

Matthew ch 12 vs. 38-50

The last few weeks we've seen Jesus heal the demon possessed man, lay down the standard of 1 of 2 absolutes, that being that you'll either be for Him or against Him, He's spoken about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. And He's exhorted the Pharisees and really all that were around to be careful in the words you choose because by your words you'll be justified, or by your words you'll be condemned.

Which of course He was still flowing in the same thought of the warning against the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit when He issued the warning about being careful what we say. Because if you recall the problem isn't so much that there's any one set of words that can't be forgiven, but the problem is that what comes out of my mouth is only symptomatic of a much deeper issue and that's what's going on in my heart. Because it's out of the abundance of the heart (Jesus said) that the mouth speaks, it's out of the overflow of what's in my heart, that dictates what comes out of my mouth. And the things that I say; not when I'm in the public eye, but when my restraints are down and I'm no longer concerned about guarding my tongue and the real me comes springing forth; that's when I truly reveal my "treasures."

My true values are exposed when I let down my guard and speak my mind freely. And it's then that I begin to say those things that reflect who I am in the inner man. Remember I quoted a man last week who once said "the *carefully* spoke words maybe a calculated hypocrisy." And often times those same people that are models of charm and courtesy in public, when they get home are people of rudeness, criticism, they're very short with you, they're people of hot headedness and spiteful sarcasm. and Yet the bible says that those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh along with it's passions and desires. It doesn't say those who are Christ's have been given the ability to suppress their flesh so that they appear to be really good people when it really counts because people are watching. That's called hypocrisy, I'm this person in this circumstance, but I'm this person in this circumstance. You see what is that person's true treasure, what kind of fruit is budding forth on their tree? Is it good fruit?

The bible says "*now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. and Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds*" Col 3 Eph 4:29 "*Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*" Does that reflect the average day in your home? Or would it be more accurate to say that criticism, rudeness and short temperedness describes your life behind closed doors? If that's the case then repentance is in order because according to Jesus that's the reflection of what's going on in your heart. And that's what God is always searching. Jer 17:10 "*I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the (listen) fruit of his doings.*"

David understood this, that's why he wrote "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" Ps 139 vs. 23,24 My prayer is that each one of us would take that same frame of heart this morning, that we would just be open to God probing our hearts and revealing to us those areas that aren't pleasing to Him. That He might lead us in the way everlasting. That we wouldn't be too prideful to repent if we've been bearing bad fruit, but rather we would allow the Holy Spirit to shape us and mold us more into the image of Christ.

Vs 38

Now the scribes and Pharisees kind of seemed for the most part to be sort of linked together. The scribes were the guys who were responsible for the preservation of the scriptures; they were the ones who were always copying the manuscripts so meticulously and tediously never missing one little jot or tittle. So consequently as they would copy the scriptures, they became very skilled in the word in that they knew the law and the prophets, the written word of God. and The Pharisees were similar in that they were very educated in the law and devoted their lives to the learning and the keeping of the law (according to their interpretation) which was all wrong but that's another story. But that's why Jesus was always rebuking these guys, because they were the teachers of Israel, they were supposed to know their stuff, and yet here sat the Messiah right in front of them fulfilling prophecy after prophecy and these guys with their masters in theology, couldn't even see Him. As a matter of fact it was their idea to crucify Him, because they didn't get it. You see notice what it is they call Him. (Read)

They call Him "Teacher", not Lord, not Messiah, not son of David, why? Because they don't recognize Him for who He is, and they say to Him "we want to see a sign from you."

The Jews were notorious for wanting to see signs as proof of your credentials, Paul the apostle recognized that same fact when he wrote in 1 Cor 1:22 "*The Jews request a sign,*" but to ask for a sign, is to serve evidence against yourself of your unbelief. It shows your lack of faith, because "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" And the bible says with out faith it's impossible to please God. So what do you think the odds are of Jesus performing a circus sideshow trick for them is? Jesus isn't a sideshow performer He's the Son of the Living God, He didn't come to impress these guys with magic, He came to heal the broken hearted and set those that are bound by the chains of sin and death free. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,* (why) *that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" Not so that He could dazzle them with signs and wonders.

When I read this statement of theirs, not only was I staggered at their audacity but I was also sort of dumbfounded at their ignorance. That's all Jesus has been doing, what part of the healing of the blind, mute Demon possessed man, didn't they get. In ch 8-9 we studied 10 specific miracles that showed Jesus' power and authority over every conceivable aspect of life. He cleansed the leper, healed the centurions servant, healed Peter's mother in law, calmed the storm, delivered 2 demon possessed men, healed the paralytic, healed the woman with the issue of blood, raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, gave 2 blind men their sight, and healed and delivered the demon possessed mute. And in those 10 specific miracles Jesus demonstrated His power over incurable disease, His ability to heal while not being physically present His power over nature, over the supernatural, and His power over even life and death itself. Not to mention the sighting of the various times He just ministered to the multitudes in healing every sickness and disease among them. I mean there are literally thousands of people walking around whose lives have in some way been supernaturally touched by Jesus and now these guys are asking Jesus to show them a sign!

