

Sunday School Lesson for February 22, 2026
Matthew 12

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this last Sunday of February, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Jeff's message from Matthew, chapter eleven, and John the Baptist's question to Jesus whether He was indeed the Messiah and the Lord's answer, our lesson today comes from chapter twelve where the Lord corrects a misunderstanding about the Sabbath, and we read of more healing miracles and the Jewish leaders accusing Him of using the power of the devil, His response to their request for a sign of His authority, and a visit from his mother and brothers.

In chapter twelve, Jesus is on the road again, and He and His disciples happen to be walking along a road that bordered a wheat field--verse one--: "At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.' He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.'"

It was springtime or early summer in Galilee, and the grain was ready to be or had recently been harvested with a few stalks left standing. According to

the Jewish religious calendar, the first sheaf of ripe barley was to be offered during the Feast of the Passover, and the first sheaf of ripe wheat was to be offered fifty days later at the Feast of Pentecost. Wheat would ripen earlier in the fields of Gennesareth, the fertile plains west of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus probably was.

Walking a short distance on the Sabbath was not contrary to the Pharisees' interpretation of the Law, and there wasn't a problem with walking through someone else's field since they were generally not fenced and the established paths often took people through fields as they went from place to place.

It's interesting to note that Matthew tells us that Jesus' disciples were picking the heads of grain, but doesn't say that Jesus Himself was doing this. It was, of course, permissible under the Jewish law to pick heads of grain as you traveled. Deuteronomy chapter 23 and verse 25 reads, "If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain." Grabbing a snack along the way was okay, but harvesting some for later was not.

But we have to add some conditions to that. The law as recorded in Deuteronomy 23 allowed for the picking of grain, but it did not explicitly allow you to rub it in your hands to extract the seed from the husks. The Pharisees said that that involved work--thrashing, winnowing, and preparing the food, so, according to what the Pharisees taught, such labor was not permitted on the Sabbath. And that's exactly how the Pharisees saw it as Matthew explains in verse two.

The first question you might be asking is, "Why were members of the Pharisees traveling with Jesus?" From what we read in much of the gospels, the presence of the Pharisees was stubbornly persistent throughout His ministry. We find them almost whenever and wherever He taught, and it seems that their entire reason for doing so was to try to catch Him in a grievous transgression of the Law-- like picking grain--so they could add to

their growing list of charges against Him and win enough support to be able to put Him to death. This was already their stated purpose as we read in John, chapter five.

In this case, perhaps they had come along to see if He would violate some Sabbath Day regulation, as they had taken it upon themselves to be the official interpreters and enforcers of the traditions that had evolved over the years, but their legal traditions were not always in keeping with God's intention.

In Exodus, chapter 16, verse 29, the Lord told Moses that, on the Sabbath, "Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out." Even though the context of this command was the Lord's instructions about gathering manna, the scribes and Pharisees had not only applied it to activity in general on the Sabbath, they had also added a loophole. If you're not supposed to go out of your house, you could still walk maybe 3000 cubits around the inside of your house. So, if you could do that inside, you could do it outside as well, as long as you didn't go any farther than 3000 cubits--about the distance from the church to the intersection of Friendship Road and Camellia Drive. So, you could travel on the Sabbath--just not more than about eight-tenths of a mile--unless you ate a meal, and then you could travel another 3000 cubits. If you really wanted to travel farther, you would have to stash some food along the path not more than 3000 cubits from your last meal.

So, although you could travel a short distance on the Sabbath and eat on the Sabbath, you couldn't rub a few heads of grain together on the Sabbath. The teachers of the law had established 38 other restrictions concerning the Sabbath, some of them more trivial than this. So, the Pharisees wanted to know why and by what authority they felt they could blatantly violate the Sabbath as they had interpreted it.

Jesus answered the Pharisees, **not** by discussing what was and what was not lawful to do on the Sabbath, but by explaining the greater purpose of the commandment regarding the Sabbath that they had completely missed and

misinterpreted. He asks these learned scholars, “Have you not read?” They were the experts. Of all the people that should have read and understood the full intention and meaning of the Law of Moses, it was these Pharisees.

Like He did so often, our Lord presented his critics with a dilemma that they needed to figure out if they really wanted to know the true answer to their own question. And Jesus did so by appealing to their beloved and revered King David, suggesting that, if His disciples were guilty of violating the Sabbath, then they must also charge David with the same offense.

