

ChristReformationChurch

Tillamook, Oregon

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com

www.lightfordarktimes.com

The Gospel According to Matthew

Twisting God's Word to Oppress the Innocent – Real Religion Contrasted with the Counterfeit

December 9, 2018

Sermon Text: Matthew 12:9-21

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 42

Follow along as I read verses 9-21 of this 12th chapter of Matthew. Remember, Matthew is showing us what the King and the kingdom of God is like, contrasted with the counterfeit kingdom of darkness that parades so often in this world as “the church.”

Mat 12:9-21 He went on from there and entered their synagogue. (10) And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--so that they might accuse him. (11) He said to

them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? (12) Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." (13) Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. (14) But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

(15) Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all (16) and ordered them not to make him known. (17) This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: (18) "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. (19) He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; (20) a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; (21)

and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

You will recall that last week we saw Jesus in a confrontation with the Pharisees over the Sabbath. Specifically, "harvesting grain" on the Sabbath.

Why do Matthew and the other Gospel writers include so much about these conflicts of Jesus with the religious leaders of His day? Let me give you several reasons:

1. He is showing us, by way of startling contrast, how radically different God's kingdom is from that of the counterfeit kingdom.
2. Holding Christ up against a dark background of the false temple and its false leaders and practices is like a star set in the heavens against the night sky.
3. Matthew is warning us about how the devil uses religion to enslave people.
4. He is showing us what we can expect in this world if we follow Christ, especially what we can expect from the wicked who parade as "Christian."
5. And he is showing us what it truly looks like to follow Christ.

You must be wise in regard to evil and if you will study the characteristics and methods of Christ's enemies here in

the Gospels, *and then apply what you learn to evil, counterfeit religion today, you will advance in that wisdom.* Many people who claim to be Christians don't want to hear about these things. They are fools. Don't you be one of them.

Alright then, listen again to the first part of this section:

Mat 12:9-21 He went on from there and entered their synagogue. (10) And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--so that they might accuse him. (11) He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? (12) Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." (13) Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. (14) But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? This question these enemies put to Jesus is so stupid that it is difficult to even know what to say about it. You can imagine them there acting sooo wise and learned about the Law, right? And they just know that this trick trap they have concocted is going to

ensnare Jesus. “You have claimed that it is lawful to thresh grain on the Sabbath. So we suppose that you are even going to tell us that the Law does not forbid healing on the Sabbath?”

NOTE: Do you see that false religion *leads to insanity*? It is sheer madness, the rules these wicked ones had concocted. You have to wonder what they did if one of their children broke an arm or came down with some illness on the Sabbath. Did they forbid applying any kind of medicine or treatment? *Why would it EVER be forbidden by God to heal someone?* Listen carefully-

Anytime an interpretation of Scripture leads us to an insane, illogical, foolish application, we can know that we have gone wrong in our handling of God’s Word.

Just the fact that this question is asked shows us that these evil idiots had butchered the Scriptures – *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?*

I probably do not need to give you example after example of this same wicked idiocy in our day. “Oh, you say your husband tried to kill you? Well, God forbids you from divorcing him you know.” “God forbids women from wearing pants, so girls – when you go to school, even at PE class, you must wear a long dress.”

And, of course, there are myriads of foolish rules and regs in churches today about what you can and cannot do on Sunday.

So, Jesus comes into the synagogue of these phonies and there is a man with a withered hand. From birth? A stroke? We don’t know. But these kinds of maladies had not only the difficult physical hindrances, they also made a person somewhat of a social outcast.

And Matthew identifies the evil motive – *so that they might accuse him.*

False religion, particularly that which claims Christ’s name for itself, *has a motive for all of its twisted rules.* Unlike the Apostle Paul who, though he was wrong in his days as Saul of Tarsus, genuinely thought he was serving God, these phonies were motivated by their lust for power and control. That is to say, they used the Scriptures to lay heavy burdens on people so as to manipulate and control them.

Consider, for instance, a so-called church that demands all of its people use only the King James Bible, claiming that this “authorized version” is the only true Bible. Most such teachers spread this false teaching not because they have a real zeal for God’s Word, but because they want to trip people up so they can condemn them,

thus making themselves look more holy and pious.

Now, of course, you can never win a debate with Jesus! And here, the Lord has a question of his own for them:

"Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?"

"Hands? Do I see any hands?" Of course not. Every one of them would lift the sheep out. (One wonders if they would have done so out of kindness to the sheep or simply for economic reasons!) After perhaps an awkward silence, Jesus goes on with the punch line-

"Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Remember what Jesus had just told them in the previous encounter about picking and eating grain on the Sabbath?

