

Matthew Ch 12 vs 15-30

As you're going through the book of Matt, by the time you get to ch 12, the hostility and opposition towards Jesus as represented in the scribes and Pharisees has blown wide open. Up until this point things have gone relatively smooth for Jesus overall. Now we've seen a few fairly obvious statements, and insinuations that have begun to show their resentment toward Him but by the time you hit ch 12, the animosity is blatant. And the tension is building. And the specific issue that seems to have really set them off, or at least acted as the catalyst to secure their position against Him was the Sabbath. This issue of true rest, and where it was to be found and what it was that constituted a violation of their holy day of rest.

Because these guys (the scribes and Pharisees) were highly meticulous, very self-righteous, and tedious individuals who had determined with in themselves exactly what "you shall do no work on the Sabbath" entailed. And you'll have to get last weeks tape to get just a glimpse of what all that came to be, but believe me when I tell you that by the time they were done determining or outlining exactly what that meant, the Sabbath had become anything but a day of rest and relaxation. And they were proud of all the sacrifices that they made to keep the Sabbath, but in the defining of what all entailed "keeping the Sabbath" they left out one essential aspect, and that was the priority of human need. You see God instituted the Sabbath for the benefit of man. The Sabbath was made for man not the other way around, but they had interpreted themselves into a corner. Because if you had no money to buy food and it was the Sabbath, you went hungry because to pick some heads of wheat and eat the kernels was reaping, threshing and winnowing in their book and all of those things were against the law. And all of that constituted preparing a meal, which was also against the law according to their interpretation.

So to make a long story short, in our last gathering in which we seen Jesus at odds with these Pharisees; because they had accused His disciples of breaking the law in plucking and eating some wheat on the Sabbath. Jesus (in His disciples' defense) exposed their ignorance in a 3 fold manner, #1 concerning their history (by reminding them of how David ate the showbread which wasn't "lawful for him to do, yet he remained blameless.) #2 by showing them their ignorance of the law that they prided themselves on, (by reminding them that the priests actually worked twice as hard on the Sabbath). and #3 their lack of understanding when it came to the Scriptures because God wasn't interested in all their sacrificial rituals, He desires mercy to those in need. And told them that He was the Lord of the Sabbath anyway so He could do whatever He wanted. Even though they weren't breaking the law only the rabbinical interpretation.

Then they tried to set Him up again using His own compassion against Him by planting a man with a withered hand in the temple on another Sabbath. and They wanted to accuse Him again of breaking the law because as you may've guessed, according to their interpretation it was against the law to heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus basically said to them *what's wrong with you guys, you're trying to tell me that if your sheep falls in a pit on the Sabbath that you're not going to get it out.* Of course they would that little sheep is helpless, But yet if carrying anything that weighed more than 2 dried figs constituted carrying a burden how much more lifting out a sheep! That's just a worthless dumb animal. And He exposed their hypocritical double standards because these same guys that would help out an animal would neglect the needs of one who was created in the very image of God.

Jesus said *it's lawful to do good any day of the week, especially to someone in need.* He was trying to show these guys that love overruled law and that God desired loving relationships, not legalistic ritual. And so after He made these guys look like fools He said to the man, *"Stretch out your hand"* and the guy's hand was made whole again just like the other. and So we left off with these same guy's who were so against aiding the welfare of human life on the Sabbath, plotting a murder; the murder of Jesus. Why, because He was exposing their errors and they were too prideful to repent. But that city wasn't big enough for the both of them and they weren't about to change their philosophy, and Jesus wasn't going to bow to their hypocritical standards and traditions, so these "righteous" individuals decided the best thing to do would be to have Jesus killed.

Vs15

Now we're not told how Jesus came to know of their plot to kill Him, whether it was by a supernatural means or maybe his disciples caught wind and told Him. It really doesn't matter; it probably wasn't too hard to figure out that these guys had a beef with Him anyway. But the point of this being mentioned was to point out the fact that Jesus didn't stick around in the face of pointless opposition. As you study the scriptures you find that Jesus never stuck around where He wasn't wanted. And the same is true today; Jesus will not force Himself upon you. Maybe He's been dealing with you and showing you the errors of your ways, you have 2 choices #1 to receive His correction allow Him into your heart and into your life and reap eternal riches untold, or #2 you can take the pharasytical position. You can get all prideful and hostile toward the corrective desires of the Holy Spirits conviction and reject Jesus Christ and He will honor that to, He won't force Himself upon you and He'll walk away from you if that's what you want, and the rewards are just as eternal. But they're not riches and peace in the everlasting ecstasy of the presence of God. They're eternal isolation and loneliness in torment and in outer darkness where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched. But the choice is up to you.

