

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #203

Jesus' Ministry in Perea

Miracle #29: Jesus Heals Again on the Sabbath, A Man With Dropsy LK 14.1-6

1 One Sabbath, when Jesus went to share a meal in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully observed.

2 Look! There in front of him was a certain man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. 3 Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, *"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?"*

4 But they held their silence. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.

5 Then he asked them, *"If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?"*

6 And they were not able to say a thing.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	In the Home of a Pharisee, in Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	2. Miracle #29: Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy, On the Sabbath

COMMENT:

Today's reading features the only miracle that Luke chose to include in his narrative of Jesus' ministry in Perea (LK 14.1 to 17.10). Issues in discipleship continue to dominate Luke's description of these roughly ten weeks of ministry.

Once again we see Jesus' grace and impartial love in his willingness to accept an invitation to share a meal with some Pharisees. He knew that their sole purpose was to find some grounds for discrediting him, but Jesus broke bread with them anyway. Unconditional love for his enemies caused Jesus to take the risk, and seize the chance to minister to them.

It was not surprising that Jesus immediately found a man with a serious medical problem sitting right in front of him at the dinner. It was a Sabbath day. It appeared that the Pharisees were baiting Jesus by taking advantage of the man's illness. Would he heal again on the Sabbath or not?

Rather than being concerned about the man's health, the Pharisees were only interested in seeing if Jesus observed their legalistic rules (39 of them!) that severely limited work on the Sabbath.

Knowing their hearts, Jesus asked them a question after he healed the man. Would not any of them break their ritual rules if their own child, or even their ox fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath? Of course they would prioritize

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the life of those they loved and depended upon, whether child or beast, and do everything necessary to save a valuable life--no matter how much "work" was required. When Jesus pointed this out, no one was able to deny the truth of it.

In the context of this question, none of the Pharisees could rebuke Jesus for a Sabbath healing. However, Jesus was not about to subject the healed man to the further humiliation of being a pawn in Pharisees plan to find fault with Jesus. He immediately dismissed the man, setting him free to celebrate and make the most of his unexpected healing with his true friends, apart from the judgmental scrutiny of the Pharisees .

We see here that Jesus genuinely loved and care for this man, while the Pharisees merely wanted to use his pain and suffering for their own agenda. Jesus also loved and cared for the Pharisees enough to remain with them in these acutely uncomfortable circumstances, and continue to reach out to them with the truth. The glory, humility, love, and true servant-greatness of Jesus shine bright in scenes like this.

APPLICATION:

The Pharisees never got it. Jesus had told them long ago in Galilee, at the very beginning of the controversy about Sabbath observances, that the Sabbath was created by God to benefit people. People were not created by God for the purpose of keeping man made work-rules concerning a religious holiday.

It is all too easy to become legalistic as Christians, and make people subservient to man-made rules. When rules become more important than the people the rules were designed to serve, legalism has set in .

Do you ever find yourself following rules to the detriment of yourself, or others?

What does today's reading tell you about what Jesus would do about that problem? What will you do about it?