

## Resurrection, Reformation, and Relationship

Matthew 12:38-50

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018

New projects this week – sound system and divider

Part of our initiative we planned over the summer for what to do with some excess funds – 50% debt, 40% projects, 10% reserve/emergency

The building items are not an end in themselves. Our goal is to make disciples, not rock out a loud sound system. But we gather to worship and we need to hear the music and voices to follow and we gather to hear the Word preached, so that needs to be clear as well. Our goal is clarity, not loudness. The prior system often lead to a lack of clarity and inteligability, and it was worse in some parts of the room than others. This system is calibrated and adjusted so that it hits the entirety of the room almost evenly.

Big idea: Moral reform without saving trust in Jesus is useless.

Intro:

If you asked the average non-Christian, “what is the message of Christianity?” what types of answers do you think you would get?

Many would answer something about morality. Do good and God will let you in to heaven.

They would be surprised that Jesus compared the person focused merely on moral reformation with a man who cleaned his house only to find himself having prepared a nice home for a hoard of demons.

There are many reasons why someone might try to improve their morality and character.

Pressure from family, frustration with life circumstances, a desire to be a better husband or wife

That might lead to some measure of change, but it would likely not be lasting, permanent, true change.

Merely cleaning up a person’s life, even if from good motives, does not give one a place in God’s family.

1. We have been given sufficient **evidence** to repent and believe in Jesus. (12:38-42)
  - a. May be a new scene but connected because still talking about the rejection of the people.
  - b. They want a sign
    - i. Hasn’t He already provided every sign they could want?
      1. Healed the blind and paralyzed, took leprosy away, even raised the dead.
      2. What parents experience on a much smaller level when you just finish a big dinner that your child refused to eat, clean up, and your child says, “Can I have something to eat?”
      3. They wanted something else, something of their choosing perhaps.
    - ii. The kind of miracle they wanted was the kind Jesus refused to perform.
      1. His miracles met real needs for people, he wasn’t a circus performer satisfying their desire for something miraculous.
    - iii. Mark and Luke tell us they asked this in order to test Jesus.
    - iv. People will sometimes say this today, “If only God would . . . I would believe.”
      1. Give me some sign! Write it on the sky, burn the image of Jesus on a piece of toast
      2. Heal this disease in this way

3. The request ignores the evidence God has already given in favor of more evidence, different evidence, tailored evidence to their desire.
  4. Now, you may not know about the evidence. You may not have studied the evidence. But that doesn't mean it doesn't exist.
- c. Generation shows that Jesus is extending this out beyond His immediate audience.
- i. This rejection is the norm not the exception during His ministry.
- d. The greatest sign they will be given is His death, burial, and resurrection.
- i. Just as Jonah was swallowed by a fish and came out after 3 days, so would Jesus be swallowed by the grave and be raised from the dead.
  - ii. Why does He say that will be the only sign?
    1. He's not going to play their game. He has done miracles in kindness as a foretaste of the kingdom. He has fulfilled prophecy that was outside of His control (family lineage, place of birth).
    2. I'll give you a sign – after my death. But not now.
  - iii. **John 2:19, 22** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." . . .  
<sup>22</sup> So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.
  - iv. **Mark 8:31-32** And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.
    1. Very risky prediction – meant that His truth claims would be discredited if it didn't happen. What if He didn't die except by natural means at an old age? What if he stayed in the ground?
  - v. Why did Christianity emerge so rapidly, with such power?
  - vi. No group of Jews ever worshiped a human being as God – what led these disciples to do it?
  - vii. How do you account for the hundreds of eyewitnesses to the resurrection who lived for decades, publicly gave testimony, and eventually died for their belief?
  - viii. How do you explain what happened to the body?
    1. No authority had any incentive to hide it.
    2. No disciple would willingly spend their life (decades for several) in suffering, poverty, and persecution for something they knew was a lie.
  - ix. Is your rejection of this miracle merely a rejection of miracles as not possible? Are you therefore assuming the point instead of making the point?
    1. Why do people NOT believe in the resurrection of Jesus then?
    2. Many simply say, "PEOPLE DON'T RISE FROM THE DEAD" – there is an underlying assumption based on a scientific presupposition that these things don't happen so any evidence to the contrary is dismissed. Not following the evidence where it leads.

