

Matthew 12:15-30

A lot of what we will be looking at today is rooted in the authority and person of Jesus Christ.....

Who exactly is He.....and more important than that.....Who exactly is He to you?

We're gonna find out who He was to the religious leaders of the day.....and we are going to find out who He was to many people who believed in Him in that day.....

And ultimately, we will see that there are only really two positions that a person can take.....

We either believe He is who He says He is.....or we believe He is not.....

Jesus had been addressing their misinterpretations and abuses of the law..... in particular, the keeping of the sabbath.....

These guys had no idea of the true purpose of, and why, God put in place all of their sacrifices and laws, and their priesthood and their holy days etc. etc.....

It's like they missed it or ignored it, when Hosea and Micah said, "**I desire mercy over sacrifice**".....

This chapter 12 of Matthew is really a pivotal point in the ministry of Jesus as far as Matthew's account.....

Jesus is really beginning to open up, and speak up about exactly Who He is.....and how everything..... and I mean EVERYTHING.....is under Him and His authority.....

He overrides everything..... He fulfills all of their rituals, and He fulfills the law and the sacrifices and the priesthood and the holy days.....All of their purposes are found IN HIM..... so if you are IN HIM.....IN

CHRIST.....here today..... then through Him, abiding IN HIM..... you are fulfilling all of the needs that all of these rituals were put in place for, in the first place.....

Leading up to our study today what did Jesus say that confirms some of this.....

Matt 12:6 - "**Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.**"

He's Speaking of Himself.....

In context of today..... **in this place, there is One greater than the church**..... or the building or the rituals or the religion that is in the structure of that church.....

The temple was meant to in a way.....to HOUSE GOD.....even though He couldn't be contained, His shekinah glory was desired there.....yet God HIMSELF in the person of Jesus entered the temple.....

He came to His own, yet they did not recognize Him.....

And now, He resides in US.....The Holy Spirit.....

Jesus is saying in verse 6.....IT'S ME.....and He said.....

Matt 12:8 - "*For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.*"

Which would be taking His claim to an even greater level for them to hear.....

And what did they want to do.....they wanted to destroy Him.....

So it's quite evident how dramatic and powerful Jesus statements were because as we see in verse 14 leading into our study today that the Pharisees at this point were so offended by Jesus that they not only wanted to arrest him or quiet him..... it says *they plotted on how they might destroy him*..... that's a pretty heavy statement..... this was the breaking point.....where the religious leaders weren't only just trying to keep an eye on this man, and make sure He isn't leading too many people astray, watching what He does and says.....but at this point they made the decision.....we have to get rid of him.....they were secretly terrified of this man..... that He was going to remove all of their places of authority and privilege, and completely over turn their very way of life..... but this is important I think..... we have to understand that many of these Pharisees probably were convinced that they were following their own laws, and doing a good thing destroying this man..... but the only person who was in fact following the law perfectly, was Jesus, and we'll see that in a bit.....

So Jesus had just been dealing with their misunderstanding of the Sabbath, that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath.....

They believed that no one could carry any kind of burden on the seventh day, being our Saturday, and they expanded upon their understanding of what a burden was and it infiltrated and touched every area of their life.....

God did command Israel to do this, and to have a day of rest..... but the command was specifically a part of the law and a part of Israel in the Old Testament..... but we know today that Jesus is our Sabbath and each day is a day of rest and holy.....We are IN HIM.....and He is Lord of the Sabbath.....

One of the burdens they deemed sinful to take upon yourself on the Sabbath day, was one that really took me by surprise and would've been an incredible challenge for me.....

They believed that if you lost a leg and had an amputation and you had a wooden leg, that using that wooden leg would be putting a burden upon yourself.....so you couldn't use it on that day..... At first I was really surprised, and wrestled with that idea.....until I realized that if I lived back in those days or even if I became a Sabbath keeper today..... I would have this great excuse for sitting on the couch and watching golf all day.....can't use my crutches.....lol.....

Jesus had said that he was the Lord of the Sabbath so He was gradually leading them to greater and greater revealings of Who He was.....and in these verses we will look at today He will take it to a whole other level where He is not only Lord of the Sabbath, but He is Lord of ALL..... and if you're not with Him, then you are against Him.....and those are some pretty divisive words that identify Him as only possibly being one of two different possibilities.....

He is either a narcissistic self righteous lunatic..... or He is in fact the Lord of all....