In the story recorded for us in First Samuel, chapter 21, David was on the run from Saul after having been warned of the king’s anger by his son and David’s dear friend, Jonathan. David fled to the city of Nob where he found Ahimelech, the priest.

Ahimelech is troubled by David’s arrival and wants to know why he’s traveling alone. David says that he’s on a special mission from King Saul and that he and the small detachment of soldiers with him needed food, so he asked for five loaves of bread. The priest told him, “‘I don’t have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here--provided the men have kept themselves from women.’ David replied, ‘Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out.’” “So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.” Since a fresh supply of showbread had just been laid out, it was a Sabbath when David came asking for bread, and Ahimelech gave the old bread to him.

In Exodus, chapter 29, we read that God told Moses that only Aaron and his sons were to eat the consecrated bread, and he adds in verse 33 that “no one else may eat them, because they are sacred.” In spite of this, David asked for, was given, and apparently ate this consecrated bread as he traveled on the Sabbath.

Since David had travelled on the Sabbath, and, since he had taken the consecrated bread to eat himself, he must have violated the Sabbath in at least two ways--if that's what the scribes and Pharisees understood by violations of the Sabbath. With this example in mind, Jesus intended for them to draw the conclusion that no ceremonial law was to override the general principle of providing for the needs of the body.

Jesus went on to add, "Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?" In the book of Numbers, chapter 28, verses nine and ten, we read that, on the Sabbath, two lambs, flour mixed with oil, and a drink offering were to be made in the tabernacle, in addition to the burnt offering and drink offering that were to be offered every day. This required them to kill the sacrifice and keep the fires burning to offer the sacrifices. They did that which, for anyone else to do, would have been considered a clear violation of the Sabbath. But they did what was necessary and commanded. This was done in the temple--the place of holiness--where the Law should have been most strictly observed. They worked on the Sabbath, yet they were blameless. And now, Jesus said in verse six, "I tell you that one greater than the temple is here."

Relating to God isn't about religion and following laws, rules, and regulations set up by people. Relating to God is all about a relationship that's found only in Jesus. One greater than the Temple was standing before them. Not only that, He went on to tell them in verse eight that the Son of Man--referring to Himself--is Lord of the Sabbath. He was trying to clarify and correct all the preconceived notions they had and many that we have today about Sabbath-keeping. In Jesus alone, this One Who is greater than the temple, greater than the Sabbath, do we find rest for our souls. True rest isn't found in a day of the week, but in a daily, growing, personal relationship with Jesus, and the author of chapter four of the letter to the Hebrews has much to say about that. Now, every day is a day holy unto the Lord, not just a single day of the week.

Undeterred, Jesus pressed on and went to their synagogue--where that was exactly, we don't know, but here's what happened beginning in verse nine: "He went on from there and entered their synagogue. 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." Besides looking for something to pin on Jesus, there was another reason the Pharisees were watching Jesus so closely.

One of the many things the Pharisees and the Sadducees constantly argued about was how strictly the rules about the Sabbath should be obeyed. Among the Pharisees were those who were followers of the great Rabbi Shammai, the most influential of the Pharisaic Schools of the time. They were so strict about the laws regarding the Sabbath, that they believed it was a violation of the Law to care for those who were sick, or even console them on the Sabbath. The Sadducees weren't so restrictive in their interpretation of the Law in this regard; so, the Pharisees were waiting to see whether Jesus was going to side with them or with the Sadducees.

So, Jesus puts the question back to them: "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?' Everyone there in the synagogue would have thought, "Duh. Of course, I'd go rescue it. I couldn't leave one of my sheep in a pit until the next day. A wolf might come along and eat it; or, if it were injured, it might die if I didn't take care of it right away." There was no question at all in their minds about what was more important when it came to taking care of their own little lambs, even on the Sabbath. Now, of course, Jesus is making the connection between the common, Jewish shepherd caring for his sheep and the Great Shepherd caring for His sheep. But would the Pharisees understand?

Verse thirteen: "Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him." No good deed goes unpunished for Jesus. He heals a man on the Sabbath without

touching him--only by saying the word--even though it was perfectly legal to rescue a sheep, and now they want to kill Him? Here was a perfect opportunity for them to celebrate the man's healing, to rejoice in the great clarification of the Sabbath laws that had become such a burden to the people, and to seek healing from Jesus themselves, but they chose instead to try to find a way to do away with this One Who offered them the Kingdom of heaven.

