

# Every Command Creates a Boundary

- *"Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Gen 2:17*

**Don't Eat of the  
Tree of the  
Knowledge of  
Good and Evil**

**You will surely  
Die**

# Two Commands Overlap

- *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. Heb, 11:19-31*
- *If we sin wilfully ... no more sacrifice for sin.*
- There is nothing more important than assembling with the saints.
- A willful sin to forsake.
- A clear and absolute boundary.
- But what if another command presses up against it and overlaps it.
- *Love your neighbor as yourself ... who is my neighbor? ... The parable of the good Samaritan*

# At different times: Fulfill Both

Not  
Forsaking

Love your  
neighbor as  
yourself

# The Good Samaritan

- To love our neighbor as ourselves we must stop and help the injured (Lk. 10:30-36).
- What happens when on our way to services to fulfill the command to assemble.
- Come across a terrible accident, no one else is there to help and there are badly injured people.
- Two commands come into conflict.
- If we stop we will forsake the assembly
- If we don't stop we won't love our neighbor
- Choice of love and mercy overlap command to worship God.
- Which one should be set aside? Why?

# At Same Time: A Choice must be Made



No  
Forsake

Love your  
neighbor as  
yourself

# Do We Have any Guidance?

- Jesus debated this exact issue.
- *Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. Ex. 35:2*
- A Clear boundary.
- Crossed by someone picking up sticks,
- God said:
- *The man must surely be put to death. Num. 15:32-36*
- Boundary of 4th commandment must be kept. Ex. 20:8-11

# Every Command Creates a Boundary

**Keep Sabbath  
Holy**

**Surely be Put  
to Death**

# Some Used Sabbath To Condemn

- *Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!" Matt 12:1-2*
- Comparing picking up sticks to plucking heads of grain we might have concluded they were right.
- But Jesus used the overlapping of Commands:
- *“Have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless”*
- *break the Sabbath and are innocent - NASB?*



# At different times: Fulfill Both

Keep  
Sabbath  
Holy

Priests offer  
Sacrifices

- *5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. 7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Mt 12:5-8*

# Priests Profane the Sabbath – Blameless



Keep  
Sabbath  
Holy

Priests offer  
Sacrifices

# Circumcision Required Same Decision

- The offering of sacrifices forced the command to keep the Sabbath to be set aside (profaned/broken). Later Jesus used circumcision in the same manner:
- *“If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, **so that the law of Moses should not be broken**, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Jn. 7:23-24”*
- Their choice: *profane the Sabbath* or *“break the Law of Moses.”*
- Truth is they did not profane the Sabbath because the law to circumcise conflicted and a choice had to be made.

# At different times: Fulfill Both

Keep  
Sabbath  
Holy

Circumcise  
on the  
Eighth Day

# To Keep from “*breaking the Law*”



Keep  
Sabbath  
Holy

Circumcise  
on the  
eighth day

# Another Debate: Similar Issue

- *“The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, ‘There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.’ Luke 13:14-16*
- Jesus accused this man of hypocrisy because he did exactly the same thing for his animals.
- *Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?*
- *“work of loosing a donkey”* not a violation of the Sabbath because done out of mercy.

# At different times: Fulfill Both

Keep  
Sabbath  
Holy

Loose ox or  
donkey from  
the stall to  
water it.



# An Act of Mercy on the Sabbath Day

Keep  
Sabbath  
Holy

Loose ox or  
donkey from  
the stall to  
water it.

# A Second Debate Point

- Jesus also said: *“What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?” “Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”*
- The command *“not do any work on the Sabbath,”* was not absolute when it overlapped with mercy. *“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath”* (Lk. 13:10-13; 14:1-6; Mk. 2:27-28). As *“Lord of the Sabbath”* all that Jesus said about this was right!
- If our conclusion differs from His we are wrong

# When faced with conflicting Commands

- A very dangerous and perilous place to be.
- Sometimes we can't avoid it.
- Must approach with extreme caution and humility, asking for wisdom and pleading with God to help make the right decision.
- It should always be agonizing decision to us, even to the point of praying for forgiveness if we have erred.
- But sometimes we have no choice. Both commands come at the same time and both are in conflict. One or the other must be lessened.