Matthew 12:15-17 - “*But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. 16Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:*

We'll see what Isaiah said in a moment.....but.....

Remember, Pharisees were now deciding to destroy Him.....

Jesus withdrew from there because it wasn't His time yet.....

He was on a perfect, scriptural, purpose filled timeline.....that had been put in place before the very foundations of the world.....and He knew it and was in complete control.....

He was on a mission.....the Pharisees wanted to destroy Him.....yet He came to destroy sin and death.....for them...

Jesus' purpose is seen through scripture....

1John 3:8 - “*He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*” THANK YOU LORD.....

And listen to what Jesus told Pilate.....

John 18:37 - “*Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and*

for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

And we know the main part of His cause, that He is expressing to Pilate, is His inevitable death and crucifixion for our sin...

So Jesus wasn't going to let them take Him and destroy Him, and crucify Him yet..... He still had work to do.....for them....and us.....

And we see the divisiveness that truth, and Jesus brings.....

Some wanted to destroy Him and others wanted to follow Him.....

Matt 12:15-17 Slide

When you hear about Jesus and who He is and what He does, you can either harden your heart as the Pharisees did and many people do today.....or with an open heart..... you can look at Him..... take a really close look at Him..... and draw close to Him and speak to Him.....and I guarantee you..... He will draw you close to Him.....and He will tell you everything..... everything you need to know about finding forgiveness and peace and life.....

Because we read in verse 15 that the people that didn't reject Him, but that followed Him and pressed into Him..... Jesus didn't turn a blind eye to them..... and wasn't irritated or impatient with them, even though it says there was multitudes.....

No, he does a very rare thing that we don't hear frequently in the New Testament.....

He healed them all.....unbelievable.....

There were multitudes, so this must have taken Him hours....

But we don't have the full account here, so I guess He could've healed them ALL instantly, if He wanted to.....

God in His Word wanted us to know that they were all healed..... so I suppose He wants us to understand the importance of the fervency of our faith.....to not be luke warm.....but to either be on fire or cold..... if you're cold..... your faith is cold and you just don't believe.....then at least maybe one day you will believe and become on fire.....as it was for these believers who followed Him.....

And why did Jesus warn them to not make Him known?

Well, as verse 17 says, we will find out and Isaiah tells us.....

Because Jesus had as we said, a mission that He needed to fulfil..... that was of the utmost importance.....He wasn't here for a popularity

contest.....or as the Jews hoped.....that He would come and be lifted up as king, and conquer the Romans and overtake Jerusalem.....no..... Any other mere leader, or spiritual guru.....would be telling them, "*yeah, go tell all your friends.....tell everyone you know and let's start this movement*".....

But Jesus, in knowing His mission and Him being the Living Word, was fulfilling all scripture.....as Matthew quotes Isaiah here:

Matt 12:18-21 -

***18“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
19He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
20A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;
21And in His name Gentiles will trust.”***

It Seems strange to us to call Jesus a Servant.....

But He is not only God the Father's Servant.... but He is still serving us today.....

Sure He served us in the most profound way on the cross and through His resurrection.... so that as verse 18 says, *He will declare justice to the Gentiles*.....that's us.....

Through our faith in His work on the cross, we are justified, forgiven.....saved....have stepped from death into life.....

But He has never stopped serving us.....

He is serving you today.....

Heb 7:24-25 - "*But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.*

25Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

If you are saved and in Christ..... then, during the course of the day, if you sin.....Jesus is right there beside the Father, making intercession for you.....*Father, they are with Me*.....

*19He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets*.....

This isn't to say the Jesus never raised His voice.....

He just set a godly example for us.....

We read in scripture the few times that He was righteously angry, or that He did cry out, but only to His Father.....

We are eternally, grateful for those times that He cried out to the Father, because He was in agony.....but still for the joy that was set before Him, and for complete obedience to His Father, He went through the agony.....

It's when HE was reviled and accused, that He didn't quarrel or cry out.....

He prayed, and cried out to the Father in the garden, asking if it was possible for this cup to be taken away from Him.....but He still desired to do the Fathers will.....

And He cried out on the very cross, moments before He was going to surrender His life for us.....and He said, "*Father into Your hands, I commit My Spirit*".....

Thank you Lord.....

And what does Isaiah mean here.....

*20A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;*

21And in His name Gentiles will trust.....

