn't believe in Jesus. It seems to me, apart from not hearing the gospel, people believe or assume all sorts of things that stand in the way of believing the gospel. Here are some examples. *Christianity doesn't make sense.* The very idea that Jesus is God, that during his life, he performed miracles, and that following his crucifixion, he was raised from the dead is really ridiculous. And life after death is nonsense. *There is no Christian God.* How could there be? If a good and all-powerful God did exist, he would do something about poverty, disease, slavery, sex abuse, war, and climate disasters, not to mention innumerable other deplorable realities. *Hell doesn't exist, and I don't want to go to heaven.* A loving God wouldn't sentence people to burn in hell forever, and the whole idea of spending eternity in heaven doing nothing forever is childish. *Christians are no better than anyone else, and in some cases, a lot worse.* Christians have no corner on the morality market. The best of them live decent lives just like decent irreligious people, and the worst of them are hypocrites. Lots of Christians are, as they say in Texas, “All hat and no cattle.” One author observes: “In past generations, the first question people asked was, ‘Is it true?’ Now another question is *all that matters*: ‘Is it real in your life?’ In other words, do you walk the walk and talk the talk?” (Jeremy Bouma, “10 Reasons Why People Reject the Gospel,” zondervan-academic.com/blog/reasons-why-people-reject-gospel). So it's come to this: When people think of *Christianity*, they don't think of *good news, salvation, forgiveness, restoration, justice, mercy, and love*. Instead, they see Christians as oppressors and haters, while they see non-Christians as siders with *choice, equality, rights, justice, and mercy*. Perhaps you can think of more examples.

Like post-moderns, the Pharisees let what they believed or assumed to be true, i.e., their *preunderstanding*, stand in the way of believing in Jesus. Unlike post-moderns, it is what the Pharisees believed about the observance and meaning of the Sabbath (see Mt 12:1-14) that got in their way — one of several points of conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus (e.g., see Mt 9:3, 11, 34; 15:1-2; 21:23; 26:65).

The Sabbath controversy began when Jesus' disciples picked and ate kernels of grain as they were walking through a grain field (Mt 12:1-3), and the Pharisees accused them of “doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath,” namely, harvesting. “As they understood it, plucking the grain was reaping, rubbing it to separate the grain from the husks (Luke tells us that they did this) was threshing, blowing away the husks may well have been interpreted as winnowing, and for good measure they may have seen the whole as preparation of food, which they also regarded as prohibited” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 300).

The controversy continued when Jesus encountered “a man with a shriveled hand” (vv. 9-10a) in the synagogue, and the Pharisees asked, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” (v. 10b). (Harvesting *and* healing were both included on a rabbinic list of thirty-nine kinds of activities classified as “work,” and therefore, forbidden on the Sabbath.) Jesus corrects his opponents misguided understanding of Sabbath law by first pointing out that “the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (v. 8) and then that “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (v. 12). But they were unsuaded by his use of the Old Testament and logic, choosing rather to believe that he healed and cast out demons by “Beelzebul, the prince of demons” (v. 24) and in doing so blasphemed the Holy Spirit (vv. 31-32).

Matthew 12:9-14

9 Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, 10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

11 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

READ in another translation

9 He left that place and entered their synagogue; 10 a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. 11 He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a human being 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 conspired against him, how to destroy him.
(NRSV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "their" in v. 9, "they" in v. 9, "them" in v. 11, and "the Pharisees" in v. 14.
- Circle "synagogue" in v. 9.
- Circle "a man" in v. 10.
- Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 12.
- Underline their question in v. 9.
- Bracket Jesus' *hypothetical* question in v. 11.
- Double underline Jesus' answer in v. 12.
- Box "just as" indicating *comparison* in v. 13.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 14.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____"



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Whose synagogue did Jesus visit?
2. And “the beat goes on” so to speak. Read vv. 1-8 and explain.
3. We are told virtually *nothing* about the man with the shriveled hand. What do you infer from that?
4. “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” A *fair* question or not? Explain.
5. Identify the assumed answer to Jesus’ *hypothetical* question (v. 11).
6. In Jesus’ logic, what does pulling a sheep from a pit on the Sabbath have to do with healing a person on the Sabbath?
7. Why would Jesus not simply say “Yes” in answer to their question?
8. Jesus answers, and then he “puts his money where his mouth is” so to speak. Explain.
9. Explain the *contrast* in verse 14.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about why people *now*, like Pharisees *then*, don’t believe in Jesus.