We also see here Jesus living the example that He taught His disciples, remember back in Ch 10 vs 23 Jesus told them *‘when they persecute you in this city flee to another.’* There’s no glory in needlessly becoming a martyr. Why allow your life to come to an end if it’s avoidable, because at that point you’re officially finished being used for the purposes of the kingdom when you could remain effective. And besides all it does to be shut out in one place is act as a catalyst to spread the Gospel to another place that you might not have gone had you not been forced to leave where you were at. So God can take seemingly disastrous circumstances and use them for His glory and the furthering of His purposes.

But even another factor with Jesus is the fact that He was on a “divine timetable”; Jesus came into the world to die that much is for sure, but not at their disclosure. You recall in the gospel of John we repeatedly read how the Pharisees would seek to lay hands on Jesus and Take Him into custody, but they never could because as John said “His hour had not yet come.” Jesus was to be crucified only at the appointed time of the Fathers perfect will as the Passover lamb of God with out spot or blemish, slain for the sin of the world. And Jesus was very aware of that so when He caught wind of their desire to kill Him, it was time to go because His hour had not yet come. And it says here that (read, great..)

So as He with drew from there these massive crowds of people were following Him. Now, Matt doesn’t tell us where He with drew to or who the crowds were that followed Him. **But** Marks gospel tells us that “Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him.”

So it would’ve been a mixture of both Jewish people and some Gentile people from these various locations. and We read in Marks gospel that there were so many of them that He had to get into a small boat just right off the shore line. Because there were so many people trying to press in on Him to touch Him so that they might be healed; that He had to separate Himself from the people in that way to prevent Himself from being crushed. So there were literally thousands of people trying to reach Him; the majority of which apparently had some form of ailment. And again we take note of the compassion of Jesus in that (finish vs). In other words there was not one failure, as many as came to Jesus for healing received it and everyone of them was complete. There was not so much as one need that Jesus was not able to meet. And not so much as one person that came to Him that He turned away, Jesus said, *“the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”*

What's the deep need of your heart and your soul this morning, what is it that's plaguing you or afflicting or ailing you this morning. There is no need so great that Jesus Christ can't meet that need and if you come to Him, He will by no means cast you out. Whatever pain that's eating away at your heart, if you'll humble yourself and come to Jesus He will heal your hurts and your emptiness and your discontentment's concerning this life.

Nothing else will and nothing else can. No amount of money or anything else will fill the void in your heart, only Jesus can do that. and That's exactly what Jesus did for these people he "*healed them all.*"

Vs16

And we've discussed in previous studies why He would instruct people not to make Him known so we won't take the time to do that this morning. But one thing for sure our eyes should never be focused on the gifts, but rather on the giver. Jesus didn't want His ministry propagated as some sideshow of the miraculous. Nor did He use His abilities to seek after fortune and fame. Something that these modern day so called "faith healers" would do well to learn from His example. If freely they've received that gift, than freely they should give it, not use it as a means of gain and a way to make a name. You don't enter the ministry to make a name; your purpose is to glorify a name, the name of Jesus.

Jesus chose the pathway of humility and charged people not to make Him known. And in all that's just happened to Jesus with the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees with a hostile intent; the fact that Jesus was encouraging and healing the sick and afflicted. and That He was ministering also to the gentiles that were in the crowd; Matt was quickened by the Spirit and saw how in doing all these things Jesus was fulfilling prophecy.

Vs17-18

Vs 18-21 are an application of the 1st 4 vs of Isaiah ch 42 by Matt to the life of Jesus. and We can no doubt bear witness to the accuracy of this prophecy as it pertained to Jesus. When J.B. baptized Jesus we read that "*suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" And how the Spirit came upon Him like a dove. and It's interesting how even in that section you can see the Trinity, the Father testifying of who Jesus is as His Son, and the Spirit coming upon Him. All 3 represented at the baptism of Jesus, even so we see the trinity here as well in regards to the prophecy of Jesus. Whose servant? The Father, who's chosen Him? The Father, who is the servant, who is the Beloved? The Son Jesus Christ, and what will be upon Him, God's Spirit, The Holy Spirit.

