

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church  
**Matthew 12:15-21 | Jesus: The Perfect Servant**  
Sunday December 31, 2023

**WELCOME:**

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 12.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Notes in the foyer—take home with you.

**REVIEW:**

Last Sunday, we watched how Jesus is the Lord of Mercy by healing a man with a paralyzed hand.

We also watched how the Scribes and Pharisees tried to trick and trap Jesus.

It's fascinating to see how the mercy of one person causes such rage in others.

Why is that?

We learned that the primary reason that the Pharisees flew into a rage after this miraculous healing was because Jesus is holy.

Jesus is both God and man.

He has two simultaneous distinct and complete natures—truly God and truly man—Hypostatic Union.

Jesus is God, and God can't be controlled—and if world people can't control Jesus Him, then they must kill Him.

*Jesus is everything that we are not*

**INTRODUCTION:**

Jesus is different. He is set apart—He's not like you and me.

I saw somebody wearing a t-shirt that said, "Jesus is my homey."

No, Jesus is not your homey—

Jesus is HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. (ISAIAH)

And this differentiation of Jesus' holiness and our sinfulness is where our Gospel writer, Matthew, takes us.

Today, Matt takes a break from all the drama of the Scribes and Pharisees and reveals how different Jesus truly is.

He does this by taking us back to the OT prophet Isaiah.

Matthew digs deep here because he wants us to know how different Jesus is from Israel's spiritual leaders.

While the Scribes and Pharisees were rude, demanding and harsh—

The prophet Isaiah foretells with perfect accuracy the demeanor in which The Lord Jesus has and treats people.

What are those characteristics, and how does it impact your life today?

Let's find out!

*\*Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.\**

**SCRIPTURE:**

**Matthew 12:15**— *Jesus was aware of this and withdrew. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them all.*

**Matthew 12:16**— *He warned them not to make him known,*

**Matthew 12:17**— *so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:*

**Matthew 12:18**— *Here is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.*

**Matthew 12:19**— *He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear his voice in the streets.*

**Matthew 12:20**— *He will not break a bruised reed, and he will not put out a smoldering wick, until he has led justice to victory.*

**Matthew 12:21**— *The nations will put their hope in his name.*

**PRAY:**

*Make your face shine on your servant;  
save me by your faithful love. (Psalm 31:16)*

**EXEGESIS:**

**Matthew 12:9**—Moving on from there, he entered their synagogue.

**Matthew 12:10**— There he saw a man who had a shriveled hand, and in order to accuse him they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

**Matthew 12:11**— He replied to them, "Who among you, if he had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't take hold of it and lift it out?"

**Matthew 12:12**— A person is worth far more than a sheep; so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath."

**Matthew 12:13**— Then he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out, and it was restored, as good as the other.

**Matthew 12:14**— But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, how they might kill him.

**Matthew 12:15(a)**— Jesus was aware of this and withdrew.

As the perfect, God-Man, Jesus knows when to confront people, fight, and when to back down.

**Proverbs 14:16 NLT**—The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence.

**Proverbs 14:17 NLT**— Short-tempered people do foolish things,

**Proverbs 18:18**— A fool's lips lead to strife, and his mouth provokes a beating.

This was a time to back down—and the reason to back down is not only because Jesus is wise but also because of the Father's divine timing.

Evidently, the Scribes and Pharisees are so mad that Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath Day that they were ready to kill him on the spot.

So, Jesus withdraws from this confrontation because it might have led to an early death.

And no one takes the Lord's life—He gives it freely.

Matthew doesn't tell us how Jesus knew that the Pharisees wanted to kill Him.

A couple options:

First, Jesus witnessed the rage of these men first hand.

Secondly, The Father may have revealed this information to Jesus.

Thirdly, Jesus is God and, therefore, may have known it.

Regardless, the point is that Jesus decided to withdraw from that confrontation and leave.

Jesus was not afraid to die, but he had to die at the right time.

In "the fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4), Jesus came into the world, and at the right time, he would leave it (John 7:6-8).

So please know that Jesus was never forced to do anything. He withdrew under his own volition.

**Matthew 12:15(b)**— *Large crowds followed Jesus, even though Jesus leaves, He doesn't leave alone.*  
We're talking thousands upon thousands of people.

How do we know that?

Mark's Gospel provides a bit more detail:

+ **Mark 3:7**—Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a large crowd followed from Galilee, and a large crowd followed from Judea,

+ **Mark 3:8**—Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and around Tyre and Sidon. The large crowd came to him because they heard about everything he was doing.

