

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

September 4, 2016

19. The Charge of Blasphemy

Matthew 12:22-32

The spiritual world is so massive and real; and controlled by the evil spirit and the Holy Spirit. The evil spirit influences people to do evil whereas the Holy Spirit influences them to do good and what is right. Rejecting the influence of the Holy Spirit by quenching Him and grieving Him is the sin of blasphemy. Blasphemy is rejecting to do good and what is right. Demon possession is part of the evil spirit's way of influencing people to become unstable and do wrong. In such people there is no good intention whatsoever in all they do. In fact demon possession wrecked much havocs in the lives of those possessed. Sometimes it leaves them crippled, or blind or mute. Jesus ministry involved liberating those who were in bondage by such evil spirits. It was kind of strange for the Pharisees to accuse Jesus of driving out evil spirits by the power of the devil. That was absurd and blasphemous. So Jesus remarked that the only sin not forgiven is that of blasphemy.

Thus our text of the day reads, "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. 23 All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." 25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. 30 "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 31 And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:22-32).

In this discourse, Matthew records that Jesus has just healed a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute, so that he could talk and see. The crowd was amazed at what was done and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" Son of David was a term that was used for the Messiah and it was Matthew's favorite term for Jesus. The Pharisees however attributed the healing to work of Satan. They said "it is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons that this fellow drives out demons". Beelzebul is sometimes spelled Beelzebub or Baalzebub. The etymology of this name has been difficult to determine with any degree of finality. It has been thought to mean "Lord of the Flies", "Lord of Dung", "Lord of heaven" (a star god), "Master of the House", and "Fly Lord" (flies being demons). Whatever the case, the term as used by the Pharisees was a pejorative one to be an insult to Jesus.

When the Pharisees once more charged that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Satan, Jesus responded with three basic arguments and then a startling announcement:

1. A house divided against itself will fall. If Jesus was casting out demons by the power of

Satan, then Satan's house was divided.

2. To what power did the Pharisees attribute the power of their own disciples to cast out demons if Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebul?
3. Before one man can enter a house and plunder the goods of the house, one must first overpower the owner. If Jesus had entered Satan's house and plundered his goods (those people held captive by demons), this must mean that Jesus had overpowered Satan.

Jesus startling announcement was this: Since He is indeed casting out demons by the power of the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come. Not that it will come, but the kingdom has already come and is upon them.

Jesus continued His rebuttal of the Pharisees' charge of blasphemy with another remarkable statement that has given problems to scholars and ministers – the unforgivable sin (v. 32). This section begins in v.31 which connects this discussion to the previous one in which the Pharisees had attributed the work of God through His Holy Spirit as a work of Beelzebul, or Satan. To attribute the work of God through His Holy Spirit as a work of Satan is the worst kind of blasphemy possible. While opinions may differ regarding the unforgivable sin, it is possible to understand the meaning from this section as it relates to the previous discussion of the Pharisees' blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. To set this section in context:

1. The Pharisees had blasphemed the Holy Spirit, charging that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Satan, whereas He claimed to cast them out by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. To deny or blaspheme the work of the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit Himself and to deny the very process of new birth, regeneration and sanctification.
3. To deny the work of the Holy Spirit is to remove oneself from the process of forgiveness and to place oneself outside the process of God's atonement, and to undercut the very possibility of experiencing the reality of God's salvation.
4. To oppose the Holy Spirit is the same as opposing the very mission of Jesus Himself.
5. Although rejecting Jesus' divine ministry has catastrophic consequences, Jesus Himself stressed that the denial or blasphemy of the Holy Spirit has ultimate, unforgivable results.

In summary, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable because it is the denial of the working of the Holy Spirit in God's system of atonement. Jesus considered this blasphemy even worse than the blasphemy against Himself. To reject the saving power and work of the Holy Spirit is ultimately to reject God's working His salvation in the individual. Jesus then closed this encounter with the Pharisees with a pronouncement of judgment on them for the careless words they had just uttered. In their haste to deny Jesus, they had in fact blasphemed the very working of God through His Holy Spirit. Their words, uttered in the heat of their hatred, were not thought about, and through their inconsiderate treatment of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, they had brought judgment on themselves. This is the word of God for the people of God and let the Church say, "Amen".

