

Matthew 12:1-37—Portraits of the King: Pt 2

- **Intro:**
 - Last week—invitation to come to Him and receive REST!
 - Come this week on a discourse about the Sabbath! No irony!
- **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (1-14)**
 - **Pharisees:**
 - **Added to the requirements of the law**
 - “weary and heavy laden”—these were the people on whom were heaped all the added legal requirements! These are the people Jesus said are given freedom and rest in his gospel
 - “the Pharisees saw it”—stalker Pharisees (ISS for untucked shirt!)
 - Pharisees upset b/c disciples were breaking the rules of their Religion Manual!
 - Sabbath was significant—longest commandment (Ex. 20); not keeping it was one reason for exile (Jer. 17); Pharisees had gone beyond that to burden of extra laws!
 - **Ignored the exceptions to the law**
 - David ate in tabernacle; priests in the temple worked!
 - “have you not read”—They had elevated their regulations/traditions to equality with Scripture!
 - “not lawful”—lawful according to Bible but “not lawful” according to their traditions.
 - **Missed the heart of the law**
 - The heart of the Sabbath = God’s mercy on people to provide them REST!
 - “mercy, and not sacrifice”—turned a law meant to lead to freedom and rest into burdensome RULES
 - Those most “devoted” to the law turn in hostility against the One who gave the Law!
 - **Jesus:**
 - **Greater than the tabernacle and temple—Jesus appeals to the example of David/priests**
 - Ate the bread of the tabernacle; Sabbath made for man, not man for Sabbath
 - **Ultimate Message: The work Jesus was doing was GREATER in every way! It redefined how one would live before the presence of God and how/where one could enjoy the presence of God!**
 - **Jesus is God—Lord of the Sabbath**
 - As Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus is God...God in the flesh! As God, Jesus has AUTHORITY to determine Sabbath regulations for his followers!
 - By claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus was saying to the Pharisees, “how you are justified before God is not in keeping regulations but in having faith in me!”
 - “conspired against him, how to destroy him”—the people set to destroy Jesus are the ones most ardently making and keeping rules to try and make God happy!
 - **If there is a symbol for hardcore religious people it is a FIST—they are defending their turf and ready to fight!**
 - **Why were they so mad?**
 - Jesus was breaking their rules, yet was holy, they were not; he was good, they were not, he had authority, they did not!
 - **Oftentimes, it is the religious rule-keepers among us/those places in our hearts, that are most opposed to grace! Great sinners readily accept extravagant grace!**
 - **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath so flee religion and take rest in Him!**
 - **Jesus is the SERVANT of God and sinners (9-21)**
 - **Servant of sinners (9-14)**
 - **Jesus is hope and healing for the hurting**
 - v.9-14—MERCY OVER SACRIFICE...MINISTRY OVER REGULATIONS... RELATIONSHIPS OVER RULES
 - v.15 = he healed all who followed him—a ministry of compassion and mercy!

- 4 aspects of Jesus: he brings justice, he exemplifies humility, he is full of compassion (will not afflict the weak and vulnerable), he brings salvation/hope to the whole earth!
 - Jewish leaders trampled the sick/weak and burdened them with more law...Jesus serves and heals, sets free and gives rest!
 - Bruised Reed = Richard Sibbes—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 Christ than there is sin in you.
 - If there is a symbol for Jesus/gospel it is an OPEN HAND—he is on a mission and is seeking, serving and saving the hurting, the broken, the sinners!
 - Servant of God (15-21)
 - Jesus is loved by the Father and filled with the Spirit (18)
 - “servant”= sometimes servant, sometimes son; Jesus is the Servant Son of God!!!
 - Pharisees seek to exterminate, the Father seeks to exalt!
 - “beloved”—Jesus is both chosen and cherished! He alone is the good, faithful servant!
 - “put my Spirit on him”—Jesus was filled with the Spirit
 - What a CONDESCENSION that Jesus, VERY GOD, would lay aside deity to the degree that he would depend on the Spirit’s power for his live, holiness and ministry!
 - Jesus was totally committed to the will of God (v.15)
 - He withdrew and ordered them not to make him known—the time had not yet come
 - Jesus is the servant of God and sinners so receive mercy, grace and hope from Him!
- Jesus is the POWER of God (22-32)
 - Pharisees hurl an inconsistent and illogical accusation against Jesus (24)
 - We will rationalize our unbelief w/ all kinds of ridiculous excuses!
 - Why hurl the accusation? THREAT/FEAR
 - Jesus had just healed another demon-possessed man AND the people were beginning to wonder if Jesus really was Messiah (Son of David)!
 - Jesus delivers a powerful response (25-29)
 - If it is not by Satan then it is by God, and if by God, the Kingdom “has come”!
 - “has come”—it is here! The one stronger than Satan is here
 - v.29—summary statement of what it means that the kingdom HAS COME
 - “bound the strong man!; “plundering his house”—all the miracles, healings, deliverance is Jesus storming the domain of Satan, binding him, and plundering his house!
 - Jesus gives a strong warning (30-37)
 - Neutrality is impossible (v.30)—you either receive him or reject him!
 - Rejecting Jesus is dangerous (31-32)
 - Jesus serves even the Pharisees with a gracious warning
 - Blasphemy against the Son is forgivable, and the avenue to forgiveness is repentance!
 - Blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable because it rejects the avenue of forgiveness
 - This sin involves willful rebellion, persistent rebellion, and final denial.
 - Permanent rebellion against Christ leads to ultimate separation from Christ.
 - Progression of Rejection:
 - Ch. 11:1-15 (doubt); 11:16-19 (criticism); 11:20-24 (indifference); 12:1-21 (rejection); 12:22-32 (blasphemy/ultimate denial)
 - Our big problem is our HEART (33-35)
 - Our problem is inside us and the solution is outside us (Christ); not other way around!
 - v.34—The unforgivable sin is an issue of the HEART, not the lips. Careful not to label!!
 - Religion—problem outside, solution inside...Gospel—problem inside, solution outside
 - Saving faith is accompanied by good works, including good words
 - Jesus is the power of God so repent before him in humility and receive the Kingdom!
- Will we reject the King or worship the King? Be humbled or hardened by Him?
 - We ALL need Jesus—Pharisees of Matt. 12 and tax collectors sinners of Matt 9!!