They were looking for a man like Moses and so they maybe standing there with the mentality of all this stuff is neat but how do we know that you're not some high-class charlatan. We want to see a real sign, Moses rained bread down from heaven, struck a rock and water gushed from it, turned water into blood, and summoned hordes of frogs upon the land. Elijah called fire down from heaven. We want to see a real sign; this stuff isn't sufficient for us.

Vs39-41

Jesus calls them evil and adulterous, often times throughout scripture you'll read where God likened His relationship to Israel to that of a marriage. You can look at Jer 3vs14 and 20 for a reference to that. And when Israel would fall away from God into idolatry; God considered it spiritual adultery, playing the harlot in the worship of foreign gods who weren't gods at all.

But in these few short vs Jesus affirms 3 biblical facts. #1 is the obvious, and that's the account of Jonah. We live in a day and age where the account of Jonah is highly criticized and down played to the point that if you believe you're almost considered crazy. Because who in their right mind would believe that this great fish came up from the deep and as Jonah was cast over board into the Mediterranean sea that this fish swallowed him whole and 3 days later vomited him out on shore at the command of God?

Apparently Jesus did, and if Jesus refers to this account to validate something about Himself, and it's not true then that makes Jesus a liar. And if Jesus is a liar that means He wasn't sinless, and if He wasn't sinless than His death was in vain and you're still in your sins. Because if you're putting your trust in Him and He wasn't the lamb of God with out spot or blemish that the Bible says He is then we're in a world of hurt because we count on the fact that He's everything that He said He is. And the fact is that He is everything that He said He is and He furnished evidence to prove it and we'll talk about that in a minute.

Jesus referred to account of Jonah as a factual event; and believed that Jonah was a prophet. As a matter of fact if you study the teachings of Jesus you see that it's almost as if Jesus purposefully used the examples that He did because He knew that there would come a day 2,000 yrs later that people would seek to dismiss many of the biblical accounts. He speaks of Adam and Eve, when He teaches on marriage, He refers to Noah in regards to His 2nd coming, He talks about Daniel, we see here that He speaks about Jonah. And many of the same people that dismiss those accounts, claim to believe in Jesus. But Jesus says these things are factual events and so He sets it up in such a way that we can't believe some of it, and dismiss other parts of it if we claim to believe in Him. It's either all true or none of it is, and if you believe in Jesus then you believe it's all-true, because Jesus teaches that is. Notice He didn't say Jonah the legend, or Jonah the myth, or Jonah the allegory, or Jonah the fairy tale, He calls him Jonah the prophet.

Here's the deal, these people that have a problem with the account of Jonah; their problem doesn't lie in the fact that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. (If your bible says whale that's really not a correct translation, great fish is closer; actually it says great sea monster and most commentators believe it was a shark type of a fish rather than a whale. Because most whales couldn't swallow a man whole nor are they indigenous to that part of the sea. But there are several documented accounts of sharks swallowing people whole so most people believe that it was some form of a shark, but we're not told.) But as I was saying that's not even the issue, the problem isn't that Jonah was swallowed by a fish, the problem runs deeper then that; the problem lies in that persons concept of God. Because if you have a right concept of God you'll have no problem with the story of Jonah. Even if it said that God prepared a fish with 3 bedrooms 2 bathrooms and a look out window so that Jonah had a great view of the ocean while he was down there for a few days. Why, because God can do anything, so your problem lies with in your concept of God, not with the story of Jonah. That's just where your problem surfaces.

That's one of the basic problems of man in general, his concept of God. And that problem exists because man has the tendency to create his own god in his own mind, which will always make for problems. Because when man creates his own god, he creates his god really as a projection of himself to what he would consider to be a state of godhood. And then they try and figure out how they would've done things if they were God. And so they have problems with God's revelation of Himself because there are aspects of that revelation that differ from their ideas and their concepts of how they would've done things, or dealt with things if they were God.

So there are many who reject God's own revelation of Himself, preferring to worship their own concepts, which is really to worship themselves. Because there is really only 2 burdens that man has, 1 is to do the will of God, the other is to do the will of himself. Remember a few weeks ago we read where Jesus said "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" What was His burden? To do the will of the Father, Jesus said, "*I always do those things that please Him*" Speaking of His heavenly Father, what's your burden? To do the will of yourself, heavy isn't it? That's why Jesus said come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

David also saw how people made their own gods, how they molded them out of gold or carved them out of wood and they set them up on their little pedestal and burn incense to them and that's their god. Leave the book of Matt and turn with me quickly to psalm 115: Vs 4-8

Vs 7

You see David observed that man makes their gods like themselves, why do you put eyes on your god? Because you've got eyes, why put ears on your god, because you've got ears. Why do you put a mouth on your god, because you've got a mouth; you make your god like yourself. But really you create your god to be less than yourself because this little trinket that you've made and decided to worship, even though you've put eyes on it, it can't hear. You've put ears on it, but it can't hear you, and you worship the works of your own hands. You create it less than yourself and then worship it as though it's above you. But it's deaf, mute, blind, immobile. It's completely insensate, and notice what else David observes in vs 8.

