

Luke 13:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Analysis

And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day. The synagogue ruler's response—"indignation" (ἀγανακτῶν, aganaktōn)—reveals misplaced priorities. The Greek verb means to be greatly displeased or aroused to anger. He witnessed a miraculous liberation of an eighteen-year sufferer yet felt outrage rather than joy. This exposes the danger of religious legalism: tradition can so blind people that they oppose God's mercy.

His statement—"There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day"—appeals to Exodus 20:9. But his application perverts God's intent. The Sabbath command prohibited servile labor to give rest to workers; it never forbade acts of mercy. His logic is absurd: he demands the suffering woman wait another day for liberation while he conducts synagogue business on the Sabbath. Compassion must be scheduled around religious rules?

Notice he addresses "the people," not Jesus directly—a passive-aggressive tactic avoiding direct confrontation while undermining Christ's authority. He tries to turn the crowd against Jesus by framing the healing as Sabbath violation. This reveals

cowardice alongside legalism. His concern is protecting religious tradition, not truth or compassion.

Historical Context

Pharisaic Sabbath regulations extended biblical law into elaborate restrictions. The Mishnah (compiled around 200 AD but reflecting earlier oral tradition) lists 39 prohibited categories of work, including healing except when life was endangered. Jesus' Sabbath healings of chronic conditions (not life-threatening emergencies) deliberately challenged these human additions to divine law. The synagogue ruler represents religious authorities who valued their interpretive traditions above Scripture's intent and above human welfare.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the ruler's indignation at healing illustrate how religious tradition can oppose God's mercy?
2. In what ways do contemporary Christians sometimes prioritize religious rules over compassion for suffering people?
3. What does the ruler's indirect confrontation (addressing the crowd rather than Jesus) reveal about religiously motivated opposition to truth?

Interlinear Text

ἀποκριθεὶς	δὲ	ὁ	ἀρχισυνάγωγος	ἀγανακτῶν	ὅτι	
answered	And	G3588	the ruler of the synagogue	with indignation	because	
G611	G1161		G752	G23	G3754	
τῷ	σαββάτου	θεραπεύεσθε	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	ἔλεγεν	τῷ
G3588	on the sabbath	be healed	G3588	that Jesus	day and said	G3588
	G4521	G2323		G2424	G3004	
ὄχλῳ	Ἑξ	ἡμέρᾱ	εἰσὶν	ἐν	αἷς	δεῖ
unto the people	six	day	There are	in	which	men ought
G3793	G1803	G2250	G1526	G1722	G3739	G1163
ἐργάζεσθαι·	ἐν	ταύταις	οὖν	ἐρχόμενοι	θεραπεύεσθε	
to work	in	G3778	therefore	and	be healed	
G2038	G1722		G3767	G2064	G2323	
καὶ	μὴ	τῇ	ἡμέρᾱ	τοῦ	σαββάτου	
and	not	G3588	day	G3588	on the sabbath	
G2532	G3361		G2250		G4521	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:9 (Parallel theme): Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

Matthew 12:2 (Parallel theme): But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

Luke 6:7 (Parallel theme): And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Mark 5:22 (Parallel theme): And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

Luke 8:41 (References Jesus): And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

