

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Seventh Sunday after Trinity, July 26, 2020**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 12 (377:10) 340, 9:1-4, 9:5

Lessons: Psalm 50:14-23; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; John 5:1-14

Sermon Text: Matthew 12:9-21

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Dear fellow redeemed,

There is a tremendous difference between the religion of those who think they can be saved by their own works and the Christian religion. The difference is like the difference between day and night. The work-righteousness religion always **demand**s something of man in order that he can save himself by his own efforts. The Christian religion **gives** us Christ and what he has done for us to make us righteous in God's sight. The one religion **demand**s, the other religion **gives**. The work-righteousness religion emphasizes the Law and what man should do. The Christian religion emphasizes the Gospel and what God's grace in Christ has done for us.

This difference we see in the many clashes between Jesus and the Pharisees in his day. The Pharisees were always concerned with the demands of the Law. Jesus as the Messiah was always concerned with the love and mercy of God for sinners. It is this contrast that is brought out in our text. Let us learn:

**JESUS, THE LORD OF THE SABBATH, FULFILLED HIS MESSIANIC OFFICE**

1. **In teaching what is permitted on the Sabbath;**
2. **In conducting his ministry as Isaiah prophesied.**

The Pharisees were always concerned about what could or could not be done on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Before our text we read that the Pharisees faulted Jesus for allowing his disciples to eat grain from the field on the Sabbath. They said, ***“Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath,”*** Matthew 12:2. Jesus then taught them from the Scriptures that it is not forbidden that a man should do good works and show mercy on the Sabbath. ***“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God,”*** Micah 6:8. Then Jesus said of himself, ***“For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”***

But the Pharisees didn't listen and did not believe Jesus. The very next Sabbath they again found fault with Jesus. In fact, they purposely used a situation to make an accusation against Jesus. It happened this way: ***“Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’”*** The Pharisees may have even arranged for this crippled man to be in the synagogue at this particular time to see what Jesus would do. This was not their only wickedness that they wanted to find fault with Jesus. Time and again they saw miracles performed before their very eyes. Here they spoke of Jesus healing the man, but they were not thinking of Jesus doing something good. Instead of thinking of how wonderful it would be to show mercy and love for a crippled man, their only concern was voiced in this question, ***“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”***

Jesus answered 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? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”*** Anyone of those Pharisees would not have hesitated to help an animal out of a pit on the Sabbath. Indeed the Scriptures speak of this very situation. ***“If you see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help him get it to its feet,”*** Deuteronomy 22:4. How much more important, then,

that they would allow a human being to be healed on the Sabbath! Then Jesus said to the crippled man, **“Stretch out your hand.’ So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.”**

We today are no longer under the Old Testament Law concerning the day of worship. We are no longer bound to worship on Saturday as the Old Testament Law of Moses commanded, though the Seventh Day Adventist churches teach that we are. We are not bound to worship on any particular day. If someone asks why we worship on Sunday, we may answer this way: The early Christians in their Christian liberty chose to worship on Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead. But we are not bound by any commandment of God to worship on Sunday. Instead of thinking of the day of the week we choose to worship, we should be more concerned about what the Lord’s Word says about hearing and learning God’s Word. We should be concerned about being prepared for when Jesus comes again to judge the world. We should be concerned about being prepared for the day of our death. Are we ready to meet our Maker? The Bible teaches us, **“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching,”** Hebrews 10:25. We should be concerned about what we do when we have the opportunity to learn God’s Word and worship him with our hymns of praise and prayer. It’s a matter of priority. What should come first? Are we worried about making a living? Is there something else we would rather do than go to church and worship? Jesus says, **“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well,”** Matthew 6:33. It’s not a matter of obeying a law about worship, but it’s a matter of wanting to be guided by God’s Word. The psalmist expresses it this way, **“I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD,’”** Psalm 122:1. Again he says, **“My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the LORD,”** Psalm 84:2. **“Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere,”** Psalm 84:10.

Now as we hear the reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus’ miracle of healing, let us learn that **Jesus fulfilled his Messianic office in conducting his ministry as Isaiah prophesied.**

## 2.

It was such a wonderful miracle that Jesus healed the crippled man. But after they had seen the miracle, we are told that **“the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.”** To heal a man on the Sabbath was considered a sin by the Pharisees. But they themselves could make plans for murdering Jesus and consider that perfectly lawful. What hypocrites they were!

