

• *Jesus spending time with people*

Jesus would often have meals with people in order to have an opportunity to talk to them. He would even spend time with people who were very critical of Him. The Pharisees were not generally friendly to Jesus, but He was happy to eat with them and talk to them.

• *Heals a man on the Sabbath*

One Saturday Jesus was eating in the home of a Pharisee. Probably Jesus had just been to the synagogue not far away; one could not walk far on a sabbath day. There was a man there suffering from 'dropsy'^{□1}, a physical condition in which fluid builds up in the body and makes it heavy and inclined to sag. The Pharisee was not very friendly towards Jesus, and was watching Him suspiciously, wondering whether Jesus would heal someone on a Sabbath, as He had done many times before. The suffering man does not seem to be a guest. After he is healed he is sent away. Jesus does four things in response to the attitude of the Pharisees.

□1 14:1-2

1. Jesus resists their legalism

• *Ignores the burdensome additions to the law*

1. **Jesus resists their legalism.** It is difficult to find anything that Jesus ever did that was actually disobedient to any command in the law of Moses. What He deliberately disregarded was the Jewish additions to the Mosaic law. The Pharisees loved to make the Mosaic law more burdensome than it really was. It was burdensome enough in itself, but they had a tendency to make their religion a very 'heavy' matter. This is one of the difficulties of liking legislation too much. You tend to add more and more legislation to cover the gaps and make sure that no one can possibly come anywhere near disobeying the law! There are two ways of going higher than the law. One is to forget the law and walk in the Holy Spirit. The other is to add more and more law, trying to get higher and higher in your 'obedience'. But this kind of legalism does not work. It is 'of no value in subduing the flesh'^{□1}.

□1 Colossians 2:23

• *Legalism doesn't work*

• *Jesus is not intimidated by strict and rigid religion*

People like this are very strict and rigid. They want every tiny bit of behaviour to conform to their prejudices! Jesus is not intimidated by this kind of religion. He calmly goes ahead and does what He knows will annoy them! First of all He faces the question: '*Is it lawful to heal on a Sabbath?*'^{□1}. He is not afraid of them. They have no answer. Jesus goes ahead and heals the man^{□2}.

□1 14:3
□2 14:4

2. Jesus points out how inconsistent legalists are

2. **Jesus points out how inconsistent legalists are.** If they have an ox which is in trouble on the Sabbath they will do something about it! They do not mind 'healing' an ox of theirs which is in trouble, but they do not want Jesus to heal a man with dropsy. This goes to show how hypocritical it is to be legalistic. Such people are sometimes more legalistic about others than they are about themselves. They can have very strict religion, but somehow their rules are for other people. They 'bend the rules' when it comes to their own problems and situations. What deceitful creatures men and women are – all of us!

3. Jesus points to the pride of religious people

3. **Jesus points to the pride of religious people.** They can make no reply to His accusation of inconsistency in Sabbath-keeping. They know what He says is true. Jesus goes on to another point, concerning these Pharisees. They love honour and glory too much! When they go to a wedding they like to sit in the conspicuous places as if they are important people^{□1}. Jesus says, 'Don't do it!' Let the honour come to you as a

□1 14:7
□2 14:8-10

• True faith is more concerned about honour from God

result of someone giving it to you. Don't take glory for yourself^{□2}. People like to use religion as a way of getting attention for themselves. Jesus says seeking glory is a mark of unbelief, a mark of dead and useless religion. True faith is more concerned about honour from God, than honour from others. Of course, we all like to be honoured. Men and women were made to be 'crowned with glory and honour'^{□3}, but we lost our glory when we sinned. Only God can give it back to us, and it will only come by serving Him.

□3 Psalm 8:5

4. While talking of feasts, Jesus points to a better way of living - one of humble generosity

4. While talking of feasts, Jesus points to a better way of living, one of humble generosity^{□1}. The proud Pharisee in his attention-seeking, proud, legalistic religion is full of his own self-importance. Better, says Jesus, to learn another way. He urges the Pharisees, and His disciples who are listening, not to have this self-centred kind of religion. When they have a public meal at their house (as the Pharisee is doing)^{□2}, they should invite the neediest people, not only those who repay the invitation. Don't be generous only with your own advantage in mind, says Jesus. It is a hint that that is what the Pharisee of 14:1 had done. He had not invited Jesus out of any love for Him! So what was his motive? He hoped to get something out of it. He had not asked the man with dropsy to stay on for lunch!

□1 14:12-14

□2 see 14:1

• We are ruled by self-centredness – 'sin'

The trouble with all of us is that we are ruled by self-centredness. Sin turns us in on ourselves and we start manipulating everything for our own convenience, for our own glory and advantage. What an ugly, foul thing is this self-centredness that we call 'sin'.

• His ministry on the way to Jerusalem shows how much His death upon the cross is needed

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. He has 'set His face' to go there to die for sinners^{□1}. His ministry on the way shows how much His death upon the cross is needed. Sinners like the Pharisees need to discover they have a religion with no grace in it. It is the atoning death of Jesus on the cross which humbles us, grants us forgiveness, and brings the grace of God into our lives.

□1 9:51

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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