

**Digging Deeper Study**  
**Matthew-God's Kingdom Comes Pt 2**  
**Opposition**  
**Week of January 18,2026**

<p>NIV Matthew 12:1-8 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. <sup>2</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."</p> <p><sup>3</sup> He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? <sup>4</sup> He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the</p>	<p>"In essentials, unity; (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) in non-essentials, liberty; (Romans 14:1) in all things, charity." (John 13:34)</p> <p>Quote: Just like opposition didn't stop Jesus, when we face opposition with our eyes focused on Him, it won't stop us.</p> <p>Read the text.</p>
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consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. <sup>5</sup> Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? <sup>6</sup> I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. <sup>7</sup> If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'<sup>[a]</sup> you would not have condemned the innocent. <sup>8</sup> For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus confronts a system where rule-keeping mattered more than people. The Pharisees had Scripture knowledge, but it didn't lead to compassion, worship, or obedience.

### **The Heart Behind the Rules**

- Why do you think the Pharisees were so threatened by Jesus' interpretation of the Sabbath?
- What does Jesus mean when He says, "*I desire mercy, not sacrifice*"?

### **Knowledge Without Movement**

The Pharisees had the right information but the wrong heart — just like the religious leaders in Matthew 2.

- Where in your life are you tempted to rely on "correct theology" instead of a transformed heart?
- How can Christian knowledge become a substitute for Christian obedience?

### **Personal Application**

Mathew 12:22-24, 25, 28

Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'

...Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined... But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.'"

Read **James 1:22–25** and **Matthew 7:24–27**.

- What is one area where you know what Jesus teaches... but you're not doing it?
- What would a step of costly obedience look like this week?

Read the text.

Matthew 12:46-50

"While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.'

Jesus heals a demon-oppressed man. The crowds wonder if He is the Son of David. The Pharisees accuse Him of being empowered by Satan.

### **Why Accusation?**

- Why do you think the Pharisees chose accusation instead of honest evaluation?
- What does this reveal about the danger of a hardened heart?

### **The "Herod Impulse" in Matthew 12**

Just like Herod in Matthew 2, the Pharisees felt their authority threatened.

- When has Jesus' teaching felt like a threat to your personal "kingdom" — your control, preferences, or reputation?
- What "respectable" tactic do you use to avoid surrender?
  - Rationalizing
  - Delaying
  - Changing the subject
  - Blaming others
  - Minimizing sin

### **Scripture Reflection**

Read **Matthew 6:33, James 4:6–7, Galatians 2:20.**

- How do these verses call us to dethrone ourselves and enthrone Christ?

Read the text.

He replied to him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'"

After witnessing miracles, healings, and deliverance, some of the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus for *another* sign. Their request isn't rooted in curiosity or faith — it's a way to delay obedience and maintain control. Jesus responds by pointing them to the "sign of Jonah," a foreshadowing of His death and resurrection.

Jesus exposes a timeless truth:

**A heart that demands signs is often a heart resisting surrender.**

### **Why Ask for a Sign?**

- What does the Pharisees' request reveal about their hearts?
- Why do people sometimes ask God for "one more sign" even after He has already spoken clearly?

### **The Jonah Sign**

Jesus points to Jonah — three days in the belly of the fish — as the ultimate sign pointing to His resurrection.

- Why do you think Jesus refuses to give them any sign except His death and resurrection?
- What does this teach us about the sufficiency of the gospel as God's ultimate revelation?

### **The Subtle Danger of Delayed Obedience**

Sign-seeking can be a spiritual stalling tactic:

- "God, show me one more thing before I obey."
- "Make it clearer."

Matthew 12:46-50

"While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.' He replied to him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my

- "Give me a feeling."
- "Open a door... or close one... or maybe open a different one."

- Where in your life are you tempted to delay obedience by asking God for more clarity than you actually need?
- How is this similar to the Pharisees' request?

### **Scripture Reflection**

Read **James 1:22–25** and **Matthew 7:24–27**.

- How do these passages challenge the idea that we need more signs before we act?
- What does it look like to move from *information* to *obedience* in this area?

### **E. Personal Application**

- What is one area where you already know what Jesus wants you to do — but you're waiting for a sign?
- What would it look like to take a step of faith this week based on what you already know to be true?

Read the text.

brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

As Jesus is teaching, His mother and brothers arrive and want to speak with Him. Instead of stopping everything to prioritize biological ties, Jesus uses the moment to redefine what true family looks like in the Kingdom.

This is not Jesus dishonoring His earthly family — it's Jesus elevating obedience to God above every other loyalty. In a culture where family was the highest allegiance, Jesus makes a radical claim:

### **Competing Loyalties**

- Why do you think Jesus chose this moment to redefine family?
- What does this teach us about the danger of letting even good things — family, tradition, reputation, expectations — take priority over obedience to God?

### **When Good Things Become Ultimate Things**

Misplaced allegiance often shows up subtly:

- Wanting approval more than obedience
  - Letting family expectations override Scripture
  - Prioritizing comfort over calling
  - Allowing cultural values, theological beliefs, political factions to shape decisions more than Jesus' words
- Which "good thing" in your life is most likely to compete with your allegiance to Jesus?

### **Scripture Reflection**

Read **Philippians 3:7–8** and **Matthew 6:33**.

- How do these verses help clarify what Jesus means by "doing the will of my Father"?
- What would it look like for you to reorder your allegiances this week?

**Personal Application**

- Where is Jesus inviting you to move from *admiring Him* to *aligning with Him*?
- What practical step could you take to demonstrate that your primary allegiance is to the King and His Kingdom?