A reed is a very tender plant, and if it is bruised, it is right near the breaking point.....

And flax used as a wick for an oil lamp..... if it is only smoking....tells us that it is low on oil..... The flame can't be lit and arise.....

And this speaks of how Jesus cares for and treats all of us, His children.....I know I've been here many times.....

Have you ever been bruised, and broken, and right near the breaking point..... but you have reached out to Jesus begging Him for comfort and healing, and He has drawn so close to you..... He has put you back together again.....

And have you ever been so discouraged and you are struggling with your faith..... but you reached out to Jesus, and said, "Lord, help me with my lack of faith"..... and He has responded by giving you a piece of scripture that has lifted you up, or a brother or sister in Christ.....and He's given them just the right word that you needed to hear.....

And you are once again filled with the Spirit, the oil of the Spirit, and it's like your flame is glowing again.....

That's what He does.....that's what Isaiah was saying.....

Our faith is restored, and we continue to trust in His name....

Now, Something Happens that as we said, is a real turning point in Jesus' ministry, and starts a sequence of events and comments from the religious leaders and comments from Jesus that have brought..... really.....terror and concern into many believers..... But as we look at these next few verses and as we look at verses 31 and 32 next time, it should bring comfort to all believers.....

Matt 12:22-24 - “*Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.*

23And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

24Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

Keep in mind that this person was demon possessed AND mute.....
Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis is a lecturer in Kabbalah and rabbinic literature at the University of North Texas.....

Listen to what he says.....about Jewish exorcism.....

1. Key to any Jewish exorcism is having a truly pious man first, an abba, baal shem, which was a Jewish healer, rebbe, or a rabbi, to conduct the ceremony.

So the Pharisees would first be thinking.....Jesus, who do you think you are? And what or who gives you the right?.....

2. The process usually starts with the exorcist ritually purifying himself
But we know that Jesus WAS PURE....HE WAS COMPLETELY RIGHTEOUS.....But the Pharisees didn't know this.....

3. An exorcism could be dangerous so the rabbi would use scripture to protect himself.....Jewish exorcisms are usually “liturgical,” using protective passages from the Psalms and other sacred texts.

But Jesus didn't need to use psalms or any part of the scripture.....
because He is The Word.....

And now this next piece of the exorcism is most interesting.....And explains a lot of the fear and anger from the religious leaders.....but also the wonder and awe from those that believed.....

4. The exorcism techniques include interviewing the demon.....The goal of the interview is to eventually learn the name of the evil spirit.....the demon needed to identify himself.....

The exorcist then uses the power of the demonic spirit's own name to "overpower" it, by round after round of scripted ritual actions involving threats and rebukes, getting more intense and invasive with each effort.....

BUT THIS MAN WAS MUTE.....he couldn't speak....the demon had stopped his ability to speak....so the demon DIDN'T IDENTIFY HIMSELF.....yet....Jesus easily removed him.....this was unheard of.....I think the Pharisees were terrified of Who Jesus is..... or Who He may be..... and they used the Sabbath..... healing on the Sabbath, as an excuse to bring Him down.....BUT this question has been put out there.....

Luke 6:11 says that the critics of Jesus were filled with rage when Jesus healed this man. The question is.....Which was more a violation of the Sabbath: When Jesus healed a man, or when these hate-filled men plotted the murder of a godly Man who never sinned against anybody?

I think we know.....

23And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

The people, who had no agenda like the religious leaders....were amazed and their hearts and minds were racing with excitement and wonder.....

Could this be the Son of David?

Is this the promised Messiah.....

That is the humble, open minded, and open spirit response to Jesus.....is HE REALLY WHO HE SAYS HE IS.....

and we know that when someone sincerely desires to know the answer to that question.....He always answers.....

ASK AND IT WILL BE GIVEN.....

SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND.....

KNOCK AND IT WILL BE OPENED.....

This is the good soil...the seed that lands on good ground....

If you don't know Jesus yet, do you have an open mind and open heart and open spirit, and are you asking and seeking and knocking because I guarantee you if you do, you're in for the biggest and most glorious surprise of your life.....

Don't be like the Pharisees.....

24Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons....."

That's a really dangerous response.....they are saying Jesus has this power from Satan.....

With the peoples response and with the religious leaders response we see the two distinct response differences in this world with people, and they are radically different.....