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The early Ministry of Jesus around the Sea of Galilee after the Sermon on the Mount reflected the following:

- The Healing of a Leper – a miracle occurring and the process involves request, response, resolution, and restriction and/or responsibility.
- The Healings at Capernaum – Showing Christ is interested in our complete deliverance - sin, sickness and death so that we can serve Him and others.
- There is a price tag in following Jesus that you cannot afford to be impulsive or reluctant but dedicated in your commitment to follow Jesus.

- The storms are calmed at the word of His command and peace is restored!
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- The Father Revealed in the Son
- Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath!
- God's Chosen Servant
- The Charge of Blasphemy
- And let the church say, "Amen!"

Do you know this Jesus who transforms you through cleansing and/or healing to be accepted by the society of believers? If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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**Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama**  
**Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor**

**THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST**

**September 11, 2016**

**20. You Will Be Judged By Your Words**

**Matthew 12:33-37**

Words are powerful because they express the abundance of what is in the heart. The words you speak are based on the condition of your heart. A polluted heart will always pollute everything in its path by the words spoken. A clean heart will always clean and refresh everything in its path because of the words spoken from it. A manipulative heart will manipulate all that is in their path and so also will a controlling heart control everything in its path. Hope you got the pattern I am attempting to establish. Your heart is precious, guard it for it is the wellspring of life (Prov. 4:23). You guard you heart by filtering what gets into it through your eyes and ears, which are the gateways to your heart. Then always remember that there are two spirits that influence your life: the Holy Spirit and the evil spirit. The evil spirit pollutes the heart to produce negative vibes. The Holy Spirit on the other hand cleanses the heart to refresh life through positive vibes (controlled by agape love). So you see then that the old adage: "an apple

does not fall far from the tree” is true. A tree can truly be identified by its fruit because there are too many look-alikes. Christians are known by the fruit of love because God is love and love is the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit. So the goal then is to make Christians learn to practice love to produce the good fruit of love. Otherwise the opposite happens – you will act in the flesh and bear the ugly fruit of the flesh. And what and how you speak make people identify whether you are abiding in Christ or you are not. Ultimately, you will be judged based on the fruit you produce as spoken out of the abundance of what you have stored in the heart.

Thus our text of the day reads: “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. 35 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:33-37).

This discourse occurred just after Jesus had made a disclaimer that He does not heal by the power of Beelzebul (Satan). Matthew records that Jesus continued His rebuttal of the Pharisees’ charge of blasphemy with another remarkable statement that a tree will produce based on what it is made of. Verse 33 states “make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit”. Indirectly Jesus is saying be careful what you cultivate in the hearts of men. If you cultivate evil through the evil spirit you going to harvest bad fruits. The evil spirit produces the fruit of the flesh and that spells doom. Such fruit is bad and they make you act ugly because you have truly been polluted. Paul states it succinctly as follows: “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery (or wickedness); idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-20). However, if you walk by the Holy Spirit, you will cultivate a good tree that produces the fruit of the Spirit that are good. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23). Paul then concluded, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other” (Galatians 5:24-26).

The interesting thing about what you produce is that you end up storing it in your heart and speak out of the abundance of what is stored in you. If you have sown to the flesh, the produce that you reap is corruption. But if you sow in the spirit, you will reap eternal life. “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” Galatians 6:7-8). This is why Jesus made these seemingly harsh but truthful remarks to the Pharisees: “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. 35 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:34-37).

