

ETHICS AT ODDS

Matthew 12:1-14

I. Justice and mercy *clash* in *Pharisaic* ethics (vv. 1-8).

II. Justice and mercy *kiss* in *Messianic* ethics (vv. 9-14).

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Read Matthew 11:29. Why would the accounts in Matthew 12:1-14 be fitting to follow this gracious offer?
2. What is the Sabbath? How did the 1st century religion leaders misunderstand it?
3. What were the disciples of Jesus doing as they walked to the synagogue? Why did the Pharisees think they were breaking the law?
4. Where did Jesus point the Pharisees to in Israel's history, Israel's law, and Israel's prophets to prove them wrong?
5. What does God mean when He says He desires mercy, not sacrifice? How does this apply to us today?
6. How does Jesus demonstrate a proper understanding of the Sabbath in his healings? How is this contrasted with the murderous plots of the Pharisees?
7. Did Jesus break the Sabbath? And do we still have an obligation to keep the Sabbath? If so, when and how?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Is my heart prone to worship the twin gods of accumulation and accomplishment? How do these idols of 21st century American society threaten to distort my understanding and practice of the Sabbath? How is that distortion related to the Sabbath distortion of the Pharisees?
2. Why does the moral law trump the ceremonial law? Why does this matter, practically speaking?
3. How is an unmerciful justice actually injustice? Where do I see such at play today?