If you worship a god that's blind, deaf, and dumb; guess what, you will soon be blind deaf and dumb, or mute, and immobile. You become blind to the things of God, you become deaf to the voice of God, you're unable to walk in the ways of God and you become numb to the presence of God. You become insensate, someone says, "well I've never felt the presence of God" that's because your god is insensate and so you've become the same way. "I've never heard the still small voice of God." Same deal, that's because you worship a god that isn't the one true living God and you've become like that god.

Be it your car, your job, your partying, your hobby, or whatever, you worship something other than the one true living God and so your becoming like your god. Because the bible teaches that man will become like his God. That much is inevitable; and it's a horrible tragedy and a curse that a man becomes like his god, if his god is false.

But it's a tremendous blessing that a man becomes like his God if his God is true. 1 John 3:2 "*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him*" why because man becomes like his God. 2 Cor 3:18 "*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" 1 John 4:17 "*Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.*" Why, because man becomes like his God. And we should be being transformed more and more everyday into the image of Jesus Christ and If we are truly worshipping Him that will be the case.

But back to Jonah, Jesus here confirms the account of Jonah as historic fact and if you have the right concept of God you'll have no problems with that. But believe me when I tell you that if you don't have the right concept of God, your problems are just starting and your hang up with Jonah are the least of your worries.

The 2nd thing that Jesus affirms here is His resurrection, and that's the only sign that He guarantees them so as to leave no doubts that He came from God. Now He often called His disciples to believe Him because of His works sake, but His witness to the world or those who may have doubt is the resurrection. And He's using the story of Jonah to illustrate the fact of His resurrection and really to authenticate it. (Read vs 40) So if Jonah were an allegory and that's the illustration Jesus uses to authenticate His death and resurrection, that would leave a huge window open for skepticism. Because maybe that's not what He really meant and we just misunderstood the allegory. But there were over 500 witnesses to the risen Christ, so even as the resurrection is fact, so is the story of Jonah. So Jesus calls upon His resurrection as an undisputed fact of Him being the Messiah. and Just so that you know in that culture according to the Jewish method of reckoning any part of a day was considered a whole day. It didn't have to constitute a full 24hr. Period. So the fact that He was placed in the tomb at all on Friday constituted in their eyes a full day. The Sabbath began on sun down on Friday night so that constituted day #2 and then sun down Saturday night day #3 began, the fact that He was in the tomb for just a few hrs or whatever on Sunday morning was irrelevant, it was considered a full day. So in a nutshell that's how you get a 3-day death and resurrection out of a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection. The rabbis said that a day and a night make an Onah, and a part of an Onah is as the whole.

So there's no problems with the time slot from Friday to Sunday morning, if there was #1 Jesus would've been heralded as a false prophet when He showed up early, but that didn't happen, not even from the Pharisees. And there are several references in scripture where the term 3days or 3nights are swapped around and there's no question as to what's being said and so we have here the same type of a deal. You can look at 2nd Chronicles ch 10 vs 5 and vs 12, Est 4:16 and 5:1 and then also 1 Sam 30:12-13 in regards to that.

The 3rd thing that Jesus affirms here is the judgment, and the final resurrection whereby all people of all ages both small and great will stand before the judgment seat of God. And there is no escaping that, the men of Nineveh, He says, will rise up in judgment with this generation. Daniel speaks of that time in the 12th ch of Daniel vs 2 where He says, *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt."* Rev ch 20 gives a very graphic description of this resurrection and judgment in vs 11-15, it says *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire"* and So Jesus speaks of this final resurrection when the men of Nineveh rise up with the men of this generation and condemn it. Why, (read because they..Vs41).

