

The Gospel of Matthew

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

LESSON THIRTEEN

MATTHEW 12:1-32

Day 1



Heavenly Father, as I open your word today please help me to understand. Give me ears to hear, and eyes to see you. Soften my heart to love you more and to follow you closely.

- Read chapter 12:1-32
- In chapter 12, opposition from the Pharisees becomes more intense. Here we begin to see the contrast between the light burden of Jesus' yoke and the heavy burden the Pharisees created with their extra-curricular rules and misinterpretation of the Law.
- What is one truth in today's passage that moves your heart to praise, thanksgiving, confession, action or love for God?

Day 2- Matthew 12:1-8

1. What do the Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of, according to verses 1 and 2?

Scholar's Note: "The Pharisees had traditional teachings that they regarded as virtually equivalent to divine law."¹ These teachings are known as the oral tradition. They are man made additions to the law of God.

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses and answer the question:

-Who created the Sabbath? What did God require in this command?

Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

What was at the heart of the law about harvesting and reaping?

Leviticus 19:9-10 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

Scholar's Note: "By the fact that the priests engage in temple duties on the Sabbath (preparing the consecrated bread, presenting offerings, cf. Num 28:9-10), they too are guilty of Sabbath violations, yet the rabbis considered their temple service an exception. Since they are doing God's work, they are "guiltless" even though technically they "profane/desecrate" (a very strong term) the Sabbath."²



The Pharisees were legalists. They thought they could achieve a righteousness of their own through the law. They kept missing what Jesus was telling them— that it is only in his life that we find true righteousness. What ways does legalism—trying to earn favor with God through your own means—crop up in your life?

2. How would you characterize Jesus' response in verses 3-5?

3. What is Jesus implying in verse 6, is greater than the temple?

-If the priests serving God in the temple were not guilty of breaking the Sabbath, what does that say about Jesus' disciples?

-How is Jesus greater than the temple?

For Discussion: How does God's establishment of the Sabbath show his mercy?

4. What point is Jesus making in verse 8 by saying he is lord of the Sabbath?
(What is Jesus' relationship to the law?)

Picture and Ponder: "If we capture the true intent of the law, it always leads us to love God and love our neighbor."³



Loving God and loving our neighbor are our highest priorities as followers of Jesus. These priorities are to be lived out each day, but can you think of any special ways your Sundays could better reflect these priorities?

Day 3- Matthew 12:9-14

5. How does verse 10 show what the Pharisees care about and what they don't care about?

6. What is Jesus' point in verse 11?

7. Remember in chapter 5 we learned that Jesus is the final authority on interpreting the law. What does he reveal is lawful to do on the Sabbath in verse 12?

8. Describe the contrast in verses 13 and 14 that was taking place on the Sabbath.



Jesus teaches that love and mercy are more important than the law or rules. When you prioritize rules over people, what does that reveal about your heart?



Jesus help me to love people like you do, to show mercy and care about their healing and wholeness. Forgive me for sometimes protecting myself by hiding behind rules.

Day 4- Matthew 12:15-21

9. As the Pharisees plot to destroy Jesus, what three things does Jesus do according to verses 15-16?

-What can we learn about Jesus from these three things?

Old Testament Ties:

In verses 18-21 we see the seventh fulfillment passage in Matthew. It is from Isaiah 42:1-4 and God is speaking about his suffering servant who will come and save. Jesus is the fulfillment of this. From verses 18-21:

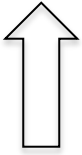
- Describe the relationship between Jesus, the Servant and God.
- What is his demeanor? (A bruised reed and a smoldering wick represent the weak and broken.)
- What will he do?
- Which parts of this Isaiah passage remind you of Jesus' gentle and lowly heart (11:29)?



Jesus came not as a conquering king but as the suffering servant. He suffered the ignorance, reproach and accusations of the religious leaders that led to his ultimate suffering on the cross; and he served the weak and broken with deep compassion that culminated in his sacrificial death.

- ❖ How has Jesus' tenderness and compassion touched your life when you have been a "bruised reed" or a "smoldering wick"?

Picture and Ponder: " Are you bruised? Be of good comfort, he calls you. Conceal not your wounds, open all before him and. . . go to Christ . . .There is more mercy in [Him] than sin in [you]."⁴



Thank you Jesus that you came not to be served as the King that you are, but to serve and to give your life as a ransom for many. You are the hope of the nations!

