

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" (ἀγανάκτων, 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

Psalm 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

οὐχλω Ἐξ ἡμέρᾳ 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 ἡμέρᾳ 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:

