



Growth Group Discussion Questions

Fall Session 10/13/19

1. What do you observe in the pattern of outsiders' responses to Jesus versus insiders' (religious people) responses recorded in Matthew? What could explain this and what implications are there for us? Here are some examples:
 - Matt 2: Magi vs. chief priests and scribes
 - Matt 8: the Centurion's faith compared with those in Israel (and vv 11-13)
 - Matt 9: paralytic (maybe or maybe not an outsider) vs scribes
 - Matt 9: Matthew & tax collectors/sinners vs Pharisees
 - Matt 9: demon possessed man vs Pharisees
 - Matt 11:16-24 Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum (cities of Israel) vs Tyre, Sidon, Sodom (Canaanite cities)
 - Matt 12:38-42 scribes and Pharisees, Jonah vs people of Nineveh
2. Read Isaiah 58. Featured prominently in this passage are the true spirit of fasting (generosity and release of oppression of the poor) and observing the Sabbath. While these may seem to have nothing to do with one another on the surface, could they both be connected with what it means to have a "good eye" / "ayin tovah" (Matthew 6:22-23)? If so, how?
3. Several times in Matthew, Jesus is keen to impress upon his listeners the importance of showing mercy, even taking priority over sacrifice (a function of obedience). Read Matthew 5:6-7, 9:13, and 12:7 (quoting Hosea). Why do you think prioritizing mercy so highly to reflect God's heart was so difficult for them? What makes it difficult for us? How do you intend to cultivate an ayin tovah (good eye) in your daily walk and relationships?

