

27As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 29Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith." 30And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!" 31But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

32As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. 33After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." 34But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

35Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

36Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Lefty Ward used to tell a story about his family on the long journey to Prairie Bible Institute in Canada. They had passed and been passed a number of times by another large family and after a while they started waving at each other like old friends, it was so common.

Ultimately they happened to stop at the same rest area and Lefty says they asked the other family, "Are you born again". To which the folks said, no, we're Methodist.

We christians throw a lot of names around. "Born again" was big until Jimmy Carter was born again and then everybody was born again, and ultimately it didn't mean what the original intent was.

Baptist is a good one. It can mean anything and nothing.

Fundamentalist. My parents were fundamentalist in the 1950's. Still a good word if you understand it, but it took on a meaning of stiff necked puritanical kind of christian. Sort of a pharisaical legalistic christian.

The current word is evangelical. We're evangelicals. Independent, non-denominational evangelicals. Or are we?

All of these words get thrown around but rarely does anyone stop to analyze what the words actually mean. Are we really evangelicals? I think this passage will challenge us this morning.

In Matthew 5, 6, and 7, we studied the sermon on the mount. Jesus speaks differently than any of the teachers in Israel. He speaks with the authority of one who is author of the book, not one commenting on the book.

It's one thing to speak. Anybody can talk big. But Jesus backs up the talk with doing. In chapters 8 and 9 Jesus shows us miracles and authority that can only be accomplished by God.

He casts out demons. He has authority over the unseen spiritual world. He controls the wind and the sea with a word. He forgives sin. He restores sight to the blind and legs to the lame. He raises the dead. He heals every kind of sickness.

In the face of such astonishing attestation, it seems every possibility to explain such power from any other source but God, would be a no-brainer.

No one has ever come close to doing what Jesus did. Before or after Him. The miracles are meant to remove every doubt that could ever stand in the way of worshipping Him as God.

We've got 2 more miracles this morning, then we've got the reaction, and the reaction to the reaction. A most interesting passage. Matthew's taking us here on purpose, because this is another turning point. A

crossroads.

27As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Went on from where? Jairus house. This is the same day. The miracles just keep coming in rapid fire succession. Miracle after miracle after miracle.

John says all the books in the world couldn't hold the accounts of everything He did.

And the miracles are creative. In the Genesis 1:1 sense. He speaks and dead tissue becomes living strong tissue. Shriveled dead legs and arms become strong, healthy, muscled legs and arms.

Something out of nothing. At the sound of His voice. Performative utterance.

How could anyone witness this, and not believe.

two blind men followed Him How. How do blind men follow someone? I don't know. Perhaps they had someone helping them? Someone like Karen. This way. Hurry. There's a curb. OK, up some stairs into the house.

There's a contrast here for us. The people who can see are blinded. And the blind can perceive. The people who can hear are deaf, and the deaf can hear.

So these 2 blind men, with all of their limitations are somehow following Jesus and they're *crying out*,. Shrieking loudly; *"Have mercy on us, Son of David!"*

Son of David! That's a messianic title. These blind men have perceived, correctly, that only the messiah could do what this man does.

Why is it that the folks who can see the miracles, aren't there, but the

blind men are? It's the most logical of conclusions. *“Have mercy on us, Son of David!”*

28When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”

We don't know what house He entered. Just "the house" and the blind men are able to get within speaking distance. And so, they have this conversation. *“Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”*

Yes, Lord.

Based on what? They've not seen any of the evidence, and yet they believe. Why is that. Why do these men believe even though all of their information is secondary. Someone has told them about all the different things Jesus accomplishes.

Thomas said he wouldn't believe unless his eyes could see and his hands could touch the hole in his side. In John 20:28 *Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."*

These men have only been able to hear, second hand, and they believe Jesus is the messiah.

29Then He touched their eyes, saying, “It shall be done to you according to your faith.”

Over and over, Jesus touches. When He heals, He touches. He doesn't line people up in categories and heal a couple of dozen at a time.

