

A Study of the Christ

Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Matthew (Levi) called to be a disciple	9:9	2:13-14	5:27-28	
Parables at Levi's reception	9:10-17	2:15-22	5:29-39	
Jesus in Jerusalem 2nd Passover				5:1
Man healed at pools of Bethesda				5:2-15
Sabbath healing challenged				5:16-47
Disciples pick grain on the Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	

Overriding Principles

- God's compassionate intentions are often overlooked by men in their self-centered, self-righteous blindness.
- Mercy does not negate law, it does, however, give us a proper focus for interpreting how God wants His law to be employed.

Main Point

- But go and learn what this means, "I desire compassion and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Matt. 9:13; Hos. 6:4). But if you had known what this means, "I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice," you would not have condemned the innocent (Matt. 12:7; Hos. 6:4).

Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- Tax collectors were the worst of the worst to most Jews—traitors (**Matt. 9:9**).
- Matthew's topical arrangement of material may reflect his accounting background (**Matt. 9:9**).
- The Pharisees forgot that they were sinners and also that God loves to save lost men and women. Their question in **Matthew 9:11** is a monument to their clueless foolishness.

- Those who admit to being sick can be helped by a physician, those in denial will die (**Matt. 9:12**; cf. Jn. 8:24).
- Following the call of Matthew Levi, the persecution phase of Jesus' ministry begins. Jesus gives three reasons behind this change in how He was perceived (**Lk. 5:33-39**).
 - o His message was new and did not match the traditional way the Jews practiced religion. Rather than patching the old practices with something that did not match and would cause considerable disruption, a new garment was needed. Although in different ways, Jesus' remarks applied both to the way of Moses and to the way of Jewish traditions (**v. 36**; Heb. 8:1-13; Mk. 7:1-13).
 - o Neither the patterns and forms Moses nor the structures of rabbinic traditions could hold the new way of the Christ. He would burst them wide open (**vv. 37-38**; Matt. 23:28; 24:1-2).
 - o When people are accustomed to a certain way of doing things, they commonly prefer to hold to those things, even if a better way comes along (**v. 39**; Matt. 23:37).
- The "feast" of **John 5:1** was most likely either Passover or Tabernacles. If Passover, His ministry lasted about 3 1/2 years, if Tabernacles, about 2 1/2.
- As noted in an earlier lesson, John will use the word "sign," **σημειον**: a signal, to organize the development of his Gospel. In the signs Jesus performs, John is more concerned with what they point to or signify beyond themselves; the Synoptic writers prefer "miracle" from **δυναμις**: an act of power (Jn. 2:11; 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2,14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30).
- The *sign* of **John five** is one of a related trio—chapters five, nine, and eleven. The signs of these three chapters: the lame man, the man born blind, and dead Lazarus, betray the heart of the rejection of Jesus. The first appears to break the Sabbath, the second, while on the Sabbath, has less appearance of a problem, the last has no connection with the Sabbath at all. Nevertheless, the anger of the Jews grew with each sign. The problem was never really about the Sabbath, it was about Jesus winning the hearts of those who had followed the Sadducees and Pharisees. They were losing their perverse grip on the people (cf. Jn. 11:47).

- The various Sabbath controversies in Jesus' ministry are the most persistent aspect of the anger of the establishment. They illustrate the lengths self-centered people are willing to go to when they seek to justify what cannot be justified, and, conversely, condemn what is innocent (**Jn. 5:9-10**; cf. Jn. 7:23-24; 9:16; Matt. 12:1-8; 9:14; Mk. 2:27; Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6; Ex. 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; 35:1-3; Num. 15:32-36; Deut. 5:14; Jer. 17:21-23).
- Jesus' question to the paralytic "Do you wish to get well?" may well reveal something about the man. He proves, after all, to be an unpleasant betrayer of Jesus; he may have enjoyed his ill health as one who took pleasure in being able to complain (**Jn. 5:6, 10-15**).
- The religious establishment correctly inferred that Jesus implied that He was God. The Jews were after Jesus' life because of this (**Jn. 5:17-18**; cf. Jn. 7:19, 30, 32, 44; 8:59; 10:39; 11:8, 53; 12:10-11).
- The Jews would face a judgment based on whether or not they had overcome spiritual death by being reborn in the Christ (**Jn. 5:19-29**).
- The Jews studied Scripture not to find truth, but to reinforce their preferences for the teaching of men (**Jn. 5:39-47**).
- The lesson of Matthew twelve that referenced Hosea 6:4 was not learned; for the Jews religion was not about compassion, it was about self-righteous judgment (**Matt. 12:1-8**; cf. Matt. 7:1-1-5).
- In saying that He was Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus did not mean that he could do as He pleased (cf. Matt. 5:17-20), rather He meant that He was the accurate interpreter of Sabbath law—after all, He was the Creator of the days (**Matt. 12:8**; Jn. 1:1-3).
- In the case of David and the "consecrated bread," Jesus shows that God did not make the rule about the bread to keep starving men from food (**Matt. 12:4**; 1 Sam. 21:7).
- Regarding priests serving on the Sabbath, Jesus was teaching with another illustration that some things take precedence over others (**Matt. 12:5**).
- Jesus was greater than the Sabbath or the temple—He was the very fulfillment of both (**Matt. 12:6, 8**; cf. Heb. 4:1-11; Matt. 11:28-30; Jn. 2:18-22).

Relationship to the Church

- Compassion must be remembered as a driving force in God's work among men (cf. Jn. 3:17).
- It is not that compassion undoes law; compassion properly defines its overall intent.
- Self-righteousness, the product of pride, can look God in the eye and call Him the Devil--BE WARE (cf. Matt. 12:24)!
- Laws must be related to the principles that give them meaning and life (cf. Matt. 23:23-24; Rom. 3:31).
- The proper interpretation of all that God has revealed is a matter of seeing Scripture through the eyes of Jesus, as we come to know Him and become like Him (cf. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 3:16-21).

Who is Jesus?

- He is the man who stands up for truth and against everything false.
- He is the compassionate lover of fallen men.
- He is patiently, yet firmly, there for all who would see their true needs.
- He is the man who rejects pride and exalts humility.
- He is the One who loves me the sinner!