**In summary, God’s final Judgement will be based on how you have spoken because you speak out of the abundance of what is in your heart. If you have stored up evil, it will come out evil. If you have stored up good, it will come forth as the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This is why David remarked, “I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:10-11). This is the word of God for the people of God and let the Church say, “Amen”.**

**Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The early Ministry of Jesus around the Sea of Galilee after the Sermon on the Mount reflected the following:**

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- **You Will Be Judged By Your Words**
- **And let the church say, “Amen!”**

**What are you storing in your heart? What fruits are you producing through the words you speak? Do you know Jesus who can transform you to start producing good fruit? If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God’s kingdom as you bear good fruit. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!**

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THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

September 18, 2016

21. Are You Seeking A Sign?

Matthew 12:38-45

Have you ever sought a sign from God when you were going through something? What was the purpose of you seeking that sign? Did God grant you that sign and why? No matter the motive for your seeking a sign from God, He will grant you one but it may not be the one you desire. You see God knows your motive even before you start to ask Him for a sign. Lastly, let me ask, whenever you are asking God for a sign is it a deep quest to know His perfect will or is it to test Him?

Let me remind us, we live in the age of the dispensation of God's grace whereby we live by faith and not by sight. As such it will be a wicked or adulterous generation that will continuously look for signs. Jesus has just made a pronouncement that the kingdom of God was already here, yet for the hardness of their hearts, the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law were asking Him for a sign. After Jesus had just informed them to be careful of their spoken words because everyone speaks out of the abundance of their own heart and that everyone will be judged based on every careless words they uttered as it is by your words that you will be condemned or acquitted. Yet these Jewish leaders were still asking for a sign. In response, Jesus told them what kind of generation seeks for a sign and that no sign will be given to them except one – that of the prophet Jonah.

Thus our text of the day reads: “Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” 39 He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. 42 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here. 43 “When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. 44 Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. 45 Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:38-45).

In this discourse Matthew records that some Pharisees and scribes (teachers of the law) joined to ask Jesus for a sign. There is absolutely nothing wrong in seeking a sign from the Lord as long as the seeker is sincere. Your good and sincere motive is very important in seeking a sign; otherwise you will fall into a category of a wicked and adulterous generation that seeks signs with an insincere motive. Apparently the Pharisees and scribes fell into this category because Jesus' response to them was, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah”; for they had witnessed many miracles of Jesus and still refused to believe. In fact, as in the previous section, they attribute the power of Jesus' miracle to Satan. So in a striking analogy, Jesus made reference to the sign of Jonah the Prophet.

**The sign of Jonah represents rebellion, reevaluation, repentance and restoration. Unlike the people of Nineveh, the Pharisees and scribes would not reevaluate, believe and repent to be restored. The sign of Jonah here is also an analogy between Jonah in the belly of the fish and Jesus burial and resurrection. Jesus knew that the Pharisees and scribes will not believe in His resurrection as sign of completed victory for the kingdom He had established. So He reprimanded and condemned them for their unbelief. In Matthew 16:4 the sign of Jonah is used to refer to the unbelief of the Jews in general. Twice in the Gospel, both times in Matthew in the context of the sign of Jonah, Jesus referred to these religious leaders as “wicked (evil) and spiritually adulterous.**

**In this discourse, Jesus concludes the encounter with the Pharisees and scribes with a parable of an unclean spirit leaving a man and returning to find his house clean. The unclean spirit returns with seven more spirits more wicked than it and moves into the house. Jesus compared the generation of the Pharisees and scribes with that spirit. Those who do not respond to the message of the kingdom will find that their situation is often worse off than it was in the beginning. Obviously, Jesus had in mind that by refusing His message of the kingdom, the scribes and the Pharisees faced a definite judgment. Did Jesus have in mind the eschatological judgment at the end of the world or the impending judgment of the destruction of Jerusalem? Possibly Jesus as well as Matthew the writer had both in mind. The implication is that those who refuse to accept the kingdom message will face both an immediate judgment as well as an eschatological judgment.**

**In summary, God’s final Judgement will be based on reception or rejection of the kingdom message. Do not seek for signs, rather accept the kingdom message and repent of sin. For Jesus died for your sins and paid the price. He died, was buried but on the third day He arose with all powers in hands. His resurrection offers victory over sin, death and Satan to all who accept the kingdom message and believe. Stop looking for signs, just believe in Jesus. This is the word of God for the people of God, and let God’s people say amen.**

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Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor

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**THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST**

**September 25, 2016**

**21. Jesus' True Family**

**Matthew 12:46-50**

Today we shall attempt to answer the question as to Jesus' True Family and deduce which relationship is more important between the physical and the spiritual. Relationships are important for existence to be meaningful. The key ingredient in forging these relationships and making them last is genuine love. In the absence of love, relationships that come to existence are temporary. So let me emphasize that genuine love is the prerequisite for a lasting relationships. Also, let me suggest that Jesus had physical relationships that included acquaintances, friends, disciples, and family when he walked the surface of this earth but He also had spiritual relationship with His followers. His earthly family members had concerns and often missed him, particularly in periods of long absences during the time of his itinerant ministry. A good way to get reacquainted and build strong relationships after such long times of absence is through good communication. A good talk and/or discussion between concerned parties always eliminate any misunderstandings within any given relationship. So one day Jesus was ministering and presenting the kingdom message to the crowd to build the spiritual relationship His physical relatives came looking for Him. They were not just looking for Him; they actually wanted His immediate attention as they had sent a message to Him that they wanted to speak with Him.

Thus our text of the day reads: "While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and



brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” 48 He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”” (Matthew 12:46-50).

This is the first reference to Jesus’ family in the Gospel of Matthew aside from the last reference made in Matthew 2 that reads, “After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” 21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene” (Matthew 2:19-23). The next time a reference is made to Jesus’ family will be in Matthew 13:55-56, where the Jews attempted to find Jesus’ significance in His family origin by asking if He was the carpenter’s son and whether Mary was His mother, and if His brothers were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. Here, in this discourse Matthew recorded a discussion about physical family members attempting to speak with Jesus. Jesus suggested a paradigm for prioritizing relationships for His followers by stating what kind of relationship was more important. Blood relationship is very important. However, there are two kinds of blood relationships that exist: the flesh blood (physical) and the spiritual blood relationships. The flesh family blood relationship is from your lineage or descent and the spiritual family blood relationship is attained through the blood of Jesus. The old adage says, “Blood is thicker than water” to imply that your family descent relations should be stronger than any other relation. But I am here to invalidate that old adage and suggest to you that those who are born of God through the blood of Jesus have a stronger bond and relationship than those that are related through physical descent because the blood of Jesus gives them birth into the family of God as His children and join heirs with Jesus to inherit the kingdom of God their Father. John, the Gospel writer puts it succinctly, “Yet to all who did receive him (referring to Jesus), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1;12-13).

If you recall, in Matthew 10:36-40, Jesus said to the crowd, “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. 40 “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me””.

Furthermore, in this discourse that reports this encounter with His physical family; Jesus was not rejecting them, but was demonstrating that kingdom (or spiritual) relationships take precedence over physical relationships. Thus in our text, when informed by a man that his mother and brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to Him, Jesus 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” (Matthew 12:48-50). This section also serves as a transitional passage as Matthew moves on in his writing from reporting on the early ministry of Jesus to the discourse on the teachings

on the nature of the Kingdom Jesus had established. So for the next several weeks we shall focus our discussions on the nature of the kingdom of God.

In summary, for several weeks or perhaps months we have been discussing the early ministry of Jesus. Today's message centered on an encounter that demonstrated to us that family relations are important but kingdom (or spiritual) relationships take precedence over the physical relationships as the later are temporary while the former are eternal. This is the word of God for the people of God, and let God's people say amen.

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- Jesus true family, where kingdom relationships take precedence over the physical relationships.
- And let the church say, "Amen!"

What are you storing in your heart? What fruits are you producing through the words you speak? Do you know Jesus who can transform you to start producing good fruit? If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you bear good fruit. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir

**leads us in a song!**

**If you are reading this on the Internet why don't you pray asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and savior, then write us at [pastordatiri@mttraveler.org](mailto:pastordatiri@mttraveler.org)? If you are a child of God and this message has blessed or helped to you, please write and tell us also.**