Knowing what their intentions were--verse thirteen--: "Jesus ... withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known." Not only had the time to reveal Himself more fully not yet come, but Matthew--always eager to show us that Jesus is the Messiah by the fulfillment of prophecy--tells us in verse seventeen, "This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: '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. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.'"

This prophecy comes from the first four verses of Isaiah, chapter 42. The Jews, including the disciples at first, expected that the Messiah would be a great military leader who would free the nation from its Roman oppressors. When they saw Him withdrawing from the synagogue instead of urging the people to rise up to join Him with His miracle-making power in victory against Rome, it clashed with their previous notions about what the Messiah would do, and Matthew shows us how wrong they had been.

First, the Messiah would be a servant, chosen by God Himself. So, Paul explains to the followers of Christ in Philippi, in chapter, verse seven of his letter to them, "[Christ] emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." God, in Isaiah, chapter 42, says that the Messiah, Who is a Servant to Him

and to all people, will, in every way, accomplish what the people--His rebellious and faithless servants--had refused to do--take the good news of God's grace to the ends of the earth.

Second, the Lord said this Servant is "my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased." At Jesus' baptism, Matthew tells us that "heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Third, "I will put my Spirit upon him." The Spirit, of course, isn't some divine force or supernatural power; the Spirit is the personal Spirit of God--the Holy Spirit and Third Person of the Trinity. Accompanied by the all-powerful Holy Spirit of God, the Lord's Servant would be fully-equipped to carry out God's task of being the savior of the world. Isaiah's Messiah recognized this when He Himself says in the first verse of chapter 61--the very text Jesus spoke from in His first sermon: "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." In all His work, the Servant would demonstrate that He was abundantly endowed and empowered with the Spirit of God.

Fourth, instead of a coming as a warrior and an earthly conqueror like the Jews of that day expected, He was predicted by prophecy to be of a totally different character. Instead of shouting for battle, lifting up his voice in the streets, drawing attention to Himself in some flashy or flamboyant way, seeking publicity and popularity, "He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets."

So humble and yet so powerful would the real Messiah be that--verse twenty--: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench." This is a rather difficult sentence to understand since it didn't come from the Hebrew or the Greek of Isaiah's words. Matthew seems to be recording the words of the Lord to carry a double meaning--that the Messiah

would neither break nor be a bruised reed; instead, He would be a humble yet strong, brave, and ever-victorious hero and defender of the weak, while being a stranger to weakness Himself.

Applied to what had just happened with the healing of the man with the crippled hand, he would not deprive the man of the gift of healing, causing his last bit of hope to be extinguished; instead, he restored his hand in the face of the most ominous threats of the Pharisees.

Perhaps the thing that would have rattled Matthew's readers the most was his reference--not once, but twice--to Gentiles. The Messiah would, first--verse eighteen--, "proclaim justice to the Gentiles." Non-Jews would be told about the plan of God for their salvation: how God's justice was satisfied as His Son took upon Himself the punishment for everyone's sin--both Jews and Gentiles--so they both could be saved.

"And"--verse 21--: "in his name the Gentiles will hope." Remember that, in biblical terms, the "name" meant far more than the term by which someone was known. The name represented everything that person was. In this case, "in his Name" here in verse 21, refers to everything about Jesus--His Sonship, His work in creating and sustaining everything in existence, His peace, His propitiation, His redemption, His return and reign in glory throughout all eternity--and the justice that He has now proclaimed to the Gentiles, offering them the gift of salvation.

Next in Matthew's story here in chapter twelve--verse 22--, "A demon-pressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and [Jesus] healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, 'Can this be the Son of David?'" One commentator writes, "Nothing is more common in the Jewish writings, than for "the son of David" to stand alone for the Messiah," and he then proceeds to provide the reader with numerous quotations from Jewish scholars from this time period and before to illustrate the point. The reference comes, of course from scripture, including

the very familiar passage in Isaiah, chapter nine, verse six: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,” and this son would reign--verse seven--: “on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.”

This was not the first time Jesus was identified as the son of David. We heard it previously in chapter nine, verse 27, from the two blind men who followed Jesus, “crying aloud, ‘Have mercy on us, Son of David,’” perhaps recalling the words of Isaiah, chapter 42, verse seven in the passage that Matthew just quoted and that describes the mission of the Lord’s servant, including “to open the eyes that are blind.”

But the Pharisees didn’t see it that way--verse 24: “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.’” They couldn’t deny that the man had been wondrously healed, so they attributed the Lord’s power to Beelzebub, the pagan deity that the Jews believed was the ruler of all the evil spirits. Since only something more powerful than the demonic spirits could cast out these spirits, their conclusion was that the chief demonic spirit was using Jesus to cast out these lesser spirits.