- e. The examples of the Ninevites and the Queen of the South picture a courtroom scene on judgment day.
    - i. On trial are the scribes, Pharisees, and others like them who refused to believe in Jesus in spite of the abundant evidence He has given them – they have seen His miracles, heard His messages, listened to His logical persuasion, and yet stiff arm Him.
    - ii. Jesus calls the first witness against them.
      - 1. Moses? Abraham? No, the Ninevites from the nation of Assyria.
        - a. That would be like having the North Koreans sit on a human rights counsel. Shocking!
        - b. They were wicked, persistent enemies of Israel. We have artistic
      - 2. But, in one incident, a reluctant prophet named Jonah went to them with a warning that God would destroy their city and they repented.
      - 3. **Jonah 3:4-5** Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." 5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.
      - 4. And yet "something greater than Jonah" is there and they don't respond as well as the Ninevites did.
        - a. Would expect it to say "someone greater," but it doesn't. Likely because points to God's whole work in Jesus – sending His Son, providing salvation for repentant sinners, His miracles to meet the need and confirm His identity, and His eventual death and resurrection.
    - iii. The second witness against them is a gentile woman from the past.
      - 1. Recorded in 1 Kings 10, this refers to the Queen of Sheba (likely Ethiopia or Yemen) who traveled 1,500 miles to test Solomon's wisdom. She drilled him with questions, "all that was in her heart," and he answered all her questions.
      - 2. How did she respond? Did she feel threatened in her power? Did she try to pit her own wise men against him in some kind of showdown?
        - a. She worshiped.
      - 3. **1 Kings 10:9** "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."
      - 4. Morris – She went to great lengths to hear the wisdom of a mere mortal but they refused to be impressed when confronted with something greater than Solomon.
2. We need more than mere internal moral reformation. (12:43-45)
- a. May seem like a strange anecdote to insert in here in a discussion with the Jewish leaders about their rejection of Him.
    - i. Point is not about spiritual warfare or the activity of demons, primarily.
    - ii. He ends v. 45 with a statement about the evil generation again. That statement bookends this argument and shows that his primary point is not to teach about the activity of demons but the

rejection of the scribes and Pharisees, and their substitution of something else rather than turning to Him. We can learn something about demonic forces, but that isn't the point in context.

- iii. He uses an analogy that would shock His audience by comparison and get their attention.
  1. Not to be quarrelsome but in kindness to get their attention as He warns them.
- b. The unclean spirit (demon) leaves a man
  - i. Doesn't say how, if he was cast out by Christ, left some other way . . . it's not relevant because His point is not directly about how to deal with demons.
- c. Waterless places – as spirits they do not need food or water but do apparently prefer to dwell in humans or animals if necessary (think of their request to be cast in to pigs in Matt. 8)
- d. It decides to return to its home and found it unoccupied, swept, and put in order.
  - i. Appears to be referring to the human host in terms like a house, so what does this refer to? It appears to be a moral reform that has taken place.
  - ii. Their life appears to be cleaned up! But all it does is somehow make him a more suitable home for this demon and 7 of his friends.
  - iii. In the end, he is worse off than before.
- e. In the same way, the scribes and Pharisees were going to be worse off than before Jesus came.
  - i. Their religious system of self-righteousness may have appeared to clean them up, but it wasn't real transformation centered on faith in Christ.
  - ii. They had a chance to replace their system of self-righteousness with the Messiah, with Christ, but they stiff armed Him.
  - iii. Their attempts at self-righteousness and self-reformation would fail.
  - iv. Self-reform and self-righteousness lead to one of two ends – pride or discouragement.
3. We can join God's family through saving ***faith*** in Jesus. (12:46-50)
  - a. While still speaking, His mother and brothers were outside and wanted to speak with Him.
    - i. His brothers were not disciples at this point
      1. **John 7:3-5** Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. <sup>4</sup> "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For not even His brothers were believing in Him.
    - ii. Although they would be after the resurrection, again showing the power of this "sign"
      1. **Acts 1:14** These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
    - iii. They likely wanted to talk take Him back home or dissuade Him from His preaching and healing ministry.
  - b. Jesus showed consistent kindness to His mother, so this isn't an act of rudeness.
    - i. His last request on the cross was for John to take care of His mother (Luke 19:26-27)

- c. He identifies His family as those who do the will of His Father in heaven.
  - i. The Father's will is for us to believe in the one He sent and listen to Him
    - 1. **John 6:29** Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."
    - 2. **Matthew 17:5** While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"
  - ii. We know we have come to know Him is there is a growing desire to obey, to do the will of the Father.
    - 1. **1 John 2:3-4** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;
    - 2. We don't become his family by doing the will of the Father; rather doing the will of the Father is a "family trait." It identifies us as His family.
    - 3. Not the Christless moral reform of Jesus' analogy about the man and the unclean spirit.



1. We have been given sufficient evidence to repent and believe in Jesus. (12:38-42)

**John 2:19, 22** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." . . . <sup>22</sup> So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

1. We have been given sufficient evidence to repent and believe in Jesus. (12:38-42)

**Mark 8:31-32** And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

1. We have been given sufficient evidence to repent and believe in Jesus. (12:38-42)

**Jonah 3:4-5** Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." <sup>5</sup> Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.

1. We have been given sufficient evidence to repent and believe in Jesus. (12:38-42)

---

**1 Kings 10:9** "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

2. We need more than mere internal moral reformation. (12:43-45)

3. We can join God's family through saving faith in Jesus. (12:46-50)

---

**John 7:3-5** Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. <sup>4</sup> "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

3. We can join God's family through saving faith in Jesus. (12:46-50)

---

**Acts 1:14** These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

3. We can join God's family through saving ***faith*** in Jesus. (12:46-50)

---

**John 6:29** Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

**Matthew 17:5** While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

3. We can join God's family through saving ***faith*** in Jesus. (12:46-50)

---

**1 John 2:3-4** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;