Matt is showing the Jewish reader, (to whom this gospel account was targeted,) how Salvation was not only meant for them as they had assumed, but God would also declare justice through His Messiah to the gentiles. And He draws from scripture to illustrate that so that it can't be refuted.

Vs19

As we've already seen Jesus wasn't trying to draw all kinds of fanfare to Himself, nor did He stick around to have it out with the Pharisees there in the city, now He defended His disciples and set them straight concerning their misinterpretation of the Scriptures. But He wasn't about to get into a yelling match or a quarrel with them and make a big commotion but rather He just simply with drew and moved on.

Vs20

Remember a reed speaks of weakness and vacillation, and a smoking flax was a wick in a lamp that was just about to go out because all the oil in it was exhausted. and All that was left was the little cherry on top that was just sort of smoldering but of no real value.

Some expositors see this as a reference to the condition of the nation of Israel that was all but quenched in their relationship to God but yet Jesus came not to condemn the world but rather that through Him the world might be saved so He wasn't going to crush them for rejecting Him, but rather He would encourage repentance and a turning again unto God. As He said at the end of Ch 11 *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* (Repeat 1st part of vs 20)

Others see this as not so much a reference to Israel as to what Matt has just witnessed in His compassion toward the weak and afflicted and down trodden as He took the time to meet the need of each and every person who was ill. And that Jesus didn't come to crush those who were weak on His way up the latter in His conquest of Israel as they were expecting their Messiah to do.

But that He took the time to mend and nurture those who were broken, and fan the embers of their hearts back into that 1st love relationship that they once had with God. I'm good with either way you choose to look at it; there may be connotations to both.

Vs21

The Thayer's Greek Lexicon says that this word trust means *“to hope; in a religious sense, to wait for salvation with joy and full confidence.”* And I don't know about you but I for one am a fulfillment of this prophecy, I put all my trust, and all my hope, with everything that's with in me in Jesus Christ and I am confident in the salvation that's found in Him. Him alone, Acts 4:12 says, *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

No doubt as Matt was just looking on in awe of all that was happening all around him and seeing even these gentile people pressing towards Him placing their trust and their hope in Jesus this scripture was just stirring in his heart.

Vs 22

Every time we come to a portion of scripture by which someone is brought to Jesus, and as a result of that Jesus touches them and does a work in their lives, I try to be careful to point out what is happening. For all intents and purposes what we're seeing here is the literal act of intercession. These people brought this person who was "blind" unable to speak and under the influence and control of the enemy before Jesus and Jesus honored that.

Now this guy could've never come to Jesus on His own, but by these people; who ever it was that was concerned enough for him to stand in the gap on his behalf and present him before the Lord, Jesus opened his eyes so that he might see. He loosed his tongue that he might be free to praise and worship God and set him free from the bondage and control of the wicked one. All because someone cared enough for this guy to bring him to Jesus. Never underestimate the power and effectiveness of intercessory prayer. (But Jeff you don't understand, I've been praying and praying and praying for this person or these people (maybe for years) and nothing seems to be happening.) Then don't stop praying, that's exactly what Satan wants you to do, get just frustrated enough that you give up. and I know the Spirit's willing but the flesh is weak. But trust me when I say that it's better to go to your grave praying for that person, or those people than to let them slip through our fingers right into the pit of hell because we just weren't seeing the results we hoped for.

People you've got to remember you don't wrestle against/flesh and blood, but *"against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* Surely you don't think it coincidence that every time you begin to pray all the things that you've forgotten to do start flooding your mind, or some perverted image suddenly springs up in your mind or the phone rings, or you begin to get all tired and your mind begins to drift. You've got an enemy that the last thing he wants you to do is pray and seek the heart and mind of God and stand in the gap for others bound by him, because prayer is the most effective weapon in your arsenal. You may swing the sword of spirit with deadly accuracy, and believe me when I say that to be effective it's essential to be skilled in the word of righteousness. But prayer is like a nuclear missile of which your enemy does not enjoy the fall out.

Are we tracking together on this? So let me just encourage you to discipline your prayer life that you might take that to the next level, we want to be effective in our battle plan because it's the eternal well being of peoples souls that we're fighting for and someone took the time to get down on their knees and fight the good fight and wage war on your behalf. The least you can do is extent that same good will towards someone else, you may be the only one praying for that person, are you going to succumb to the enemies desire and take that away from them, God forbid. Become a person of intercessory prayer and never look back, don't you worry about the results that's not part of your job description, you just pray and pray and pray and then leave the rest up to God. Jesus touched this mans life thanks to someone's willingness to bring him to Jesus and don't you know that he is eternally grateful.