Our God deals with us, one on one. Christianity is a personal relationship with the saviour, one on one. One by one. No other religion approaches people that way. Jesus touches. He touched their eyes.

And again, notice the next word. Saying. Performative utterance. Those things in those mens eye sockets were dead tissue. His touch and His voice, create new eyes out of the dead ones. *30And their eyes were opened.*

If this were the only miracle in the book, we should believe that this man is God. What other explanation is there. He touches their eyes, says the word DONE, and it is done. *And their eyes were opened.*

And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!"
31But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

Here's the "Don't tell anybody" thing again. We talked at some length about this. Jesus purpose is not to fix physical problems for people. He does that because He's gracious, and the miracles are attesting to something greater.

Jesus came to take this world back from Satan. To restore the rightful reign of God on this earth. To forgive sins, so we could join Him in that rule and reign. Not to fix physical things that will just wear out and fail again.

It's interesting at this point to compare this with the guy at Gadara. The man with multiple demons. The 2000 pigs that take the long swim. He's restored to his right mind. Clothed. Spiritually healed. What did Jesus tell him? Remember, he wanted to come with Jesus. Follow Jesus.

And Jesus says, go tell everyone in this country what great things God has done for you. The first missionary. Go tell the folks that a great spiritual victory has been accomplished, against all possible odds.

That's what He came to do. Spiritual battle.

Well, the 2 blind guys go and get their friend, the demon possessed mute. Maybe they sat in the gate with him, begging. We don't know.

32As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. 33After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke;

We've lost this connection. We've caved in to modernism. Talking about demon possession is just weird. And we don't really know enough about it to be very pragmatic. These folks seemed to understand more than we do.

In the book, Hearts of Fire, that we handed out on Mother's day, there's a story about a girl named Maya whose father is the witch doctor. She was plagued for years with stomach pain and severe head aches.

As soon as I read that, chronic head aches, stomach pain, father is dabbling in evil spirits, that's a demon, I thought. Someone told Maya about Jesus and she asked Him to come into her heart. Instantly she was miraculously healed.

Jesus is still delivering people from demons to this day. We just have a whole bunch of other psychosomatic names for everything. How much of the psycho babble is really about demonic activity? Someday we'll see clearly. We know less about it now than these ancient folks.

They bring the demon possessed mute to Jesus, and the story line is so subdued you have to wonder if this is the 19th one for that day. Matthew couldn't be more succinct. I doubt you could understate this any more than what Matthew does; *33After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke*

Just like that. Jesus orders the spirit world and they must obey. Notice also that He has ordered the spirits not to babble on about who He is. I know who you are Jesus, Son of the Most High! Why are you here messing with me before the time. Blah blah blah. I think He has made a blanket order by this time. Chill out.

and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

This is where Matthew's going with these 2 chapters. He blitzes us with astonishing miracles for 2 chapters, any one of which should have us on our knees acknowledging that this Jesus is surely God of very God.

That's the purpose of the miracles.

The sermon on the mount is the manifesto of authority. The miracles prove that the authority is actual. The things He did, over and over and over again, so that everyone in Israel can see and understand can only have one result based in reason. *“Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”*

We need to pre-qualify that statement. Because astonishing things had been seen in Israel. They had witnessed miracles and powers of God the Almighty like no other nation. Ever.

That was their heritage as God's chosen people. Astonishing miracles had brought them out of Egypt, into this land, conquerd armies, fed for forty years in the wilderness, prophets who foretold the end before it happened, and on and on. That was Israel. Their heritage included the hand of God in their midst doing miracles.

So, knowing that, listen to what these folks are saying, again. *“Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”*

That's the only possible logical reasonable conclusion. God is obviously doing something, and it's greater than anything He's done before. This is bigger. Everything before this, pales by comparison. *“Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”*

Matthew has taken us here, on purpose, to show us a phenomenon that's almost as stunning as the miracles. Willful disbelief. Willful disbelief.

When men get backed into a corner where they have to choose between a God that they hate, and sin that they love, they will come up with the most bizarre, non-sensical conclusions.

