

# Matthew *A New Perspective*

## 5. A New Law *Matthew 12.1-14*

**Aim of Study:** To show that demonstrating compassion and mercy; helping and blessing others is more important than rules, regulations and a neat tidy life of religious rules.

**To start with:** What were the 'rules' in your family that most used to annoy you as a child? Did you keep them? Do they make sense now you're an adult?

### Engaging with the Text:

Read *Matthew 12.1-14*

**Background Information:** Picking corn like this from a field in itself was not wrong (see Deut. 23:25), but the disciples were doing it on the Sabbath. This was a big deal. There were many things the Jews were forbidden to do on the Sabbath. Most of these were traditions, additional rules that had built up over the years, like a fence around the law, to make sure people didn't even risk displeasing God. Strict Jews, like the Pharisees, took all of the rules, human and divine, extremely seriously.

1. How would you summarise the way in which Jesus counters the Pharisees in v.1-8?

*(NB. If it helps you could look at the incidents he describes: for the David incident read 1 Sam. 21:1-6 and Lev. 24:5-9. For the Priests read Num. 28:9.)*

What do you think Jesus was trying to show the Pharisees by quoting these two examples?

2. How do you imagine the Pharisees responded emotionally to Jesus' rebuke? Why?

3. In v.9-14, the incident of the man being healed, the confrontation intensifies. The Pharisees confront Jesus and he faces them head on.
  - a) What do you think were the Pharisees priorities?
  - b) What do you think was Jesus' priority?
  - c) What can we learn by the fact that Jesus so purposefully defied their belief about the Sabbath law?
4. a) The Pharisees were religious, moral men - trying to please God. How do you explain v14? Why do you think they were so incensed by Jesus?
  - b) If you are honest, how do you respond to being corrected in some way?
5. The Pharisees had become blind to the heart of the law. Sometimes we can become blind to the effects of our religious or cultural 'rules'.
  - What do you think the 'rules' we have in our community are?
 

*(NB. Asking those who are new to the church/ cell might help as they can probably see them more clearly than those who have been around for longer.)*
  - Which of those 'rules' do you think are helpful and which are not? What might we do about that?
6. a) Jesus sums up the principle he is teaching in v7 by quoting Hosea 6:6 - 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'. What do you think that means? How would you summarise this principal in your own words?
  - b) What do you think this principle looks like for us?