There are people who struggle with doubt and I guess you could call them somewhere in the middle ground, and there are people who aren't sure what they believe about Jesus, and there are people who make fun of Jesus and blaspheme Jesus and take the Lords name in vain and break the commandments all over the place, and yes they are not walking with the Lord, but with them there is always still hope.....they can find forgiveness.....and life....

But the response of the Pharisees here is a different thing, which I believe is leading up to verses 31 and 32 for next time.....These guys were attributing the work of Jesus to Satan which tells us that their challenge wasn't a spiritual belief challenge.....They believed in Satan and God and had no problem with that.....but here now they are saying that the work God is doing was being done by Satan..... and it will not go well with them.....

Jesus did his miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit and saying that He did it through the power of Satan would definitely be blaspheming the Holy Spirit.....

Matt 12:25-29 - *“But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26“If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27“And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29“Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”*

Jesus is now trying to use common sense to them.....

He's doing as He always does..... trying to lead people to the truth, no matter where they might stand.....

He's saying, "that if I am doing this by Beelzebub, then Satan is removing himself from this man..... and that makes no sense.....He's trying to destroy his own house?....."

And verse 27 is very interesting.....he says.....

27"And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges....."

We know that the removal of demons in an individual wasn't exclusively done by Jesus.....when Paul was in Ephesus.....

Acts 19:13-14 - *"Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."*

14Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so."

So Jesus is saying to these Pharisees in our Matt 12:27.....

Are your sons removing demons also by the power of Beelzebub?

Of course not.....and if they are in fact, removing demons..... they are doing it by the power of God.....so they will judge you.....

Back to Matt 12:25-29 slide

So He's saying..... it's clear that I do this by the power of God, therefore, the kingdom of God is upon you.....

And we know that He is saying..... And the fact is.....

That God was THERE, present with them.....

Jesus stood before them.....and they knew what He was saying, because He basically says.....

The strong man who is in the house, is Satan.....

And if I can overpower him and bind him.....then I am more powerful than him, and I can remove him and plunder, which is to remove all of the evil out of this person.....

And we know, when Jesus does this with a person, not just someone who is possessed, but with anyone who invites Him in..... that He cleans house, and when our house is clean.....He comes to live within us.....

So whatever sin or evil you are wanting to overcome in your life.....do it in the NAME OF JESUS.....not in your own strength.....He is the STRONG MAN Who will put you together again.....

And because this is all true.....Jesus draws the line in the sand....for life with Him.....or death without Him.....

Matt 12:30 - "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."

There are only two possibilities in scripture for every person when they come to the end of their life here on earth.....

You are either IN CHRIST..... or NOT.....in Christ.....

Remember, when I said that these religious leaders, or many of them, were probably convinced that they were following their own laws..... but the only Person Who was truly fulfilling, and following every law, was Jesus.....

Well, we saw that the turning point for the Pharisees, deciding to destroy Jesus, was a little earlier..... but here we see a turning point for Jesus.....

that's why I said at the beginning of this teaching, that in Matthew chapter 12, we see a pivotal point in Jesus ministry..... he draws a line in the sand..... and He will express it fully in verses, 31 and 32.....

Because a similar thing happened in Matthews chapter 9.....

Matt 9:32-34 - *“As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed.*

33And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marvelled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!”

34But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

They had never seen someone remove a demon from someone who was mute.....

But Jesus doesn't respond to them and draw a line in the sand here.....

He doesn't do that, until the same accusation of the Pharisees happens for a second time that we see in chapter 12.....saying that He does this through the power of Satan.....

Was Jesus just doing what He always does..... doing everything perfectly, and justly, and by the law.....

Some scholars believe He was following the heart behind the Jewish law we see in.....

Deut 19:15 - *“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”*

This was the second time they said that Jesus did this healing by the power of Satan.....

This sin of the Pharisees, was ESTABLISHED.....

And we'll see the consequences of this sin in verse 31.....

Return to verse 30 slide

Can I just end with this strong word from Jesus.....

He who is not with Me is against Me.....

Why would you not WANT to be with Jesus?.....

He is the REAL strong man.....Who can overcome everything in your life.....and give you real life and peace and joy.....so if you have never gone to Him.....go to Him.....

In a simple way.....speak to Him and ask Him to forgive you....believing that He died for your sin and rose again.....

And you know what.....if you do that, you will IN THAT MOMENT.....step from death into life.....

Matthew slide.....

Let's pray.....