



“MERCY ME!!!” **MATTHEW Chapter 12:1-21**

~ In this passage Jesus will give us three keys to God’s MERCY:

#1 – Mercy wins over religious legalism;

#2 – Mercy is always and forever;

#3 – Mercy is for everyone;

So, let’s learn from our Lord Jesus and be a people of mercy!

KEY #1 – (v1-8) JESUS DECLARES MERCY NOT SACRIFICE!

Let’s refresh our memories from **chapter 11:28-30**, remember Jesus said that *He would give us REST if we LEARN from HIM.*

(1-2) Let’s understand the SABBATH (Hebrew - *shabbat* which means *cessation from labor, rest.*)—This practice originated in creation, because God created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh (**Gen 1**). By this act, God ordained a pattern for living—that man should work six days each week at subduing and ruling the creation and should rest one day a week.

This is the understanding of the creation set forth by Moses when he wrote the **Ten Commandments** at God's direction in **Exodus 20:8-11**- *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

God's people, the Hebrews, are directed to keep the Sabbath because God delivered and redeemed His people from the bondage in Egypt - **Deuteronomy 5:14-15** - *but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.*

Thus, the Sabbath is an ordinance that relates redemption directly to history. Sabbath rest also holds promise of the ultimate salvation that God will accomplish for His people. As certainly as He delivered them from Egypt through Moses, so will He deliver His people from sin at the end of the age through the Great Redeemer (**Gen 3:15; Heb 4:1**).

Finally, **the Sabbath includes the idea and practice of celebrating rest, or salvation.** To this end, God declared that His Sabbath was a day for public convocation (**Lev 23:3**), a special time for His people to gather together in public worship to signify their submission to His lordship over them and their way of living (**Ex 31:13; Ezek 20:12**).

During the period between the Old and New Testaments, Jewish religious leaders added greatly to the details of Sabbath legislation. **One section of the Jewish Talmud, the major compilation of Jewish tradition, has twenty-four chapters listing Sabbath laws.**

This substituted HUMAN law for DIVINE law (Matt 15:9), made the law a burden rather than a rest and delight (Luke 11:46), and reduced the Sabbath to little more than an external observance (Matt 12:8).

Jesus, like the Old Testament prophets, kept the Sabbath Himself (Luke 4:16) and urged others to observe the day (Mark 2:28). But He condemned the pharisaical attitude that missed the deep spiritual truth behind Sabbath observance (Matt 12:14; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1-11; John 5:1-18).

- Historically, Christians observe Sunday, the first day of the week, as the Christian Sabbath. They note that *Christ arose on the first day of the week* (Matt 28:1) and, thereafter, the New Testament church regularly worshiped on Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10).

> As Christians we have entered God's rest according to Hebrews Ch. 4 (Let's read)

- Paul writes in Colossians that no one is to judge you regarding the Sabbath – Colossians 2:16-23 - *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

> (v3-8) Jesus taught and practiced the *spirit of the law on the Sabbath* in four ways:

#1 - (v1-2) The LAW itself defends the actions Christ - It was lawful to satisfy your hunger from your neighbor's field (Deuteronomy 23:24-25 - *If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain.*);

#2 - (v3-4) King David defends the actions of Christ - The consecrated bread was to be eaten only by the priests, yet David and his soldiers ate it. And if David broke the law and was not condemned, surely, Jesus could break man's traditions and be guiltless (see 1 Sam 21:1);

#3 - (v5) The Temple Priests defend the actions of Christ - The priests had to offer a given number of sacrifices on the Sabbath (Num 28:9-10) and yet were not condemned. In fact, their service was in obedience to the Law given by God. This suggests that man's traditions about the Sabbath were wrong, for they contradicted God's own Law.

#4 - (v7) The prophet Hosea (Hos. 6:6) defends the actions of Christ - The *Sabbath law* was given to Israel as a mark of her relationship to God (Ex 20:9-11; 31:13-17; Neh 9:12-15).

- The Sabbath was also an act of *mercy* for both man and beast to give them needed rest each week. He wants mercy and love, not legalism.

> *Mercy* is associated with God's *lovingkindness* and *compassion* for all people. The New Testament "love chapter" in 1 Corinthians 13 reflects this great lesson.

- In the New Testament we often find *mercy* connected to *grace* - 1 Timothy 1:2 - *To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2 John 3 - *Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

- **Jesus also gives us two monumental statements in verses 6-8:**

(1) Jesus said, that *He is greater than the temple* (v6);

(2) and that *He is Lord of the Sabbath* (v8).

- **Both proclamations are about His deity.** Jesus is God in the flesh, the Son of Man, the divine Messiah whom the *Temple honored*, and the *Sabbath served*.

- **FYI - There are three "greater" statements in chapter twelve that Jesus makes:**

#1 - As the **Priest**, He is "*greater than the temple*" (Matt 12:6);

#2 - As the **Prophet**, He is "*greater than Jonah*" (Matt 12:41)

#3 - As the **King**, He is "*greater than Solomon*" (Matt 12:42).

- We will note that Jesus appealed to **Priest, Prophet, and King**, for He is the greatest Priest, Prophet and King!

> **KEY #2 - (v9-13) JESUS DELIVERS MERCY ON THE SABBATH!**

- **By healing a man's withered hand!** - John MacArthur writes, "Like the other nine Commandments, the one to observe the Sabbath was given to promote love toward God and love toward one's fellow man. The first three pertain to showing love of God through *reverence, faithfulness, and holiness*. The other seven pertain to love of other people through personal *purity, unselfishness, truthfulness, contentment, and through respect for their possessions, rights and well-being.*"

- Since we have come into God's rest through Jesus Christ, let us also follow HIS LOVING and MERCIFUL ways with others.

> **KEY #3 - (v14-21) JESUS IS MERCIFUL TO THE GENTILES!**

(v14) A heart without mercy can become a hardened heart for murder.

(v15-16) Notice the mercy, Jesus heals them ALL! The Pharisees are without excuse.

(v17-21) Unfortunately, throughout human history most Jews have rejected Jesus as their Messiah, whereas, multitudes of Gentiles have recognized Jesus as the Savior of the world.

> **Isaiah (Isa. 42:1-4) declares that the Messiah will be:**

- **A Servant** - Mark 10:45 - *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.* "

- **God's Beloved** - God the Father spoke at the baptism of Christ - Mark 1:11 - *"You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* And at the Mt. of Transfiguration - Mark 9:7 - *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"*

- **God's Spirit upon Him** - Jesus Luke 4:18-19 - *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."*

- To declare justice to the Gentiles – God told Abraham in Genesis 12:3 – And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Christ proclaims justice and deliverance from sin. Even from our Judeo-Christian roots in the U.S.A. we declare in our *Pledge of Allegiance*, **"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."**

- Not quarrelsome (Gk.- epizo - hassling, brawling) and to cry out (Gk. – kraugazo – to scream excitedly) Jesus was not a political rabble-rouser trying to overthrow the Roman Empire, but rather a self-controlled deliverer of SALVATION.

- A bruised reed not broken and a smoking flax (a wick) He will not quench – A reed was used for making music, His praise is from generation to generation; and Jesus is the light of the world!

- He will send forth justice to victory - 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 - So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- And in His name the Gentiles will trust - Acts 4:12 - Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Philippians 2:9-11 - Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Revelation 3:8-9, 10-11 - I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

- Have you placed your trust in Jesus Christ for salvation?