Commentary On The Text

Mathew wades into the Sabbath controversy in chapter 12 of his Gospel. Jesus is preaching that “the kingdom of heaven has come near” (3:2; 4:17), in that “the one who is to come,” the Messiah, has come near. When John sent his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (11:4-5) – not to mention the demon possessed are liberated. Jesus offered the right pedigree (1:2-16) and sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that he was the Christ. But Israel’s religious leaders, especially the Pharisees, ignored the overwhelming evidence and rejected him. A number of things about Jesus disturbed them. His disciples didn’t follow Pharisaic traditions: they did not fast (9:14) and did not wash their hands before they ate (15:2). What’s more, he blasphemed God by forgiving people’s sins (9:2-3) and by calling God his own Father (Jn 5:18). And if that weren’t enough, he did what they considered unlawful; he healed on the Sabbath. Verses 9-14 record one such healing (cf., Jn 5:1-15).

The incident hardly needs explanation. Jesus enters a Jewish synagogue, probably the one in Capernaum, where he encounters a man with a shriveled hand. Matthew tells us nothing about the man or his opinion of Jesus – nothing about him before his healing or after it – suggesting that the story isn’t really about his healing. The story is about conflicting views regarding the Sabbath, the Pharisees’ view and Jesus’ view; the healing is merely a foil, providing an occasion for the Jews to ask, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” and for Jesus to answer, “It is lawful to *do good* on the Sabbath.”

Episode one in the Sabbath controversy involving Jesus’ disciples picking heads of grain and eating them, which was in the Pharisees’

view unlawful on the Sabbath, is recorded in verses 1-8. Episode two involving healing, which was also unlawful in the Pharisees’ view, follows hard on it in verses 9-14.

Jesus reasons for his view in verses 11-12. As one commentator says: “They were ready to accuse him of Sabbath breaking in a situation of their choice; what then would they do on the Sabbath in a situation of his choice?” (Morris, 306). Jesus asks this hypothetical question: “Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out?” (NRSV). The same commentator explains: “He looks to the future possibility that one of his hearers who owned just one sheep would have it fall into a ditch on the Sabbath. It is his entire flock. What will he do? Will he not lay hold on the animal and haul it out? The Jews in general showed great care for their animals and would take whatever action was necessary to deliver them from such a plight as the one Jesus outlines” (306). Then using how-much-more logic, Jesus finishes his refutation of the Pharisees’ view. “How much more valuable is a person than a sheep!” His logic is irrefutable. “Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (v. 12). We might have expected him to say, “Therefore, it is lawful to *heal* on the Sabbath,” but he moves in his thinking from a particular good to good in general.

And then, Jesus puts his money where his mouth is, so to speak, by actually healing the man’s hand. He tells the disabled man, “Stretch out your hand” and he does. His condition was more than improved; his shriveled hand was completely restored – “just as sound as the other.” Unfortunately, the story ends on a note of stark *contrast*. In spite of Jesus’ four-fold scriptural defense of his disciples in episode one (vv. 3-8) and in spite of his impeccably sound logic in episode two (vv. 11-12), “The Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus” (v. 14). *Preunderstanding* is powerful and difficult to uproot no matter the evidence mustered against it.

Word Studies/Notes

vv. 9, 11 *their, they, them* “Their synagogue means that of the local people. The previous verses have referred to the Pharisees, but it would not be their synagogue” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 305). “In this case ‘their synagogue’ should probably be taken as that of Capernaum, Jesus’ normal base in Galilee (4:13; 8:5; 9:1) . . . Geographically the synagogue at Capernaum was as much Jesus’ local synagogue as it was ‘theirs,’ but Matthew’s use of the possessive probably begins to hint at the growing rift between Jesus and the synagogue establishment, which vv. 1-8 have just illustrated. The Pharisaic group no doubt had a leading role in the local synagogue (23:2, 6-7 and cf. 6:2, 5), and may not have been reluctant to have it described as ‘theirs!’” (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, 463). “The subject of the verb [*epērōtēsān*], ‘they asked,’ is understood from the context (vv 2, 14) to be the Pharisees. The purpose of the question, [*hina katēgorēsōsin autou*], ‘in order to accuse him,’ is connected with the plot mentioned in v 14. The Pharisees were looking for evidence that could be used against Jesus . . . It is quite clear that the Pharisees did not believe it was lawful to heal on the sabbath, except in extreme cases of life or death (see *m. Yoma* 8:6: ‘Every case where life is in danger supersedes the sabbath’; cf. *Mek. Exod.* 22:2; 23:13). From their point of view, a man who had had a withered hand for some time could surely have waited one day more to be healed” (Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33a, *Matthew 1-13*, 333).

