



Sermon Discussion Questions - July 31 & August 2, 2026

Matthew Part 3: Week 13

Matthew 12:1-21

Ice Breaker: *In this week's passage, the Pharisees had taken something God intended for their good—the Sabbath—and turned it into a burden.*

- **Q1: Have you ever become so focused on a good rule or boundary that it stopped being helpful and started feeling burdensome? What happened?**

Read Matthew 12:1-21 together. The Pharisees were so focused on external rules that they completely missed the fact that God Himself was standing right in front of them.

- **Q2: The Pharisees added burdensome rules to God's good gift of the Sabbath. Where do you see similar tendencies in the church today? In other words, how are Christians tempted to prioritize rules, traditions, or preferences over people?**

Jesus repeatedly reminds the Pharisees that God desires mercy over sacrifice and shows that the Sabbath was meant to bring life, not unnecessary burdens.

- **Q3: What do you think it looks like to choose mercy over sacrifice in everyday life?**
- **Q4: Why do you think it's often easier to follow rules than to show—or even receive—mercy?**

The Pharisees responded to Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath by plotting to kill Him because He threatened the things they valued most.

- **Q5: How can legalism become a way of protecting our own idols—whether that's control, approval, comfort, power, or something else?**

Jesus shows that outward rule-keeping can still hide a heart that's far from God.

- **Q6: Where are you personally most tempted to measure spiritual maturity by "doing the right things" instead of walking closely with Jesus?**
- **Q7: What helps keep your heart centered on Jesus rather than on performance or appearances?**

Jesus is both the Lord of the Sabbath and the Servant who brings hope to the nations. Following Him means reflecting both His truth and His mercy.

- **Q8: What's one practical way you can reflect Jesus's heart this week—whether by choosing mercy over being "right" or by helping someone experience the rest and hope He offers?**

Take a few minutes to encourage each other, and spend some time in prayer together!