

# Scripture and the Sabbath: Law or Love?

- **Common Misconception:**
  - Many view scripture as a rule book, both inside and outside the church.
  - Conversations about faith often focus on prohibitions in the Bible.
- **Jesus' Alternative View:**
  - Jesus challenges the rule-based view of scripture.
  - He emphasises God's character and love over a list of rules.
- **Conflict with the Pharisees:**
  - Pharisees focus on strict interpretations of Sabbath laws.
  - Examples: Disciples plucking grain, Jesus healing on the Sabbath.
  - Pharisees allow healing only if life is at risk.
- **Jesus' Approach:**
  - Jesus broadens the interpretation to focus on doing good versus doing evil.
  - He emphasises the purpose of the Sabbath and God's intentions for humanity.
  - Jesus contrasts life-giving actions with life-denying attitudes.
- **Purpose of Scripture:**
  - Jesus asks, "Why did God give us scripture?"
  - Scriptures reveal God's love and purpose for humanity.
  - They are meant to inspire love, service, and the affirmation of life.
- **Misuse of Scripture:**
  - Pharisees use scripture to judge and control, leading to harm.
  - True use of scripture should glorify God and benefit humanity.
- **Jesus' Ministry:**
  - Jesus' actions show the true meaning of the Sabbath: doing good and saving life.
  - Delaying good deeds, like healing, misunderstands God's character.
- **Paul's Teaching (Romans 13:8-10):**
  - Love fulfils the law.
  - Commandments are summed up in loving your neighbour as yourself.
  - Love is the key to fulfilling scripture.
- **Conclusion:**
  - Scripture is not a list of prohibitions but a revelation of God's love.
  - It should inspire acts of love, service, and life-affirming attitudes.
  - Through understanding God's love, we can better love and serve others.

## Questions:

1. How do the actions of Jesus in Mark 2:23-3:6 redefine the traditional understanding of the Sabbath as depicted in Deuteronomy 5:12-15? What does this tell us about the purpose of the Sabbath?
2. How does viewing scripture as a revelation of God's love, rather than a rule book, change our approach to faith and daily living? Can you provide examples from your own experience?
3. In the sermon, Jesus' conflicts with the Pharisees highlight different interpretations of the law. What lessons can we learn from these conflicts about the importance of interpreting scripture with a focus on love and compassion?
4. How can we apply Jesus' teaching about doing good and saving life, even on the Sabbath, to our modern context? What are some ways we can prioritise acts of love and service in our own lives?
5. Paul's letter to the Romans (13:8-10) states that love is the fulfilment of the law. How do we balance adhering to biblical commandments with the overarching principle of loving our neighbour? Are there situations where this balance is particularly challenging?
6. Reflect on a time when you were faced with a decision between strict adherence to a rule and an act of compassion. How did you handle it, and what might you do differently after considering Jesus' teachings in these passages?