

August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Luke 13:10-17



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### **“What is the Most Important for Christians?”**

“Are you Christians?” Could you ask your next whether they are Christians?

We all are Christians. I do not doubt you are Christians. You keep the Lord’s Day (Sunday) worshipping God because we are Christians. If we agree that we all are Christians, we should know what the most important is for Christians. Do you know what the most important is for Christians?

I want to share with you a story about a teacher. This story is from a bible commentary by Bruce Larson.

“There was an unmarried man who had been traveling all around the country giving a lecture on “Ten Commandments for Parents,” when he fell in love and got married. After the arrival of his first baby, he changed the title of his teaching to “Ten Suggestions for Parents.”

With the second baby, his education was called "Ten helpful Hints for Parents." When a third child came, he stopped giving the teachings altogether. “

This story gives us wisdom, “Sometimes it’s difficult to live out those principles we are talking about.” You and I also have the same problem applying what we believe and teach to our daily attitudes and behavior.

In the text, we saw the leader of the synagogue’s indignation. He is indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath day. The leader was taught that if you believe in God, you should keep the Sabbath day, which means you shouldn’t do anything. You should rest on the Sabbath day because it is God’s command.

In the view of the leader, Jesus seems like against the Law of God. Therefore, he offended by this healing, and then protests.

However, he does not dare directly criticize what Jesus has done. Instead, he rebukes to the crowd. His issue of anger is that the suitability of healing on the Sabbath. Jesus answered him, "you are hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And, ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"(13:15-16).

Jesus teaches us through this parable what the important is for the believers.

As you may know, taking a rest on the Sabbath day is one of God's Commandments. God's Ten Commandments teach us:

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

The Christian tradition teaches us these are the Ten Commandments from God. And, we are trying to live them out in our daily lives. Yes, we should keep them.

However, we wonder why Jesus is going against one of them, not keeping the Sabbath day. Jesus is not merely against one of the Commandments, but he just gives them a parable to teach.

In Luke 4:31-37 and 6:6-11, Jesus has healed illness on the Sabbath day. Jesus already established his authority over the unclean spirits, and he argued that it was right to do good and to save life on the Sabbath.

Jesus's parable with this healing of a woman gives us Christians' importance how we live the Commandments out. The Ten Commandments are based on God's love; it is not merely for keeping the rules. If we try to keep the law without love, we may make a big mistake. We need to be careful to understand what God tells us through the Bible. The purpose of God's Ten Commandments is to protect those who are powerless in the society such as women, the sick, widows, children, and seniors. Many leaders have used God's law so that they rule over the weak and the powerless at that time.

The point of this story is that Jesus healed a woman who was possessed by unclean spirits. As the traditional custom of Jews, a woman could not come to the front of people by herself. Furthermore, a woman or a man who is possessed by evil spirits was treated as a sinner. Nevertheless, Jesus called the woman to come in front of the people and proclaimed that the woman is free from her illness. Jesus teaches that concern over the suffering of fellow human beings takes precedence over obligations related to keeping the Sabbath.

The women's condition is attributed to a spirit of weakness." For eighteen years she had been bent over, unable to stand up straight." Jesus answered the leader of the synagogue by contrasting what one would do for an animal with what he has done for the woman. So, it gives us an implication that they may treat women worse than their animals. As Jesus mentioned the woman as a "daughter of Abraham," he confers on the woman a status of dignity. Jesus is in the process of releasing the captive, freeing the oppressed, and raising up children to Abraham.

We remember the story of a rich man who kept all the Ten Commandments from his childhood(Mark 10:17-31). Jesus looked at him and loved him, and he said, "One thing you lack, go and sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."

However, he did not do so because he had great wealth.

The rich man kept all the Commandments in his life, but he could not give his property to the poor. He loved his wealth more than his neighbors. He held the Commandments in literary, not with his heart, his soul and his mind.

Jesus taught us what the Greatest Commandment is for Christians in the gospel of Matthew 23:34-40.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind. It is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Who is our neighbor? They are perhaps those who are in need, the oppressed, the powerless, and the sick. If we are Christians, we should treat our neighbors as well as ourselves.

Go back to the teacher I shared with you at the beginning. The teacher taught "Ten Commandments for Parents" before he became a parent. However, he changed his teaching topic, as the Suggestion for the Parents, and eventually, he stopped to teach parents. We may assume it is not comfortable that we live out as what we teach. However, remember what the most important is for Christians. It is to love God and to love neighbors.

We are imperfect, and we cannot live out as what we were taught and what we teach. Therefore, we need God's help. Jesus said to us, The Holy Spirit helps us to remember what Jesus taught us, and guides us to live them out in the world. The way we ask of God's help is to pray to God. Through our prayers, God helps us to be strong enough to live out with the love of God and the love of neighbors. Let us pray every day God may help us to live out in the love of God and the love of neighbors.

Thanks be to God, Amen!