34But the Pharisees were saying, “He casts out the demons by the ruler

of the demons.”

There it is. These are the religious elite's. These are the guys who go and speak at the religious conferences. The movers and shakers of Israel. The religiously important. Religious rock stars. These are the King makers.

And they've seen all the same miracles the common folks saw, and this is the best they can come up with? Satan is a terrorist in the land of Satan? Satan's blowing up his own house?? Brilliant, guys.

But when men are forced to face clear evidence, and the end result is that there is a God, who defines what they love most as sin, and they're backed into that corner, choose sin, or acknowledge God who judges sin, and this is what men do.

Can't give up the sin. Must get creative about the obvious truth. Satan's terrorizing his own kingdom. That's what explains Jesus undeniable powers. It's satan. He's satan.

Matthew will re-visit this phenomenon again in the 12th chapter. The sin that can't be forgiven. You see all the evidence and you weigh it in the balance scale. Evidence demands a verdict. God. Sin. God. Sin. Done, I'll keep my sin and come up with an idiotic reason to make the evidence go away.

When you get to the end of the evidence and choose sin, over God, you're fate is sealed.

Paul visits this in the letter to the Romans. 1:18 - 19 *18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*

I want to take the time to look at one key word in there, and then take us to a modern phenomenon. men who *suppress* the truth.

katechontōn. The word means to hold back the truth, at all costs.
katechontōn means effort. Hard effort holding back the truth.

In my ridiculous hobby, Model A Fords, newcomers will inevitably discover, as they try to clean and restore the shift tower, the thing that holds the gear shift lever in it's socket. There's a spring inside there. And invariably, newbies will underestimate that spring, and when it's let loose, if they're lucky enough to not lose an eyeball, they'll find it about 2 houses down the block.

Don't ask me how I know this. OK, so now the parts are clean and painted and you have to put that thing back together. You have to suppress that spring somehow to about 1/3 of it's unsprung length. It's a nasty business, suppressing something that's nearly impossible to suppress.

That's the idea here. It isn't just put a cardboard box over this and it'll go away. You have to work at it to make God's truth go away.

Now, stay with me and think about this. Our entire society, and indeed, half the worlds population is built on secularism. And the basis for secularism is that there is no God. God is a myth that ancient people dreamed up, and the sooner you jettison Him, the happier you'll be.

REally? Really!?! Well, please explain to me the intricacies of creation and the vastness of the universe.

OK, first of all, don't say creation. There was no creation. Everything made itself over billions and trillions of years by chance. This all happened by random chance.

Oh. What about DNA?

It takes massive faith to believe the lie. Massive. Way more faith than it took to believe the truth.

But the bottom line is; Yes, the lie is idiotic and no one in their right mind would ever believe it, but your other choice is a God with

standards who judges the sin that you love.

OK, then. Since you put it that way, random chance is looking pretty good.

Men will believe pure idiocy in order to keep their sin. They will suppress the truth. hold back the truth with unbelievable force, in order to have their sin. It's hard work. This suppressing the truth. But sin is at stake, so you leave your brain at the door and get on with it.

And that's exactly where we're at with Matthew's well ordered account of Jesus and His authority, over everything.

He's backed these pharisees into a dangerous corner. Not only would they have to give up their sin in order to believe, they'd have to give up the power that they wield over the false religion of Israel that holds these unlearned men in it's clutches.

These folks are teetering towards belief. Their logic is undeniable. Their eyes have not lied to them. They've seen what they've seen and heard what they've heard.

“Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.” That's the correct and most logical, easiest solution. What're you going to do with that, pharisees? No one's ever seen anything like this man, before or since.

34But the Pharisees were saying, “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”

That's their official position. Sure it defies all logic. But the other choice is untenable. This is what we're going to have to go with. Satan causing wreckage on his own kingdom. Jesus has a direct high up link with satan.

This is a sad day in Israel. We learn a sad truth about mankind here. Men will set aside reason, and logic, and actually work hard, apply effort, in order to keep their sin. They love sin. They hate God.

