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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon
Jose Cisneros

Class Leaders:

Inreach: Pat Hester
Secretary: Mary Clark
Deacon: C M Hester

Justice and Sabbath Laws Matthew 12:1-14

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson reviews for understanding Jesus' teachings regarding **Justice and Sabbath Laws**. The **study's aim** is to understand that obedience to God never hinders compassionate actions. The **study's application** is to live according to the principles we can draw from the Lord Jesus' response to Sabbath rules and the people who tried to enforce them.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

The Lord spoke the words from out text while dealing with some of the Pharisees. Their strict religious practices could not abide how the Lord and His disciples had "violated" the Sabbath by picking heads of grain and eating them on that day. Actually, it was no violation at all, as the Lord clearly informed them. In their protest they had "condemned the guiltless." Nothing had been done to violate God's principles of the Sabbath. The Lord quoted Hosea 6:6 when He said that God wanted "mercy, . . . not sacrifice." What did He mean? The reference to sacrifice points to external religious deeds and duties, like the Sabbath laws of the Old Testament. There is nothing wrong with religious observances, but they must always be combined with mercy, which refers to a genuine and graciously transformed heart. An external religious act devoid of sincere affection toward God is not pleasing to Him. In order to please our just and merciful God, we must be in touch with the higher principles that flow from His holy and loving character. We cannot please Him through mere external duties. The Sabbath laws were good. They were given by God to ancient Israel. It was right and just to observe them. However, the Pharisees had their focus on the forms and outward acts associated with observing the Sabbath and not the higher principles of mercy, righteousness (justice), and love. The Lord reminded them that God desires mercy. Mercy that does not spring from a good and kind heart is cold and empty. The Prophet Hosea ministered at a time in the northern kingdom of Israel when the people were practicing religion with hearts that were far from God. The nation was judged by God shortly after Hosea's warnings to them. We must learn to have hearts in touch with the higher principles of God's character, such as justice, righteousness, and mercy. The Lord had plenty of insights to share with the Pharisees concerning this point. He showed how David was allowed to eat the shewbread from the tabernacle (Matt. 12:4). Normally, this bread was reserved for the priests, but since David was serving God and in need, it was right for him to eat it. Similarly, priests did work on the Sabbath days; but, again, this was permissible since it was service rendered to God (vs. 5). Jesus noted that it is proper for a man to extract a sheep from a pit on the Sabbath, since this is a merciful and righteous thing to do (Matt. 12:11 -12), despite the fact that the effort is put forth on the Sabbath. For this reason the Lord also healed on the Sabbath (vss. 10-13). We are serving a just and merciful God. If we want to serve Him well, we must seek to live according to His holy character. Being more godly should increasingly become our prime motive in life. Godliness flows from faith in God, not from mere conformity to religious duty. All our actions in life should be influenced by the character of God.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

In our faith and service,
rest is as important as work

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Lord God, in You we find our rest.
Thank You that You've created us
both to work and to rest.
Please help us to find the right
rhythm for our lives.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

*Six days you shall do your work,
and on the seventh day you shall
rest, that your ox and your donkey
may rest, and the son of your female
servant and the stranger may be
refreshed.*

(Exodus 23:12 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", July 8, 2017)

**Series: Justice in the
New Testament**

UNIT: God is Just & Merciful

NEXT WEEK

**Parables of God's Just
Kingdom
(Matt 13:24-33)**

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8)

Misconception of the Sabbath (1-2)

- Misunderstandings about hidden things (Luke 9:42-45)
- Misunderstandings about the reasons for actions (John 13:6-9)
- Misunderstandings because God's works are too numerous to understand (Ps 40:5)
- Misunderstandings because of ignorance (Eph 4:18)
- Misunderstandings because of not having the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14)
- Misunderstandings because of not having or relying on the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:17)

Lawfulness of the Sabbath (3-6)

- Lawful because obedience is greater than sacrifices and offerings (1 Sam 15:22)
- Lawful through mercy and acknowledgment of God (Hosea 6:6)
- Lawful because love is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:33)
- Lawful because no one should judge us about Sabbaths (Col 2:16-17)
- Lawful because one should be convinced in their own mind about sacred things (Rom 14:5)
- Lawful because God's kingdom is not about special observances but of righteousness (Rom 14:16-17)
- Lawful because one should stand firm in the freedom through Jesus (Gal 5:1)

Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath (7-8)

- Lord of the Sabbath because Jesus is Lord of all things (Mark 2:27-28)
- Lord of the Sabbath because Jesus is the Son of God (John 5:17-19)
- Lord of the Sabbath because Jesus knows what true keeping of the Sabbath means (Luke 6:9)
- Lord of the Sabbath because man cannot judge Jesus correctly (John 7:23-24)
- Lord of the Sabbath because Jesus is of God (1 Cor 3:23)

Mercy on the Sabbath (Matt 12:9-14)

Mercy for healing (9-10)

- Mercy for healing because man needs healing (Matt 14:14)
- Mercy for healing because man is weak and hungry (Matt 15:32)
- Mercy for healing because God is always willing to help (Mark 1:41)
- Mercy for healing because men are helpless (Matt 9:36)
- Merciful healing spiritually (Isa 53:5)
- Merciful healing that proved Jesus' Divinity (Matt 11:2-5)
- Merciful healing through God's abiding (John 15:1-4)

Mercy for possessions (11-12)

- Merciful physical and spiritual resources (Ps 104:14-15)
- Merciful resources in creative ways (1 Kings 18:36-38)
- Merciful resources that overcome inadequacies (Exodus 3:10)
- Merciful resources that test our faith (John 6:5-6)
- Merciful extraordinary resources (John 11:3)

Mercy manifested (13-14)

- Mercy manifested because God loves us (Rom 5:8)
- Mercy manifested because Jesus took the initiative and bore all of our transgressions (Isa 53:5-6)
- Mercy manifested because God is faithful and righteous (Rom 3:3-5)
- Mercy manifested because of grace (Eph 2:8-9)
- Mercy manifested because it is mercy that prompted God's salvation (Rom 9:16)
- Mercy manifested because God started it before the beginning of time (2 Tim 1:9)