

Series: The King and the Kingdom
Title: Kingdom Stories - Part 2
Date: February 10/11, 2018
Speaker: Ben Patterson

Big Idea: The Bible is so much more than just a book of “do’s” and “don’ts,” yet a common misconception about the Bible is that it’s the Ultimate Rulebook, and that God is mainly interested in people following the rules. This week Ben Patterson taught that while the “rules” matter, they matter insofar as they support the relationship between God and people.

Passage: Matthew 12:1-8

Discuss It:

1. Are you more of a rule-follower or a rule-breaker? Give an example or two.
2. **Read Matthew 12:1-8.** In his message this past weekend, Ben pointed out that one problem with the Pharisees’ accusation is that they value rule-keeping over relationship. What systems in our world today do you see that are currently in danger of being exalted over the needs of real human beings; whether in your country, in church life, your family, etc.? What would it mean for the son of man to be master of them?
3. Ben pointed out that the Pharisees had lost sight of what the Sabbath was truly about: restfully delighting in God. Do you have any favorite traditions from your church background? How do they help you? In what situations might they have the potential to distract you?
4. The phrase “*I desire mercy, not sacrifice*” shows up a number of times in the Bible (cf. Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13). Why do you think we need this frequent reminder? What’s different about a mercy-showing mindset than a sacrifice-offering mindset? What leads people to opt for a sacrifice-offering mode?
5. **Read Matthew 22:34-40.** Ben concluded his message by challenging us to consider our own motives and priorities as we practice our faith. How might this passage help identify whether we’re operating in mercy-showing mode or sacrifice-offering mode?
6. Where might you soon find yourself in a position to choose between mercy and rule-keeping?

Apply It:

- What is the one thing you need to take away from this study?
- What will help you remember it?
- Is there anything that needs to change in your thinking, actions, or relationships as a result?