

## **A Man Is Worth More than a Sheep**

Deuteronomy 22:1-12; Matthew 12:9-14 / Isaiah 59:1-21

### **I. Guilt and Envy Make People Aggressive**

**A. GUILT AND ENVY** surfaced when Jesus presented the gospel. And when he was departed thence, *he went into their synagogue*: (MATTHEW 12:9)

**B. The local synagogue, with its elders, was the focus of religious life in the Old Testament as it is in the church today.** And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, *as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.* (EZEKIEL 8:1) *along with Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves* together, as the manner of some *is*; *but exhorting one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

**C. Jesus regularly attended synagogue, read, and explained the Scriptures with power.** And *came* down to *Capernaum*, a city of Galilee, *and taught them on the sabbath days*. And they were astonished at his doctrine: *for his word was with power.* (LUKE 4:31-32)

**D. Lives changed and changed lives bother contented or powerful people.** And when the *sabbath* day was come, *he began to teach in the synagogue*: and many *hearing him were astonished*, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and *what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?* (MARK 6:2)

**E. A handicapped person provided an occasion to attack Jesus and His message.** And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, *Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.* (MATTHEW 12:10)

**F. The Pharisees had made their law more important than the statements of Scripture and now presumed an unproven proposition.** But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, *Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.* (MATTHEW 12:2)

### **II. Jesus Did More than React**

**A. Anyone can understand simple kindness and mercy.** And he said unto them, *What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* (MATTHEW 12:11)

**1. The large issues of life display themselves in the small issues. A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.** (PROVERBS 12:10)

**2. The inner person cannot hide.** He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and *he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.* (LUKE 16:10)

**B. A pure heart would see through the trap. How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.** (MATTHEW 12:12)

**C. Jesus was using fundamental Biblical equity to illustrate the larger themes of grace. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.** (DEUTERONOMY 22:4)

**D. If the opposition had understood the Biblical faith they would have recognized the underlying reality of what Jesus was doing.** I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. *I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* (REVELATION 22:16)

**E. People who twist the Scriptures away from their stated purposed destroy themselves.** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. (REVELATION 22:19)

**F. People who distort Scripture make God out to be a liar and draw His wrath on themselves and that is what the Pharisees had done by setting the Bible in a context which distorted the underlying message of grace.** *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* (PROVERBS 30:6)

**G. Then Jesus drove home his doctrine with an inescapable illustration.** Then saith he to the man, *Stretch forth thine hand.* And he stretched *it* forth; and *it was restored whole, like as the other.* (MATTHEW 12:13)

### III. No One Can Be Neutral about Jesus

**A. The tormentors began to plot to murder Jesus.** Then *the Pharisees* went out, and *held a council* against him, *how they might destroy him.* (MATTHEW 12:14) *along with* And the *Pharisees* went forth, and straightway *took counsel with the Herodians* against him, *how they might destroy him.* (MARK 3:6)

**B. The Pharisees saw that they must accept Jesus as the promised Messiah or face ruin.** *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him,* because *he not only had broken the sabbath,* but said *also* that God was his Father, *making himself equal with God.* (JOHN 5:18)

**C. True understanding of Scripture leads to holiness, not plans to murder.** The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: *the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.* (PSALM 19:8)

**D. Responding to Jesus is a life or death matter.** Who *both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:* (1 THESSALONIANS 2:15) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: *he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* (JOHN 6:35)

**E. Peter faced the same dilemma and made a different decision.** He said unto them, But *whom say ye* that I am? Peter answering said, *The Christ of God.* (LUKE 9:20)

**F. What does Jesus, the WORD of God, produce in your heart?** But *these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* (JOHN 20:31)

+ Dr. Edwin P. Elliott