



Daily Reflections

September 5, 2020

Scripture

Luke 6:1-5

While Jesus was going through a field of grain on a sabbath,
his disciples were picking the heads of grain,
rubbing them in their hands, and eating them.
Some Pharisees said,
“Why are you doing what is unlawful on the sabbath?”
Jesus said to them in reply,
“Have you not read what David did
when he and those who were with him were hungry?
How he went into the house of God, took the bread of offering,
which only the priests could lawfully eat,
ate of it, and shared it with his companions?”
Then he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”

Our Scripture Reflection

In the area of Sabbath observance, the Pharisees had an especially large accumulation of rules. Observant Jews observe the Sabbath from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday evening, and seek to honor God in the day by doing no work, but observing a Sabbath rest. That is a good thing. But the Pharisees and scribes began to define what was and was not work, and some of their rules were just plain silly. Jesus and His disciples are walking through a wheat or barley field just before harvest, probably on a field path, helping themselves to handfuls of the grains pulled off of grain heads. They would rub the grain between their palms to dislodge the husks, and then eat the grain. Now you

might object to this if it were your grainfield, but what they were doing was considered entirely appropriate: "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" (Deuteronomy 23:25).

The Pharisees, however, were concerned because they were doing this on the Sabbath, and it broke their myriad of rules against working on the Sabbath.

To counter the criticism of the Pharisees Jesus makes reference to an episode involving King David. What point is Jesus making by referring to this incident? Apparently, that human need should override bare legalism. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath".

But Jesus doesn't leave it there. Instead He asserts His own authority: "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath". His assertion did not impress them.

Food for your Journey

The legislators of Texas passed a law that each automobile licensed in the state must have an inspection sticker on the driver's side of the windshield. They made that law because some of us are careless about keeping our cars in safe operating condition. The law is for the good of the owner of the car and for the others who might be jeopardized by its operation. So the law is for the good of all concerned.

Suppose that our legislators should pass another law requiring a green star sticker on the passenger side of the windshield. They explain the purpose of this law: "We made this law just to let you know that we have the authority to legislate. We want you to get this sticker simply because we say for you to get it." That would be an arbitrary, despotic law. And after the next election, there would be some new faces in the legislature!

Law must originate from authority in order to have validity; yet just laws are not arbitrary expressions of authority

The Ten Commandments, for instance, were not arbitrary laws, but were based on principles In the first three, God is saying, "I love you and want your full fellowship." In the fifth through the tenth, he is saying, "Love and respect each other." The fourth command, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy," might not seem to fit with the nine. However, it is the pivotal command. It points both directions — to God and man. In it, God is saying, "Remember your spiritual relationship with me, and remember the dignity and purpose of man."

—Cecil Hook, "Law and principle," Free In Christ, November 1, 1995, freedomring.org/fic/chap2.html.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You always showed compassion and mercy towards those who were in need. Help me, Lord, to have Your heart and Your eyes. May I see the needs of those who are hurting and show them love and mercy in Your Holy Name. Amen