

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John

Lesson #49

The Journey

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The Gospel of John

John 5:16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

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The Gospel of John

- Why this constant fuss about working on the Sabbath day?
- The history of the Sabbath can be seen in the Old Testament - in Exodus 31 we are told by God the penalty for working on the Sabbath was death.
- Since the Israelites could not cease all activities on the Sabbath, the 4th commandment required some clarity as to what constitutes work.

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The Gospel of John

- The prohibition related to work on the Sabbath was rather vague, “thou shalt do no work”.
- And because it was vague the Jews could become the interpreters of the commandment with respect to what is work, and what is not.
- A plain reading of the command tells us to refrain from customary work, or perhaps refrain from unnecessary work.

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- If you don't obsess over the meaning of the command, it's not that hard – we all kind of know what work is necessary and what is not.
- But maybe you have a different reason for wanting the meaning of the command to be fuzzy.
- Maybe you want to use the vagueness of the command to gain advantage over anyone who may look to you for spiritual leadership.

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- So, the Jews developed what is called “the oral law”, also called the Mishnah – it would be like one of our Bible commentaries.
- According to the oral law, you could not look at yourself in a mirror on the Sabbath for fear you would see something you would have to work to correct.
- You were not allowed to carry anything that was heavier than 2 dried figs or you would be working.

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- From just those 2 examples, the mirror and the figs, you can get a taste of how narrowly defined the Mishnah (the Oral Law) regulated everything allowed or disallowed on Shabbat.

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**Modern Day
"Shabbat"
keeping.**



Blech

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Warming Cold Food: On Shabbat, one may not place cold wet food, even when fully cooked, into a pot on the *blech*. However, one may place cold food (such as chicken or kugel) near the fire but not on the *blech* to take the chill off, as long as it could never become hot (over 113° F) in that spot.

Removing Food from the Blech: One may not serve food directly from a pot on the *blech*. The pot must first be removed from the *blech*.

Replacing Pots on the Blech: After removing a pot or kettle from the *blech* to serve from it, one may replace it on the *blech* only if all of the following conditions are met:

- When the pot was removed, the intention was to put it back,
- The food is fully cooked,
- The food has not completely cooled off and is still slightly warm,
- The food has not been transferred to another pot,
- One holds the pot handle until replacing the pot on the *blech*. It is preferable not to put the pot down. If necessary, the pot may be placed on a table or any dry place except the floor, as long as one continues to hold the pot.

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- There is legitimate need for some sort of commentary on the Torah so the Israelite would know how to apply such things as “thou shall do no work”.
- The natural question arises, “just what is work?” and an explanation was necessary, or maybe someone might say, “you can’t breathe on the Sabbath”.
- Over time, the Oral law grew as the Jews saw fit for their own needs and wants – like power.

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Exodus 31:12 And the Lord said to Moses, 13 “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. 14 You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes (make common) it shall be put to death.”

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Jesus treated the Sabbath differently than the “Jews” did – He claimed that work on the Sabbath was permitted if the work was essential (hospitals) or was for an act of love.

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• Luke 14:1 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2 And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" 6 And they could not reply to these things.

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• Mark 2:23 One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" 25 And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: 26 how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" 27 And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." 28 So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.

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- Jesus was not unwriting the 4th commandment – he was contextualizing it.
- As a general principle one day of rest every 7 days is a good idea even if you are not using it as a day of worship.
- On the Sabbath, to ignore the peril of a neighbor or even the neighbor's animal would not be pleasing to God.

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In a sense Jesus was disarming the Jews by removing one of their weapons – the Sabbath. It is an ugly and evil thing to use the commands of God to control others. “The Jews” had become quite good at it and Jesus was having none of it even calling the Jews hypocrites seven times in Matthew chapter 23. It seems that throughout history the Lord did not look favorably on pretenders, nor will he in the future.

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- We read of something similar in Matthew where the scene is judgment day and Jesus is doing an assessment of those who want to get into the Heaven.
- This judgment is necessarily the Great White Throne where the unsaved dead of all time appear for sentencing.
- Contrary to what we may have of imagined, there will be some protesters there who think they have a claim on Heaven.

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Matt 7:21 “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. 22 On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ 23 But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

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The Gospel of John

What? They prophesied and cast out demons in Jesus' name and they were not saved!!!

Perhaps this is the ultimate statement about being saved by faith and not by works. Indeed, this may be the biggest double-underscore ever of salvation by grace through faith and not by works.

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- Some have prophesied in Jesus' name and exorcised demons and performed miracles in Jesus' name and yet they are standing at the Great White Throne? (Deception)
- Jesus does not correct them on what they claimed to have done, so they probably did the things they claimed.
- Their problem is that entrance to Heaven is not determined by our works, which are always insufficient, but by our faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus!

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The false prophets in Matthew 7 and "the Jews" have this is common. Both groups are religious imposters using the levers of religion for their own advantage. And both groups will be weighed in the balance and found to be wanting on judgment day. It's not that healing people and casting out demons in Jesus' name is wrong – there was benefit to those set free, but there will be no benefit to those pretending to be right with God when they are not!

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- John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”
- Jesus was in fact claiming equality with the Father meaning that he was God – as I said last week, he is guilty as charged on this count.
- Mark 2:27 And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” 22

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- If the Sabbath was made for man, and not for God, then the rules for keeping the Sabbath did not apply to Jesus because he is God.
- So, the Jews can't have it both ways – if he is claiming to be God then the Sabbath rules did not apply to him.
- By his own standards Jesus never broke the Sabbath prohibition on work – he was doing humanitarian works on all the days of the week. 23

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Keeping the Sabbath was about much more than refraining from work on the 7th day – to disregard the Sabbath was to deny Israel's association with God. In addition, keeping the Sabbath showed their rest in God. It showed him as their all-sufficient Savior as they rested in him.

Ephesians 2:8-9

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The Trinity

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The Gospel of John

- John 5:19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”
- This verse has “Trinity” written all over it – the Son can do nothing that is out of the will of God for to be able to do so would necessitate him being just one of 3 Gods, but God is one.

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Jesus is not saying he has one will and the Father has another will as one might claim is possible if they were the equivalent of a human father and son. On the contrary when he says “the Son can do nothing of his own accord” he means exactly what he says. Since the Father, Son, and Spirit are one and unified in every respect it is impossible for the will of the Son to differ from the will of the Father. The same would be true of all members of the God-head.

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- I have been asked if one should pray to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.
- The answer is clearly it does not matter – I tend to follow Jesus’ own instructions to his disciples when he said, “Our Father who are in Heaven”.
- All three members of the Trinity are involved when we pray to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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- There have been lots of analogies set forth to try to explain the unexplainable; the Trinity.
- Water, ice, and steam – an eggshell, and egg white, and an egg yoke – while these may be helpful to children, they really do not satisfy the mature mind.
- We know the Bible presents the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as co-equal parts of the God-head, but it is rare to find an explanation that really works for us.

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- In ancient Greece it was common for one actor or actress to play multiple roles in the same play just by changing the mask they would hold to their face.
- What one saw as they watched the play was influenced by the mask, voice inflections, and changes in volume changed with each character played by the same person.
- The person behind the mask didn’t change, their “persona” did – how they were perceived by the audience.

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- If you trace the etymology of the word “Persona” it comes from a Latin word that is spelled the same, but means, “mask”.
- We tend to have different “personas” (masks) – one for home, one for work, and one for church.
- Our character never changes, how we are perceived and subsequently known to others does – we are the same essence, but three separate personas.

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Three Personas, One Person



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The Trinity

The word “essence” is defined as the intrinsic nature or indispensable quality of something, especially something abstract. Maybe this is how we are to understand the Trinity. Just as the actor’s essence did not change from scene to scene in ancient plays, so it is with the Trinity. He (whether Father, Son, or Spirit) never changes - how we perceive and relate to Him does.

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