Day 5- Matthew 12:22-32

10. Describe the two reactions seen in verses 23 and 24 to Jesus healing a demon-possessed man.

11. What logic does Jesus use in verse 26 to show the absurdity of the Pharisee's claim?

For Discussion: The Pharisees saw Jesus' miracle and did not deny the authenticity of it. Indeed this was not the only miracle they had seen him perform. What does it reveal about their hearts that in the face of such overwhelming evidence they came up with an absurd answer for it? How do you explain the fact that they saw in Jesus the exact antithesis of what he was and what he came to do?

Scholar's Note: "Exorcism in the first century was a thriving business, both in pagan and Jewish societies."⁵ When Jesus says *your sons* (v.27) he is speaking of followers of the Pharisees who performed exorcisms.

12. What claim does Jesus make about the kingdom in verse 28?

13. In verse 29, Jesus explains his ministry of casting out demons with a metaphor. How did Jesus demonstrate that he is stronger than the strong man (Satan)?

-Who are Satan's *goods*?

-How does this show that the kingdom of God had come?

Picture and Ponder: "Jesus states plainly that there is a devil, that he has a kingdom, and that such a kingdom has power and influence in this world. And he affirms the belief that diseases and decisions (and perhaps disasters) can be influenced by demons. And he believes, so it seems from his illustration in verse 29, that the world is not merely lost—on some deserted desert island with little hope of rescue—but is held as a prisoner of war and that apart from the rescue mission of Christ all human beings are bound by the supernatural strong man, Satan."⁶

For Discussion: What does it mean for us as believers, citizens of the kingdom of God, living under the rule of King Jesus, that Satan is defeated?

14. In Jesus' war against Satan and the destructive effects of sin, what does Jesus make clear with his challenging statement in v. 30?

Picture and Ponder: "Let us settle it in our minds that we shall never have peace and do good to others unless we are thorough-going and decided in our Christianity."⁷



In Jesus' cosmic battle to defeat Satan and deliver his children from death, there are only two sides. Even though we'd like to think so, there is no neutrality, no middle ground. Jesus dispels that notion completely. Either you are with Jesus or you are against him.

- ❖ You may never have felt that you are against Jesus, but you are if you are not with him. Don't stand any longer on the dangerous illusion of neutrality; commit your life to Jesus today.

15. What wonderful news do we find in verse 31a?

Scholar's Note: "...[most] likely, sins are deeds, and blasphemies are words against both people and God."⁸

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses and answer the question: What does the Holy Spirit do?

John 15:26 [Jesus speaking] But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

John 6:63a It is the Spirit who gives life...

1 Corinthians 12:3 No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Picture and Ponder: "Blasphemy against the Spirit is the sober, clear-minded, deliberate rejection of Jesus—as a very agent of evil—despite full knowledge of his work and in the face of the Spirit's full testimony to him. This blasphemer has heard the gospel proclaimed with clarity and power. He has watched Christians live good lives. Yet he hates Jesus and Christianity and views it as wickedness and deceit. He hears, understands, and despises. We see why this sin is unpardonable: How can one turn to Christ and be saved, when he has seen all the evidence and rejected it as a terrible evil?"⁹



God's forgiveness is deep and wide. "Any sin which you can authentically repent of and embrace Christ for will be forgiven."¹⁰ If you want to be forgiven and you go to Jesus, he will forgive you.

- ❖ Run to Jesus now for any unconfessed sin you are harboring. Ask him to forgive you. Thank God for the forgiveness you have experienced through Jesus.

Picture and Ponder: "Indeed, concern about the unpardonable sin may be a token of the Spirit's working in the heart. Those who are guilty of the sin are so settled in their rejection of the faith that this verse will not alarm them."¹¹

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here. How will this truth impact the way you think and act?

¹ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 492). P&R Publishing.

² Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 12054-12058). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

³ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 495). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Sibbes, Richard. The Bruised Reed as quoted by Platt, David. Exalting Jesus in Matthew. B & H Publishing Group, 2013

⁵ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 12651-12652). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁶ O'Donnell, Douglas Sean. Matthew (Preaching the Word) (p. 328). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

⁷ Ryle, J. C.. Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Matthew [Updated Edition]: A Commentary (p. 111). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

⁸ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Location 12723). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition

⁹ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (pp. 520-521). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Piper, John. Ask Pastor John, January 9, 2008 <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-unforgivable-sin>

¹¹ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 521). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.