

Luke 14:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

Analysis

Jesus presses His argument: 'And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?' Again Jesus 'answered' though they remained silent—He addresses their unspoken objections. His question appeals to their own practice: they would rescue an animal on the Sabbath without hesitation. The phrase 'straightway' (εὐθέως, *eutheōs*, immediately) emphasizes they wouldn't delay until sunset. If animal welfare justifies Sabbath work, how much more does human healing? This argument from lesser to greater (*qal vachomer*) was standard rabbinic reasoning. Jesus uses their own logic to expose their inconsistency.

Historical Context

Jewish law permitted rescuing animals on the Sabbath (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 128b). Even strict Pharisees agreed on this. Jesus' argument parallels His earlier defense (Luke 13:15-16) where He noted they watered animals on the Sabbath yet objected to healing humans. The comparison isn't demeaning humans but highlighting the Pharisees' misplaced priorities—they valued animals' temporary comfort over humans' permanent healing. This exposes how religious systems can invert values, elevating minor matters while ignoring major mercies.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' argument reveal the Pharisees' selective application of Sabbath law?
2. What does this teach about God's priorities—mercy triumphs over sacrifice (James 2:13)?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christianity similarly prioritize tradition over compassion?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀποκριθεὶς	πρὸς	αὐτὸν	εἶπεν	Τίνος	ὑμῶν	
And	answered	them	him	saying	Which	of you	
G2532	G611	G4314	G846	G2036	G5101	G5216	
ὄνος	ἢ	βοῦς	εἰς	φρέαρ	έμπεσεῖται,	καὶ	οὐκ
shall have an ass	or	an ox	into	a pit	fallen	And	not
G3688	G2228	G1016	G1519	G5421	G1706	G2532	G3756
εὐθέως	ἀνασπάσει	αὐτὸν	ἐν	τῇ	ἡμέρᾳ	τοῦ	σαββάτου
straightway	out	him	on	G3588	day	G3588	the sabbath
G2112	G385	G846	G1722		G2250		G4521

Additional Cross-References

Luke 13:15 (Parallel theme): The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

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