

TFTD 23.15 Friday March 10th

Matthew 12.1-21: Lord of the Sabbath



Jesus said, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. Matthew 12.8

Jesus declares “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8)

And so, it is he who decides how he will use this holy day that has been given to us by God. It is the Word of God made man who decides how the Sabbath laws will work in practice.

Because on the one hand we have the commandment not to work on the Sabbath. But then on the other hand we are commanded to love one another. And people need to be fed. And they need to be healed. So, can we feed each other and heal each other on the Sabbath? Which part of Scripture shall we follow? Who decides? The Son of Man.

Jesus decisively raises the commandment to love one another above the commandments not to work on the Sabbath. And he often does this sort of thing; quoting

passages of Scripture in order to challenge the way that the Pharisees and others choose to follow Scripture. In the Gospels, and especially in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus elevates some themes in Scripture so that they are given priority over other themes. And Paul does likewise in his letters.

And we too will inevitably have to decide what part of Scripture takes precedence in any given situation. We too will have conversations with each other in which one will say 'this bit of the Bible says this' and somebody will reply 'but this bit of the Bible says this.' And then we will have to choose which bit should have primacy.

The Pharisees chose to give primacy to Sabbath rules. And as Jesus pointed out, by elevating this theme, the theme of loving your neighbour receded into the background of their thinking. They chose to downplay loving your neighbour.

How will our conversations about what to give primacy to be resolved? In the conversations in the Church of England about blessing same sex marriages, one voice who is against any change in church practice has said, 'The church finds unity in Scripture.' I don't think this is correct. I don't think the church ever has or ever will find unity in Scripture.

The church has always found unity and always will find

unity in Christ, the Son of Man. He is the way and the truth and the life. He is the way to the Father. Those who saw Jesus in the flesh were looking at God. We, also, look to him to know what we must do.

And over and over again, Jesus emphasises the importance of the commandment to love each other. And he sets us free to work out how we will do this afresh every day. And we do that by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in imagining what Jesus would do, what Jesus would say and how can we follow him.

Loving Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, your Word made Flesh. Lead us by your Holy Spirit to find unity with our brothers and sisters in Him. And strengthen our faith that we can love you and love each other as you command and empower us to do. Amen.

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