

## Luke 13:10-17, "Religion or Relationship?"

- ✚ The Sabbath was a Law for the Jewish people, it was created for their benefit so that people would stop and rest. God required that they cease from work on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, not only them but also their animals. Not just their animals, but also their land, every 7<sup>th</sup> year. Not just every 7<sup>th</sup> day or year, but after 49<sup>th</sup> year they took off the entire year! They rested in faith that it was God who provided for their needs not their hard work, it was law to push them to trust their relationship with God! Over time they lost the understanding of that relationship and instead of the sabbath being used as a blessing in their lives, they began to use it as a weapon to control people and a burden to weigh down their lives. They turned it into a religion of rules and forgot the relationship. The command was simple just don't work, that's all. What a gift! What a blessed day! They turned it into the worst day of the week because they started splitting hairs over what constituted work. This story highlights the distinct contrast between religion, interrupted as rule-following and a relationship with God. Religion does some horrible things to us when we separate it from our relationship with God.
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### 1. Religion makes us think you can dismiss our own sin.

- ✓ Their strict following of their false interpretation of the Sabbath blinded them to the rest of the bad stuff going on in their hearts and lives. "Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of this, they will be severely punished.", Luke 20:47. "Blind guides! You strain your water, so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel! "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy, full of greed and self-indulgence!", Matthew 23:24-25

### 2. Religion can cause us to miss God altogether.

- ✓ This guy has a front row seat to a miracle of God, and he not only misses that but in anger he quotes a policy! Standing so close to Jesus but missing what He does! What happens to us when our religion is missing God? We miss people as a direct consequence.

### 3. Religion runs over people, but a relationship puts people first.

- ✓ This woman is just there for worship; she didn't ask for this. Almost certainly a regular attender, she'd been overlooked and uncared for. Jesus notices her, calls her out, touches her, people are the priority of God. They had noticed their donkeys that morning, but not people; touched them and fed their animals, but not people. We live in a similar culture, people are crazy about their animals, spend all kinds of money on them, but where are they when it comes to help people whom Jesus died for? We can legally kill an unborn child but if we so much as touch an eagle's egg or a turtle's nest, it's a public outrage not to mention fines or imprisonment.

**People matter to God above everything else, it was people for whom Jesus died. Jesus took on human flesh (Not angel or creature), no other thing in all of creation has that level of care from the Almighty. Religion is only beneficial if its beneficial for people: "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you," James 1:27. "If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing," 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.**

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