But does that really make sense? Alexander MacLaren writes, “The preposterous explanation that He cast out demons by Beelzebub, is the very last resort of hatred so deep that it will father an absurdity rather than accept the truth.” So, Jesus spends the next few minutes destroying their house of cards. First, He tells them in verse 25, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.” In other words, any action on Satan’s part to interfere with or undo / what his own subservient demons have done is self-destructive.

Jesus was showing them that, if it was their conviction that Satan had possessed those whom **He** had cured, they would also have to admit that Satan was responsible for helping or causing Jesus to heal them. If that was the case,

then Satan has helped Jesus undo what he has done--to cast himself out. If that was the case, how could there be any stability in his kingdom?

His second question was even more devastating to their claim--verse 27: "If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges." "Sons" could be their literal children, but, more likely, Jesus was referring to their students, who supposedly had the ability to cast out demons. If their argument was true that any person who casts out devils must be in league with the devil, then their own disciples have made a covenant with the devil as well. Since they would never admit that something like that was true, their own disciples would be conclusive witnesses against their **ridiculous** reasoning.

On the other hand--verse 28--, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Since it's not Satan who's casting out Satan, God Himself is at work in and through Jesus. What's more, if God is now at work--since God is at work as verified by the Lord's miracles, eradicating Satan's dominion over people like the man Jesus has just healed--, then God's Kingdom has come.

The Lord builds on His challenging response to the Pharisees in verse 29: "Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house." The answer to the question, of course, is obvious. The application is even more telling: the Lord Jesus has bound Satan, thereby allowing Him to plunder Satan's kingdom--again--as seen by the healing of this blind, mute, demoniac.

He then goes on in verse thirty to have them consider their attitude toward Him: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." There's no middle ground when it comes to following Christ--each and every person is either with Him or against Him. Since Jesus is not allied or united with Satan, but opposes him, there are only two choices: you're either scattering along with the one who causes confusion and seeks to

disrupt the relationship between God and man, or you're gathering with the One Who has come to restore that relationship.

The summary challenge comes in verse 31: "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." A lot has been written about this "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," and I wish we had more time to talk about it.

Blasphemy is any form of speech that reviles, insults, belittles, ridicules, or denigrates the character, reputation, or majesty of God. As the Lord Jesus used the word here, he was referring to the Pharisees giving the credit for the miracles to Beelzebub instead of to the unmistakable work of the Holy Spirit. It's not a single, rash word, thoughtlessly spoken but a settled decision against the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit that exposes a heart that's hardened beyond repentance.

The Jews were offended at Jesus' humble life, dynamic teaching, and miraculous works. They scorned him for being from Nazareth, a place from which no good was expected to come. They had tried to trap Him with speculative questions and were enraged by what they thought were His rejections of the Law of Moses. Jesus says that accusations like this against Him as a Man could be forgiven.

Criticisms about his humble birth and the lowliness of his human nature might be forgiven; but forgiveness has its limitation. For those criticisms that were directed at His divine nature--in this case, accusing him of being in league with the devil, denying his divinity, and attributing the power that clearly revealed His divinity to the prince of demonic spirits--there could be no pardon. Such declarations and the belief behind them were a malicious and blasphemous attack on the divine power and nature of Christ. Such a sin God

would not forgive: “whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

For those concerned about whether they’ve blasphemed the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit is convicting you of sin, and you repent of that sin, then you’ve credited that work of conviction appropriately to the Holy Spirit, so you’re **not** hardened beyond repentance. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were hardening their hearts at that very moment. If they did not repent, they would have lost all possibility of finding forgiveness, “either in this age or in the age to come.”

So, the Lord challenges them in verses 33 through 37 to examine their own hearts and motives and the evidence they give of where they now stand as either gatherers or scatterers, with illustrations from life that they would have easily understood.

Frustrated in their efforts to attribute Jesus’ healing miracles to Satan, the Jewish religious leaders try something else--verse 38: “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you;’ to which Jesus replied, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”

In His three-part answer to their request for some kind of authentication, he begins by identifying their underlying motive: “an evil and adulterous generation.” As we see in the prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and, especially,

Hosea, the relationship between God and His chosen people was often represented as a marriage agreement between God and the people of Israel. Their idolatry and apostasy are often described as adultery--unfaithfulness to the covenant bonds between them and God.

