Growing Christians Ministries
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TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Matthew 12:14-37
The Pharisees Attribute the Lord's Miracles to the Power of Satan

Matthew 12:14-37 - "Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

15 But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. 16 Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

18 " Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
19 He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
20 A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; 21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."

22 Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"
24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."
25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. 34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. ***36*** *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.* ***37*** *For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

Background Notes

Here in this section of Matthew 12 we have the focal point of Israel's rejection of her King. The nation's leaders attributed our Lord's miraculous powers to the devil! How terrible! This was unforgivable! As a result of the rejection of our Lord, the Gospel of the Kingdom would no longer be preached in Israel. Instead, the "Gospel of the Great Commission" would go out to the whole world – to Jewish and Gentile people alike.

I think that we see this shift prophetically pictured in our Lord's action in verse 15: "*But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all."* The "all" here would have included Gentiles as well as Jews. In view of this fact, Matthew tells us that this healing of **all** His followers was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Notice that this Messianic prophecy includes blessing on the Gentiles (v18 and 21). The Lord told His followers not to make it known (v16) because He had not come to earth to be a popular revolutionary hero who would overthrow Rome! No, His program and procedure were very different. He not only came as King, but also as the perfect Servant, as the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah foretold.

Doctrinal Points

1. **The Lord fulfilled the "Gracious Servant" prophecy of Isaiah.**

There are several "Servant" prophecies in Isaiah. They predict that the coming Messiah would be God's perfect Servant. The most well known Servant prophecy in Isaiah, of course, is the "Suffering Servant" passage of Isaiah 53. The passage quoted in Matthew 12:18-21 is the gentle and "Gracious Servant" prophecy of Isaiah 42. In this Messianic prophecy it was shown that the Lord would not be an outspoken political revolutionary: *"He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets."*

Rather the Lord would deal gently and graciously with individuals. People who were brokenhearted and oppressed and trampled on and dispossessed would find encouragement and strength in Him and in His justice. This is true both then and today.

I love the first part of verse 20: *"A bruised reed He will not break…"* If your name were Dave Reid, you would love this verse, too! *"And smoking flax He will not*

quench…" Did you ever feel like you were a smoldering wick just about ready to burn out? Well, the Lord knows how to gently fan your small spark of faith back into flame. He is gracious and gentle.

Notice that each Person of the Trinity is seen at the beginning of this prophecy in verse 18: "*Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him…"*

The Father is speaking, the Son is the Servant, and "My Spirit" is obviously the Holy Spirit.

Notice, too, the emphasis on the Gentiles in this prophecy. At the end of verse 18: "…*He will declare justice to the Gentiles."* And verse 21: "…*in His name Gentiles will trust."* As a result of Israel's rejection of their King and His Kingdom, blessing would flow out to the Gentiles. Anyone who would turn to Jesus Christ in time of need would find justice and blessing. The Lord fulfilled the "Gracious Servant" prophecy in Isaiah.

2. **The Pharisees committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit.**

In verse 22 we see that the Lord healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. The Bible is **not** teaching here that everyone who is blind or everyone who is unable to speak is demon-possessed! No! However, the Bible **is** teaching that demons can cause physical problems, including blindness and the inability to speak. When the common people saw this miracle, they were open to the truth that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Verse 23: "*And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"*

The Pharisees quickly quelled such speculation by saying that the miracles done by Jesus were done by demonic power -- the power of Satan! What an unbelievable accusation to level at the Son of God! The Lord refuted this terrible accusation with four arguments:

a. If the Lord's power were demonic then Satan would be defeating himself, because his kingdom would be divided. Verses 25-26: "*But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.* ***26*** *If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"*
b. There were Jewish exorcists at that time. God allowed them to operate, and the Pharisees didn't attribute their power to Satan. If they now said that exorcism was by demonic power, they were condemning their own colleagues. Verse 27: "*And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges."*
c. Verses 28-29: "*But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.* ***29*** *Or how can one enter a strong man's*

house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house."

d. The Pharisees admitted that casting out demons was good. Well, you can't get good fruit from a bad tree, said the Lord, so you Pharisees are inconsistent. In verse 33 we see the Pharisees' inconsistency: *"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit."* Look at verses 34-35: *"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* ***35*** *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."*

Because these Pharisees attributed our Lord's miraculous powers to Satan, the Lord said that their sin was **blasphemy against the Holy Spirit**! Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was unforgivable -- in this age or the age to come. These Pharisees will be in hell forever.

Can the "unpardonable sin" be committed today? Answer: Yes and No. "No" -- in the sense that the Lord is no longer bodily on this earth, doing miracles to attest to His deity. That was a one-time-in-history situation that can't be duplicated today. But "Yes" -- in the sense that an unbeliever can **resist the work of the Holy Spirit** today.

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of unbelievers today? His work is to bring unbelievers under conviction of sin and convince them that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. If unbelievers continue to resist this work of the Holy Spirit, they will die in that sin of unbelief, and the sin of unbelief is unpardonable. After death, there is no second chance.

In that sense then, if you still have not come to Christ for salvation, you're committing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit! Look at what the Lord said in verse 30: *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."* There is **no middle ground**. If you're not a Christian, you're against Christ and you're working to disrupt His program. You're in the camp of the Pharisees. The Pharisees committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit.

Practical Application

Remember, God has a tape recorder!

Verses 36-37: *"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.* ***37*** *For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

In context, these words were spoken to the unbelieving Pharisees, and they have a direct application to all those who refuse to believe. Unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne on the basis of their works -- including their words, as we see here.

But these verses certainly have an application for Christians as well. Our words don't determine whether we will go to heaven or hell, because all our sins are forgiven when we accept Christ as our Savior. However, all believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14 and 2 Corinthians 5). There our lives will be reviewed. There we will be rewarded, based on the quality of our service for the Lord -- and that will certainly include what we've done with our lips.

Have you spoken any careless words lately? Remember, God has a tape recorder!