Jonah was a bitter prophet, he didn't like the people of Nineveh, as a matter of fact he had no love for them and resented the fact that he was there ministering to them at all. They were a wicked people and on top of that they were gentiles. And Jonah did his best to deter that call upon his life to carry God's message to them. And God you might say had to encourage Jonah to change his mind. Someone has said that God will never force you to go against your will but He's able to make you willing to go. And such was the case with Jonah; after 3days in that big fishes stomach, with sea weed wrapped around his head, that fishes digestive juices flowing, the waves sloshing up over him, he had had it, he was now willing to go. So the Lord didn't really force him to go against his will, but he sure had a way of making him willing to go. And he heralded one mundane, monotonous message; 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed. But the people believed God and the king caught wind of what was going on and he called for a kingdom wide fast, and he put on sackcloth and ashes and told everyone to turn away from the evil that was in his hand. And who can tell, maybe the Lord will spare us and be merciful to us. And they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

Now contrast that with what's going on here with Jesus, who came willingly not to gentiles but to the Jews, God's people. And not with hatred or spite, but with love and compassion, not with a message of judgment but one of grace and mercy and salvation, Jonah was a bitter prophet, but Jesus was a loving Savior. And yet the people that Jonah preached to repented, but those to whom Jesus came didn't. You better believe that the men of Nineveh are going to be pointing the finger of accusation having repented in the face of judgment and while they hardened their hearts in the face of Love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

Vs42

Again another gentile seeking out this man of God. And in many ways she forms a more impressive example than the Ninevites. Because the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah who came to them in their own country as to where the queen of Sheba had to go completely out of her way on a painstaking journey to find Solomon. Now Solomon had wisdom from God, but Jesus is the wisdom of God. Solomon was a great King, but Jesus is the King of Kings. And the point that Jesus is making here is that there is absolutely no excuse for rejecting Him. He is the only provision that God has made for your sins and if you reject Him, men from every generation will rise up to condemn you in that day of judgment.

Vs43-45

Now we don't have too much time to get into this, and whether or not this is in regards to exorcism or the demon of leprosy of its own accord commentators have varied opinions. But the thrust of these few scriptures is that reformation isn't where it's at. Sweeping things clean doesn't cut it as far as the inner man is concerned. Now last week I made the statement that reformation is pointless, and don't misunderstand me; I'm not saying that it doesn't benefit society to sober up an alcoholic, or to see a rapist, or a molester, or a kidnapper reformed. That the society isn't benefited when someone who has been a menace to society changes their ways; but my point is that spiritually speaking they're still empty and haven't profited anything. You see to sweep up the mess in your life and put things in order though it changes you outwardly, does nothing for you inwardly and still leaves you empty and hurting. And your like a vacant house with a sign that says space for rent and in the end, if you don't invite Jesus Christ to move in by the power of the Holy Spirit, things will get much worse. That's the basic thrust of what Jesus is saying here and no doubt this example is used because of what's just happened with the demon possessed man back in

vs22-30.

And Jesus is acknowledging the reformation of the nation of Israel. They really weren't at a point to where as a nation they were given over to idolatry; they had kind of cleaned up their act morally speaking. But here was Jesus and they weren't receiving Him, inviting Him into that void, and so Jesus is telling them that because they've settled for reformation, with out the transformation of the Holy Spirit. That things are going to end up much worse for them. And that's exactly what happened, shortly after the ascension of Jesus, 66-70 AD hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed and the nation was dispersed. Things only got worse for them. 46-50

Now there's a couple a real brief points I want to make here. #1 for those who are placing a high degree of dependency upon the intercession of Mary, this would give me a lot of problems. Because when they said hey your mom's outside she wants to talk to you, He didn't immediately stop and drop everything and run outside and say Oh Mary mother of God blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb what can I do for you because if *you* ask it it's done. He said, "who is my mother?" No place in the scriptures are we encouraged to seek Mary on our behalf to seek favors from Jesus. As a matter of fact there's not even one little hint, or inkling, or inference that Mary can do you any good whatsoever. Jesus said whatever you ask the Father in My name I will do that the Father may be glorified. He didn't say whatever you ask Mary I'll give special consideration to because after all every son gives special consideration to his mom.

So I would hate to be casting any dependency upon Mary when Jesus took this position in regards to her while He was here on earth. And He wasn't casting disrespect to her, He was just making the point that she takes no special position in the kingdom over anyone else who does the will of God. Do you seek the will of God for your life? Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? Then you take every bit the priority in Jesus' eyes that Mary ever did or will. Family ties aren't the all-important thing, doing the will of God is. And many people have discovered that the Spirit bonds you closer than blood ever could, and you're family in Christ actually becomes closer to you than blood relatives if they don't know Jesus. Because many times Christ will split the family, because your priorities change but they still love the darkness rather than the light and so a division takes place. But Jesus said, "*everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.*" If Jesus is your priority He's going to honor that.

Lastly the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is nowhere to be found in scripture. The bible speaks more than once concerning the fact that Jesus had several brothers and sisters. The teaching of the perpetual virginity of Mary, the co-redemptrix of Mary, praying to Mary are all heresy, and so my encouragement to you is don't believe something just because some guy in some spiritual looking outfit tells it to you. Nor should you believe something just because some longhaired gut that wasn't dressed so spiritual looking says it. But search the scriptures for yourself see what God's word has to say about these things and see for yourself and God will speak to your own heart.