Vs23

So having seen this all these people are just beside themselves and their thinking maybe this *is* the Messiah; Son of David being a messianic title. In the Greek this question is posed in such a way that demands a negative answer, in other words they're saying something like surely this couldn't be the Son of David, could it? Maybe it is, and there's this buzz going about in the crowd as if to say this could be the guy we've been waiting for.

Vs24

What else were they going to say, they already considered Him a blasphemer, but there was no denying the miraculous and supernatural events that corresponded around Jesus. And they were way too proud to admit their error, which leaves only one option, which they so confidently blurted out. This guy is in league with Satan, and that's where He gets His powers. Here they were seeing some incredible and glorious works of God and yet they were so blind and perverted in their mentality that they attribute them to Satan. People do the same thing today, like when you got saved and people thought you lost your mind or were brainwashed because something radical was taking place in your life and you weren't the same as you used to be. Instead of just accepting it and praising God for what He had done they attribute it to some weird cultic action or something.

Vs25

That goes across the board, from the largest of kingdoms, (if it's eating itself up from the inside out it won't stand, it'll fall to ruin.) To the smallest of family units, if you're not agreed in your stand with one another on a certain issue or you're divided in your hearts about everything and you see everything different and your unable to come to terms, it's just a matter of time before that family ends up in ruin. That's why it's so crucial that God's word be the bases or standard of living in our homes, because I might not always agree with your way of thinking and you may not always agree with me. But if God's word is both of our absolutes then we'll always find common ground there and a foundation that will strengthen us rather than allow us to be torn apart.

Vs26

So with a few words of logic Jesus shot down their entire philosophy. Satan isn't stupid enough to turn against himself and weaken his own ranks, how would it profit him to go around releasing all these people from his control into God's care? You see it doesn't add up. And notice Jesus acknowledges the fact that Satan has a kingdom, he is the prince of this world, (the bible says). And now He shows them how they didn't stop to follow through with that thought before they shot off at the mouth.

Vs27

He says lets just suppose then for a minute that your right and that my power comes from Satan, well some of your disciples do the same thing, where does their power come from? "Well they're doing it by the hand of God but you are doing the same thing by the hand of Satan." If that's the case, then Satan is doing the work of God. You see how irrational that thought is when you follow it on out, it's inconsistent. Like Satan (who was a murderer from the beginning) is going to do something that could somehow benefit the kingdom of God. Thereby cutting off his own right hand.

Vs28

Man you know they're gritting their teeth now. They're trapped again in that proverbial rock and hard spot. Because they have to either condemn their own or acknowledge the power of God in Jesus which was something they weren't about to do.

Vs29

Satan being the strong man, his house in this case is in reference to the human body. And no one is going to just lay down and let someone seize what they've acquired, if someone was going to break into your house you'd do everything you could to prevent that. Before that happened you'd have to be overpowered yourself and bound to keep you from being able to respond in opposition to it. Well Jesus is claiming His authority over the power of Satan and that He has the ability to bind him and take his home from him, but not by Satan's will, he'd hang on to it if he could. So only by the power of God will Satan give up territory, and so Jesus just told them that His being there brought the kingdom of God upon them. And so now He draws a line and leaves us with no choice.

Vs30

In other words when it comes to your decision concerning who is Jesus Christ, who is He, and where did He come from, there is no neutral ground. *"What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"* That's basically the question, because He claimed to be the Son of God. Now you either believe it, or you don't.

You can't say well I believe He was a good teacher, because of His claims to be who He was, He was either insane or He was exactly who He said He was. And He said if you're not for Me, You're against Me, now you're faced with a choice, how do I respond to Jesus? And to not decide is to make your decision; no decision is a no decision. If you're a Buddhist you're against Christ, if you're a Muslim, you're against Christ, if you follow the Dahli lama you're against Christ. To follow no one and live your life the way you please is to be against Christ. There is no neutral ground. If you don't side with J.C you've made your stand with the enemy, that's not my opinion that's what the bible teaches.

Elijah put it like this *"How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him."* In other words you have to make a choice and to straddle the fence is the worst possible choice you could make. Joshua pretty much summed it up when he said *"Josh 24:15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

Today you have a choice to make but hear me on this and I'll close with this, as Paul said as though God were pleading through me: I implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Through the shed blood of Jesus Christ Jesus is the way the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by Him, and Him alone.