Mat 12:7 And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

God is merciful. His Word is to be interpreted in accordance with His character. If Scripture is handled in a *merciless manner*, such as forbidding

the doing of good on the Sabbath, then it is a wrong and even evil interpretation.

Let me give you another contemporary example of this kind of mishandling of God's Word that brings oppression:

1Ti 3:1-7 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. (2) Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (3) not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. (4) He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, (5) for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (6) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. (7) Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Now, what is the Lord's main point here? I still maintain that a pastor or an elder in a local church is to be a man, not a woman. I think that is the plain teaching of Scripture and I think that it is for the good of not only the church, but of men, women, and children in the church. *HOWEVER, is that the main*

point of this passage? Many, many churches and pastors and church members today seem to think that it is. In other words, that a church with a man as a pastor is a biblical church while a church with a woman as a pastor is an unbiblical church.

But what do we see in practice? We see many churches with men as pastors that are in no way reflective of Christ! That is to say, *simply putting a man in the office of pastor does not fulfill what Paul is telling us here.* In other words, *the main point of this Scripture is that a man must meet these qualifications in order to hold those offices.*

Think of it this way – if you were ever faced with the choice of joining a local church that has an evil *man* as its pastor, vs joining a church that has a godly *woman* as pastor, which one would you attend? The Pharisees of Jesus’ day, and the Pharisees of our own day would direct you to the church with the evil man as pastor.

Let me give you another such example:

The Bible says that a Christian is to marry “in the Lord.” That is to say, a Christian is not to marry an unbeliever. What is the primary purpose of this Scripture? To be certain that a Christian does not marry an “uncircumcised” Gentile as it would

have been stated in the OT era? Well, according to many churches today, apparently so. As long as Linda marries Joe, who is a church member, and not Jack, who does not attend any church at all, Linda has God’s blessing.

But what is the point and spirit of that Scripture? *That Christians marry genuine Christians.* See it? So that if Linda marries an evil man who happens to be a church member in good standing, the “church” of the Pharisees will pronounce that marriage blessed by God while at the same time condemning a marriage to a good man. The merciless, letter of the law you see. Let me see if I can state this example a bit more clearly:

A Pharisee will pronounce a marriage to a bad man or woman who is a member of a local church as blessed by God, while condemning a marriage to a good man or woman who is not a church member.

All because of the typical wooden, cruel, unbending and unmerciful handling of God’s Word.

It is not lawful to heal a man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees in other words call good, evil and evil, good.

(12) Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good

on the Sabbath." (13) Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. (14) But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Look carefully now at these final points:

1. Human beings are more valuable to God than animals. This is not the main point of Jesus' statement, but He makes it in order to show the fallacy of the Pharisee's cruel legalism. "If you will do good to an animal...is it not God's will to do good to a man?"

But we do see here that it is true – Human beings are of more value than animals. We love our pets. We appreciate animals. But they are not human beings. They are not created in the image of God. Christ's elect do not include animals – only people. And we live in a culture that really denies these facts. Animals are being "rescued" (a good thing) while babies are being slaughtered.

2. Whatever our concept of the Bible's teaching on the Lord's Day, or really all of the Bible's teaching, if our idea does not

permit "doing good," then we have gone very wrong in our handling of Scripture.

3. The incredible nature of Jesus' healing miracle. He told the man to do, I believe, what the man could not do – stretch out his hand. And in so doing, the man was able, and he was healed. (Very good picture of the Lord requiring those with no ability to believe, to believe. In so doing, they find that they have been given faith!).
4. The incredible depth of the Pharisees' wickedness. In spite of just seeing Jesus miraculously heal this man with the creative power of God, they storm out in a conspiracy to plot to kill Jesus.

Evil, false religion is murderous because its followers are children of the devil who was a murderer from the very beginning. When its power and control are threatened, when its evil is exposed by the Light, when its lies are called out by Truth, its fangs come out. Its evil desires are more important to its followers than a crippled man being healed or God's wonderful power coming among us. Jesus summarized this evil perfectly:

Joh 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they

may have life and have it abundantly.

Next time we will see Christ and His kingdom contrasted even further with the kingdom of darkness as we look at the following verses. This is Christ:

(15) Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all (16) and ordered them not to make him known. (17) This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: (18) "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. (19) He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; (20) a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; (21) and in his name the Gentiles will hope."