

### **Lesson #13- Matthew Chapter 12 Questions for Discussion (With Help for Teachers):**

1. In verses 1-7 the Pharisees see Jesus' disciples plucking ears of corn to eat during the sabbath day and accused them to Jesus of breaking the law. Jesus ends the conversation by saying, "For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." Did the disciples break the law by their actions? Discuss Jesus' response to the Pharisees.

#### **Help for Teachers:**

- Deuteronomy 23:25- reaping for profit from another man's field was unlawful, sabbath or not. Plucking and eating from another man's field because you were hungry was specifically permitted by the law. Harvesting for gain was prohibited on the sabbath. There was no law against picking grain to eat when you were hungry on the sabbath.
- 1 Samuel 21:1-6- Jesus affirms that David broke the law by his actions in eating the shew bread, but the Pharisees hold David blameless for violating the law. Hypocritically, they find fault in Jesus who did not break the law. This is what Jesus is pointing out.
- Number 28:9- Priestly work was required on the sabbath by the law. The disciples were in service to the High Priest of Heaven, who was (and is) calling out a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). The Pharisees acknowledged that the priests in tabernacle/ temple service were blameless in their required work on the sabbath. Jesus declares that He is greater than the temple; the temple only represented the actual, which is Jesus Christ, the Lord of Sabbath. The preceding chapter ended with Jesus' invitation to find rest (sabbath) in Him. He is the believer's Sabbath. All the sacrifices of the temple never settled the issue of sin. The real and final sacrifice of Christ Himself paid the debt for all that He calls that come to Him by faith, in unimaginable mercy.

2. In verses 9-14 we find the story of Jesus healing a man with a withered hand, once again on the sabbath day. Once again it causes conflict with the self-righteous religious leaders, who are now on a mission to destroy Jesus. Jesus, knowing the intent of the Pharisees, withdrew from them but great multitudes of the people followed Him, and He healed all of them. But then He gives them a strange command, that they "should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, ....". Find that prophesy in the Old Testament and discuss its fulfilment in Jesus.

### Help for Teachers:

Isaiah 42:1-4 is the prophesy that Jesus quoted. It seems that the term “bruised reed” that Jesus quotes from Isaiah finds its meaning in the words of Rabshaketh, the king of Assyria’s messenger to Hezekiah, through Eliakim. Rabshaketh says to Eliakim that Hezekiah’s dependance on Egypt for military support against the Assyrians was like leaning on a broken reed, not only will it not support you, but when it fails the sharp fractured end will puncture your hand and cause you more harm (Isaiah 36:1-6). A bruised reed (a broken staff) should be completely broken and taken out of service. A smoking flax is the charred end of the wick of an oil-burning lamp. It causes a weak light and irritating smoke. It needs to be trimmed off or quenched (put out).

Jesus is the chosen servant of the Father, who is well pleased with the Son. Israel, as the nation God ordained to bring forth Messiah and bless the nations, should have been the staff on which Jesus could depend. Instead, no different than all of us to whom He has extended His grace, they are damaged goods that deserve to be broken or extinguished. They have failed in their purpose (John 1:11). Mercifully, Jesus “withdraws from thence”, and fulfilling the prophesy, endures the let down from His own people, not destroying them but still offering them salvation. He knew they would reject Him, and that the gospel would be received by the gentiles (Acts 13:46).

3. Starting in verse 22 we read that a man “possessed with a devil, blind and dumb” is healed by Jesus. The Pharisees are outraged and accuse Jesus of doing this miracle by the power of Beelzebub. The stage is now set for the famous and often misinterpreted teaching of Jesus concerning blaspheming the Holy Ghost. Discuss the dialogue between Jesus and these Pharisees and the meaning of blaspheming the Holy Ghost.

### Help for Teachers:

After Jesus heals the possessed man, the people are amazed and are beginning to look at Him as the promised Son of David. The Pharisees are enraged with envy and, unable to deny the miracle, declare that it was done by the power of Beelzebub, prince of the devils.

Beelzebub was the Phoenician god of filth. The Phoenicians observed that often, in dead and rotting matter, small white things would begin moving around (we know these as maggots) and surmised that it was life from the dead and deified them. They were insulting Jesus in as nasty a way as they could come up with.