# At Same Time: A Choice must be Made



No  
Forsake

Love your  
neighbor as  
yourself

# A Vital Truth to Guide Us!

- *“But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.” (Mt. 12:7).*
- Jesus knew exactly what it meant!
- God is much more interested in mercy in the hearts of His servants than in their sacrifices.
- If the Pharisees had truly understood this, they would have known that what Jesus and His disciples were doing was not violating anything. They would not have condemned those who did nothing wrong.

# A Vital Truth to Guide Us!

- *“But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.” (Mt. 12:7).*
- Jesus later rebuked these same men:
- *“Woe to you, ... you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. (Mt. 23:23).*
- They still did not understand, without the weightier justice, mercy, and faith, tithes meant nothing!
- Do we understand? All decisions based on Mercy!

# Condemning the Guiltless

- When a godly Christians seek to make the best decision based on two commands earnestly trying to be kept, it must be approached with mercy and compassion.
- *“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (Jas. 2:12-13).*
- Few times will every Christian agree with such a decision. Some will contend for assembling
- Others will contend for loving neighbor
- Just as God desired mercy over sacrifice, He also desired mercy over judgment. A grave threat! When judging such matters always show mercy

# Seek God's Mercy MUST show Mercy

- We must avoid “*condemning the innocent.*”
- When forced to show mercy or strict judgment, we would be foolish not to follow James' guidance.
- James making a direct application of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount:
- “*With what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (Mt. 7:2).*”
- The more mercy we show, the more will be measured back. The more we strictly we judge others the stricter our own judgment becomes.
- An amazing opportunity to increase God's mercy!



# Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners

- “*Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?*” Jesus gave two answers.
- “*Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.*”
- A Fact: Doctors spend time with sick patients.
- Jesus spent time with sinners so He could bring them to repentance.
- “*go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*” Mt. 9:10-13; Lk. 5:29-32

# Motives Are Everything!

- But motives can't be known:
- *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.”* 1Cor. 4:5
- Spending time with *“tax collectors and sinners”* in order to bring them to repentance
- Spending time with them for enjoyment.
- Pharisees judged motives and condemned the innocent. They also increased the strictness of their own judgment and lost all hope of mercy.

# We Face Same Issue

- *“come out from among them and be separate.” (2Cor. 6:14-18).*
- *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." 1Cor 15:33*
- In its absolute sense we should not spend our free time around evil people.

# Every Command Creates a Boundary

**come out  
from among  
them be  
Separate  
Evil company  
corrupts good  
habits.**

# The Command to Preach to the Lost

- *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15-16).*
- *19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 1 Cor 9:19-23*

# At different times: Fulfill Both

Be Separate

Preach to  
the Lost  
Become all  
things to all  
men

# Each Person will Do it Differently

- When Christians have sinners into their home for dinner, or socialize with them by taking them golfing, fishing, or any other hobby to “*become all things to all men,*” both commands are being kept.
- But some, as the Pharisees, will judge them weak and sinning as they did Jesus.
- As we seek to chart our own course, we must also guard ourselves against judging others who do it differently.
- If we are not careful, we too might condemn the innocent.

Sometimes one is set aside.

Be Separ

Preach to  
the Lost  
Become all  
things to all  
men



# Scriptures will Overlap and be in Conflict

- Godly Christians must face this as part of the narrow path leading to life.
- It is an agonizing decision to make.
- Not everyone will agree, but if wise, will always show mercy instead of judgment.
- Mercy and compassion triumph and glory over strict judgment.
- Each of us must “*work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.*”
- We must humbly and mercifully take each Scripture and do our very best to fulfill them.

# Sometimes We Must Leave it to God

- *“The hard cases they brought to Moses but they judged every small case themselves” (Ex. 18:25-26; Deut. 17:8-9).*
- We need to be humble.
- There are still hard cases today.
- When we are unsure, and it doesn't impact us, we will leave it to God on the final day.
- It is better to defer to God and let Him pass the final judgment than to condemn the innocent, or cause our brother to stumble.
- *"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. Mk. 9:42-43*