v. 9 *synagogue* “When Solomon’s Temple had been destroyed and the Jews were in exile, they survived by gathering together on the Sabbath to learn about their law and traditions. This practice was found to be so useful that when they returned, they wanted to continue it and began to build places where they could ‘gather together.’ Those places, known as *synagogues*, which literally means ‘gathering-together-places,’ began to be built wherever there were at least ten adult males in the community. They were always easy to find because if not built in the actual community centre, they were built on the highest ground, or were made the highest building by some architectural feature, such as a dome or augmented base” (Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, 346).

v. 10 *a man* Lit., “And look, a man with . . .” “No mention is made here or at the end of the narrative of any appeal for healing or Jesus’ approach to the man to heal him, of the faith of the man or the power of Jesus. These two brief sentences thus mainly serve the purpose of setting the stage for the dialogue that follows” (Hagner, 333).

v. 11 *will you not* “The question is not simply rhetorical. There was active debate in Judaism at the time on just such a point. In many ways the debate centered on how much a person was willing to sacrifice to give honor to God and his holy day. The Qumran community was more rigorous on this matter than most: ‘No one should help an animal give birth on the Sabbath day. And if he makes it fall into a well or a pit, he should not take it out on the Sabbath’ (CD 11:13-14). In the same document they contend that even if a living man fell into water, they were not to take him out by using a ladder or a rope or a utensil (CD 11:16-17). Jesus presses the argument further because most Pharisees and other Jewish interpreters would have agreed with his example of rescuing an animal on the Sabbath. Using another typical rabbinic method of argumentation, Jesus contends that the higher principle is not simply abstaining from activity of the Sabbath but doing good on the Sabbath (12:12). This line of reasoning also follows from the preceding example of the priests performing their good work of temple service on the Sabbath and being considered guiltless (12:5)” (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 442-43). “The rabbinic discussion that comes from a later period [than Qumran] (*b. Šabb.* 128b), shows a different spirit: some said that articles might be thrown into the hole to allow the animal to climb out, others that it might be fed on the sabbath but lifted out the next day, but a concluding ruling is that the relief of animal suffering should be allowed to override the sabbath regulation . . . The further assumption, which appears to need no argument, that a human being is more important than an animal then establishes *a fortiori* the permissibility of measures for human welfare, and thus of healing, on the sabbath” (France, 464-65).

Other Texts to Consider

Mark 2:27-28

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’”



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Don't let any wrongheaded reason for rejecting Jesus keep you from believing the gospel and sharing it with others.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

When my middle son was in kindergarten, he became friends with an unlikely candidate. His buddy, “Mo,” was different from him in every way: my son was tallest in the class, whereas Mo was shortest; my son was outgoing and talkative, whereas Mo was quiet; my son was raised in a Christian home, whereas Mo’s family was Muslim. For all intents and purposes, they were complete opposites, but they had a strong friendship for several years before the family moved away. To be honest, I wrestled with the situation. Not with their friendship; Mo and his family were awesome! They were kind and friendly and always hospitable, and Mo was a good friend to my son. I wrestled because it was messy. I wasn’t raised in a church-going home and had no idea how to raise Christian kids in this type of circumstance. I didn’t know how to walk my kids through a messy friendship with someone who was spiritually different. Our nature is to gravitate to people just like us. We get stuck in a bubble and it’s hard to take steps to be friendly to new or different people, but where would we be if someone didn’t step out of their comfort zone and share the good news of Christ with us? I’m so thankful my friend Mary Alice took steps of obedience and embraced me despite my mess. Parents, we are praying for you to help your kids step out of their bubble and be Jesus in their world.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Matthew 12:9-14

1. What did Jesus do for the man?
2. Why did some think healing the man was “unlawful?”
3. What was the Pharisees reaction to Jesus’ healing?

What Do You Think?

Why were the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus and why did they plot to kill Him?

What Do You Do?

From this lesson, do you think it’s more important to follow the rules or show kindness?

CORE COMPETENCY: Evangelism

I share Jesus with others with my words and actions.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Peter 4:9

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling .

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CORE BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory..

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CORE VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CORE PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years and has been on staff since 2014.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2019 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-275-1315
wearecentral.org