The time for Jesus’ suffering and death was not to be decided by his enemies. It had been established by God and would be done according to God’s plans. Our text says that Jesus was aware of what his enemies planned, and so **“Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was.”** As Jesus healed all the sick, he showed his love for them as the promised Savior. Thus he carried out his work as the Messiah. But Jesus did not want publicity to hinder his work. More publicity would provoke more hatred and opposition by his enemies.

How Jesus would conduct his ministry in doing his work as the promised Messiah was foretold by Isaiah the prophet. Matthew in our text quotes from Isaiah. **“Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight.”** The heavenly Father at Jesus’ baptism spoke this same truth. **“A voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased,’”** Matthew 3:17. In several Old Testament passages Jesus is called God’s servant who was chosen by the Father to save people from their sins. For example, it is written, **“By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities,”** Isaiah 53:11.

Isaiah furthermore foretold what is quoted in our text, **“I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.”** In another passage Isaiah wrote the Messiah’s words, **“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor,”** Isaiah 61:1. This is part of the sermon text Jesus used in preaching in the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth in which he very clearly identified himself as the Messiah. What would the Messiah do for the people? Matthew quotes from Isaiah, saying, **“He will proclaim justice to the nations.”** The nations are the heathen nations, people we call Gentiles. Jesus was not only the promised Messiah of the Jews, but he came also to save the

Gentiles. The *“justice”* he would proclaim is the verdict of God’s righteousness which he declares in the Gospel. This verdict was the result of Jesus’ work of redemption. The Messiah is the one who redeemed all people from sin and guilt. He atoned for all by his sacrifice on the cross. It is for Jesus’ sake that the Gospel pronounces all righteous. Even as all are sinners, so also all *“are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus,”* Romans 3:24.

The manner in which the Messiah would conduct his ministry is also spoken of in the prophecy of Isaiah quoted in our text. *“He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets.”* This prophecy was fulfilled particularly when Jesus told the multitudes following him *“not to tell who he was.”* Jesus did not seek publicity as our modern day evangelists who advertise their own names in their crusades. It is not our name, but the blessed name of Jesus that we want to publicize in our work as Christians.

Furthermore Isaiah prophesied, *“A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.”* These words picture what Jesus does for sinners through the Gospel preaching. Those who have weak faith, who need help to become stronger in faith, are the special objects of Jesus’ love. The *“bruised reed”* and the *“smoldering wick”* picture people who need the Gospel Word to strengthen their weak faith. Jesus in his ministry did not ignore such people, nor roll over them with the steamroller of the Law. He comforted them and strengthened their flickering faith. What a comfort it is for us to know this!

When we do have this comfort from the Gospel, we should be reminded that the Lord wants us to help spread the Gospel wherever we can. When we ourselves have been comforted with the declaration of righteousness through Christ, then we can proclaim that to others. When we ourselves have the sure hope of eternal life we should also assure other sinners of the one and only hope of eternal salvation in Christ. So let us share the good news with others, that *“Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, ... is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world,”* 1 John 2:1,2. The poet encourages us,

*“Tell of our Redeemer’s love,  
Who forever does remove  
By his holy sacrifice  
All the guilt that on us lies.”*

And we pray,  
*“Lord of Harvest, let there be  
Joy and strength to work for Thee  
Till the nations far and near  
See Thy light and learn Thy fear.”* Amen.  
(The Lutheran Hymnal 507:3 and 6)

Reprinted from Ministry By mail for September 14, 2006.

**Editor’s note:**

Together with the author, I agree that the name of Jesus should be glorified rather than “modern day evangelists who advertise their own names in their crusades. It is not our name, but the blessed name of Jesus that we want to publicize in our work as Christians.”

In my sermon for March 1, 2020 (not published yet in the Ministry By Mail) I emphasized the same idea, preaching that **NO ONE MAY BOAST ABOUT HIMSELF BEFORE GOD** based on 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

But is there an inconsistency with our on-line YouTube devotions? They are found by searching for YouTube Pastor Robert Mehlretter.

Yes, there really is. But that was chosen to more easily find our LCCF YouTube videos. Many church names are found on YouTube that are the same or similar as our congregations. I chose my name so our members may more easily find our videos.

*Pastor Robert Mehlretter*