As a result, no sign would be given them except the sign of Jonah's deliverance from what everyone on the ship he had fled in / thought was certain death, only to be delivered alive from the belly of the fish three days later. So also would the Lord Jesus--identifying Himself as the Son of Man--be restored to life after three days in the "heart of the earth." No, Jesus wasn't in the grave for three days and three nights, but Matthew's readers would have been focused on the parallel in the illustration much more than the literal accuracy of the comparison as we in the modern, Western world are. Because the Ninevites believed Jonah / and repented after he was preserved, so also the people of that adulterous and wicked generation ought to repent on the basis of Jesus' resurrection, and believe that He was from God, just as He said.

After all, the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah, and if the scribes and Pharisees rejected the message of the resurrected Lord Jesus, those same Ninevites would stand in judgment against them and condemn them, since One greater than Noah has come. The Ninevites will ask, "We repented; why didn't you?"

Not only would the Ninevites stand in judgment against the religious leaders, the Queen of the South would also take the stand in their prosecution. This Queen of the South was the Queen of Sheba whom we read about in First Kings, chapter ten, and--verse four: "when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon,"--verse six--: "she said to the king, 'The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard.'"

But now, Jesus says, “someone greater than Solomon is here.” Her testimony at the judgment of the scribes and Pharisees would be, “I came a long way to hear Solomon, and I responded to his wisdom with awe and amazement, yet you have insulted and demeaned One Who is far wiser than even Solomon.”

Since the unbelieving Ninevites and a Gentile queen accepted the truth without any sign like what the scribes and Pharisees were asking for, they should accept the truth of Who Jesus is and where His power came from on the basis of His words and works alone.

Even if He were to give them a sign, Jesus tells them it wouldn’t be enough--verse 43--: “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

So entrenched were these scribes and Pharisees and others who refused to accept the fact that Jesus was the Messiah that, even if he were to give them a sign from heaven that would decisively prove that He was the Messiah, it would only be a matter of time before they would return to their unbelief. Their cynicism and wickedness, like an evil spirit in a possessed man, were completely at “home” in them. If this spirit were driven out, it wouldn’t find any other place as comfortable and undisturbed as its previous home that lay empty with nothing having been done to keep it out or let anything else in to replace it. So, not only does it return, but it brings along seven of its best friends, “and the last state of that person is worse than the first.” There are many applications we could make to this stark warning from the Lord.

The last event that Matthew writes about in this chapter is the sudden arrival of Jesus' mother and brother--verse 46--: "While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.'"

It seems pretty clear that Mary did have other children besides Jesus, brought into the world as children are, and Matthew will name Mary's other sons in verse 55 of the next chapter.

Many of the oldest manuscripts don't have verse 47, so that's why you may not find it in your translation.

Why were Mary and Jesus' brothers there? Most likely, it was because they had heard how Jesus had angered the Jewish leaders to the point that they were trying to find a way to kill Him, and the family had come to protect Him. But the Lord Jesus was fully aware of the time schedule He was on, so He told the man who announced their arrival--verse 49: "'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand toward 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.'"

Jesus didn't show any lack of affection or disrespect to His mother in asking the question. It was simply a means of fixing His hearers' attention on what He was going to say. As dear and tender as the ties that bound him to family were, those ties that bound Him to His disciples were even more tender and more sacred. And those ties went beyond that to include all those who do the will of His Father in heaven--not perfectly, for that's not 100% possible in the world--, but He's speaking of those who are responsive and obedient to the will of God through faith.

In this chapter, Jesus has taught us about the proper place and purpose of the Sabbath and illustrated the fulfillment of prophecy through the healing of a man with a withered hand. He's healed a blind and mute man possessed by a

demon that resulted in a blasphemous charge from the Jewish leaders that He did so by the power of Satan, and the Lord soundly disproves their allegations and warns them of the consequences of their continued unbelief. He's rebuked the request from the Jewish leaders for a sign, primarily because they had already rejected the clear testimony of His words and His works. And He's reminded us that those who do the will of the Father--not those who talk a good talk or live a pretty good life--those who do the will of the Father are part of His forever family.

Thank you for being a part of our ever-so-brief glimpse into the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as seen through Matthew's eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He's calling us to be for such a time as this.

Next week, following Pastor Trey's message from chapter thirteen, we'll turn to chapter fourteen of Matthew's gospel to learn about the death of John the Baptist, the feeding of the five thousand, and Jesus' walking on the water in another storm and Peter's desire to follow Him.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

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