Before they said a word, Jesus knew their thoughts and their unbelief. The people were calling Jesus, “son of David”, connecting the promises of Scripture that Messiah, from

the line of David, would come to redeem His people. But through unbelief, the Pharisees rejected redemption.

Jesus first pointed out the unreasonableness of their accusation. Satan is not divided against himself. If we are smart enough to know that a kingdom divided will crumble (civil war as an example), and that a city or house that is at odds with one another won't endure, Satan, the prince and power of the air, is even wiser concerning his kingdom. Satan is not undermining himself.

### **Concerning the unpardonable sin**

*Here is what it is not:*

It is not a moral sin, "all manner of sin forgiven" (Matt 12:31). It is not some horrible curse or oath that you might say (Matthew 12:25- "Jesus knew their thoughts" and Matthew 12:34, "out of the abundance of heart, ..." so that isn't what Jesus declared to be unpardonable). Some religions teach that it is suicide. The bible doesn't mention anything of the sort. It is not even being an atheist or agnostic- many have turned to Christ and found forgiveness.

*It is Blaspheming the Holy Ghost:*

According to Merriam Webster the definition of blasphemy is, "(a) the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God (b) the act of claiming the attributes of a deity". Holy Spirit, equal with the Father and with the Son in the Godhead, is God and is Divine. His purpose in coming to the world is to show us our sin that is separating us from God. Notice Jesus says, "of sin, because they believe not on me". The Holy Spirit points us to Righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, of whom He (The Spirit) will only testify. He also warns us of sure judgement if we reject this revelation.

So, what did the Pharisees do? They deliberately rejected the divinely revealed truth that Jesus is God incarnate and that only through His redeeming sacrifice can one have peace with God. Through unbelief they chose damnation. This is the "unpardonable sin"!

#### 4. What is the sign of the prophet Jonas?

##### Help for Teachers:

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (V.40)

Jesus said that the only sign this wicked generation would receive was the sign of the prophet Jonas (Jonah). But what sign could be greater or more persuasive than to see One that has just told you that He is going to die, be buried for three days, and then rise to life again- and then, as everyone watches, He does just that? And still most of this generation refused to believe. No wonder Jesus says that Nineveh and Sodom will bear less guilt.

Jonah (likely quite unaware) was more than just a prophet of God's impending wrath against wicked Nineveh, he was a picture of the salvation Jesus Christ would provide by His death to an idolatrous people. Forgetting Nineveh for a minute, think about Jonah's experience with the mariners as he flees on a ship to Tarshish. Woven into this story of Jonah's failure are many reminders of Jesus' sufferings and victory He accomplished for us.

As Jonah “went down to Joppa” and “paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish”(concerning the ship), *Jesus came down from heaven to go with us, as a man, to pay our fare so that we can enter His kingdom of heaven.* As the God-sent storm pounded the ship of the idolatrous mariners and threatened them with the death they deserved, God's prophet Jonah slept, *as did Jesus on the stormy sea of Galilee.* The mariners woke Jonah up and demanded to know if he had offended a god and was the cause of the storm. Jonah tells them about the one true God and accepts the guilt. Jonah tells the mariners that the only way they can be saved is to kill him by casting him into the sea. The mariners try their best to spare Jonah but ultimately throw him into the sea to drown. *Jesus is God but became man and accepted our blame, though He was blameless. The people had no interest in sparing Jesus, but demanded His death, which He willingly submitted to.* When Jonah was thrown over, the storm ceased, and the sea became calm. *As Jesus died on that cross He cried, “It is finished” and died. God's wrath was satisfied.* The mariners realized they could not save themselves and “cried unto the Lord”. *Jesus saves all that call on Him for salvation.* Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and descended into the depths for three days and three nights. *Jesus was placed in a tomb in the earth for three days and three nights.* The great fish vomited Jonah back onto the dry land. *Jesus rose from the grave at the end of three days and nights.*

(see Jonah 1 and 2)

5. How does Jesus describe His family in verse 50?

**Help for Teachers:**

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Jesus was not showing disrespect for His earthly family, instead He was making a point of great hope for His disciples, both then and now. Jesus was not denying His physical family, He was making it clear that His eternal family are those that do the will of the Father. The key to understanding the verse is knowing what is “the will of the Father”.

What does the Bible tell us about the will of the Father?

- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:16-17)
- “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)
- “And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.” (Mark 9:7)
- “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)
- “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)
- “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Hebrews 2:10)