Modern science has actually magnified this truth. When Darwin proposed his ridiculous theory, and for a hundred years we called it a theory, science had not yet discovered the truths about genetic building blocks.

DNA. The good science that forever silences the junk science.

Gen. 1:24 - 25 *Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. 25God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good....*

I'm no scientist. Well maybe that's not entirely true. I work with rocket scientists every day. But I'm the anomaly. I don't have a degree. I'm just a simple literalist.

Do you notice that all of this "after their kind" talk, mentioned no less than five times in those 2 verses on the sixth day of creation, is talking about living things, after the elemental things were finished. Water and rocks. Made out of elements. Living things. After their kind.

The ancient simple words of this book fit perfectly with what science has taught us about DNA. Building blocks that ensure that living things make more living things; *after . . . their . . . kind*

Notice also, that with this science, in my lifetime, the rhetoric to suppress the truth has stepped up it's game, in open defiance to reason and logic.

Evolution went from being a theory when I was young, to a fact, in my old age. Nobody calls it a theory now. Creation and any mention of it as a possibility is removed, with violence, from our childrens text books.

They suppress the truth in unrighteousness. It got more difficult to suppress the truth, and they simply stepped up their game. Bill Nye the science guy is out of patience with christians. The sooner we're all gone, the better off the planet will be.

At first it was just the lie. The idiotic ridiculous lie. But as true science proves their lie more idiotic and more ridiculous, the volume gets turned up. The lie doesn't get any smarter. It gets louder.

Well, I had good intentions to get to the end of this chapter this morning, but it's not going to happen.

This has turned into one of those; "What are you going to do with Jesus?" sermons.

The evidence is undeniable. These miracles happened. Thousands of witnesses saw them first hand. Thousands of witnesses came to the logical conclusion. Nothing like this has ever been done in Israel before. And Israel is the easier scenario. Miracles did happen there in the past.

For the rest of the world, Nothing like Jesus has ever been seen in this world before, or since. He speaks with the authority of God. Then He attests to all He has said, by miracles that only God can do.

What *are* you going to *do* with that! Because here's the problem. You can have Jesus, or you can have sin, but you can't have both.

One thing about being simple. You can state things simply. I'll say it again. You can have Jesus, or you can have sin, but you can't have both.

Pam came home rather dazed after ladies Bible study thursday evening. She's true to her ladies and won't give me names or numbers, but 10, 11, 12, 13 women, whatever it was, and in that group, only one person is not touched in some way, in their immediate families, by homosexuality.

And so the discussion turned to something like surely, you can be living in that lifestyle, and be a christian. And my wife, bless her heart, used the illustration of a thief.

Suppose you're a thief. You love being a thief. It's what you do, like the Geico commercial. You're a thief. And you hear about Jesus and

you accept Him as saviour and go right on being a thief. No.

Paul said, let him who stole, steal no more.

Galatians 5. 1Corinthians 6. Revelation 22. All have lists of sins that men don't want to give up, and they affirm in every case; 1 Cor. 6:9 - 10 *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God....*

That doesn't mean that saved people who slip up and sin have lost their salvation. But it does mean that people who want to keep any of those things, as their life style, are deceived if they think they can also inherit the kingdom of God.

So, what're you going to do with Jesus. He said all this authoritative stuff. Then He did all these miracles that only God can do. He's very demanding. He wants you. All of you. And He won't tolerate your sin. What're you going to do with that.

If sin wins out, it's costly. You've got to jettison reason and logic and truth. You've got to suppress it. Hold it back. You've got to embrace stupid. But you get to keep your sin (which is killing you and likely your family). And then there's hell.

On the other hand. If you embrace Jesus, no matter what the personal cost, this book will light up like a light bulb and everything not only becomes simple, it also becomes a delight. ***Oh how I love thy law!***

I urge you to weigh the evidence, count the ultimate and real time cost, believe that the gains outweigh the losses by about a millionfold, and make the right choice. Receive Jesus, at any cost.