+ **Mark 3:9**—Then he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, so that the crowd wouldn't crush him.

+ **Mark 3:10**—Since he had healed many, all who had diseases were pressing toward him to touch him.

*that's a lot of people*

Notice how, despite the Pharisees' constant hatred of Jesus and their constant schemes to embarrass and discredit Jesus—His popularity continues to increase.

Jesus is no longer this no-named rabbi from Nazareth—He is rock-star Jesus.

He is climbing to the height of His popularity.

And it's not only with His own people—the Jews— but also non-Jews—the Gentiles.

Idumea is in the southern part of Israel, and Tyre and Sidon are in the northern part.

It's like people *walking* ~~traveling~~ *from...to get to Cottonwood* *first? the*

This is a great example of God's sovereignty and truth.

The people who are now following Jesus are proof that love wins.

The Pharisaic religiosity of Jesus' day is dying.

*Jesus brings A relationship*

We see a great example of <sup>cold hearted religion</sup> this in the book of Acts, with a fire-breathing Pharisee filled with rage and hate.

+ **Acts 9:1**—Now Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.

Wow, what a shocker!

Saul is acting just like these Pharisees that Jesus is trying to minister to today.

+ **Acts 9:2**— He (Saul) went to the high priest and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if Saul found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

+ **Acts 9:3**— As he (Saul) traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him.

+ **Acts 26:14**— We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me (Jesus)? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' = foresaw

A goad is a cattle prod. It's a long stick with a pointed end to drive the cattle.

If the ox didn't like how his owner drove him, the ox would rear up and kick with his legs.

What's Jesus' point?—the owner of the ox would then discipline that animal with that cattle prod to get him under control.

That verse could be translated as,

+ **Acts 26:14 NLT**— It is useless for you to fight against my will.

These Pharisees— and Saul at that moment—would have bet their life that they were in the middle of God's will doing what they were doing—but they couldn't have been more wrong.

Have you been there?

Doing something that you believed was the right thing to do with all your heart?

Maybe even claiming that it was God's will for your life!

But not realizing the people you were running over and the relationships you were ruining—only to find out later that you were deceived?

It's tragic when people use their God given gifts to destroy the church instead of building it up.

**+** **Matthew 12:15(c)**— and (Jesus) he healed them all.  
*Jesus healed the entire crowd.*  
 Jesus healed everybody who came to Him.

No matter what ailment or disease—Jesus healed everyone instantaneously.

Why did Jesus heal all who asked?

To prove that the His Gospel message was true.

*As eye witnesses*  
 The crowd had to either accept Jesus as Lord and Savior or reject Him.

*Think about it.*

After seeing one man heal the entire nation of Israel—it becomes impossible for anyone to remain neutral.

**+** **Matthew 12:16**— Jesus warned them not to make him known,



After Jesus heals people in this huge crowd, He specifically tells them not to tell anyone.

We see Jesus do this time and time again.  
Why would Jesus tell people to keep quiet?

**Better question:** How could people keep quiet?

Aren't friends and neighbors going to recognize the healing?

Whether it's new eyesight, hearing/arms, or legs being restored.

Jesus isn't healing headaches and backpain like these jokers today.

Aren't friends and neighbors going to ask?

So, how is it possible that anyone can keep quiet after experiencing a miracle like this?

Not likely.

However, the reason that Jesus wants everyone to keep quiet is because people are always coming to Jesus for the wrong reasons—

Physical healing and free food are two of the most popular.

There are other reasons; Jesus told people, "Mum's the word."

Jesus constantly fought against <sup>People's perceptions? Opinions</sup> ~~what the people thought~~ a Messiah should do and be.

After Jesus fed the five thousand, what did some of those people try to do?

**Answer:** Force Him to be king!

Sure, who doesn't want free food and social security!

Fast forward 2,000 years, and nothing has changed.

Sick and disabled people put their hope and spend all the money they have to see these fake evangelists who promise health, wealth, and prosperity.

But our greatest need is not our health—if it were God the Father would have sent a doctor.

Our greatest need is not finances—if it were God the Father would have sent a financial advisor.

Our greatest need is forgiveness, which is why God the Father sent a Savior.

Today, many people are coming to church for the wrong reasons and asking the wrong questions.

You'll always get the wrong answers when you ask the wrong questions.

*What's wrong with my marriage? (Why am I such a lousy husband and Father?)*

*Why am I always worried about <sup>future</sup> money? (Why do I still love the world and all that it offers?)*

*Why is my health so bad? (Why do I disrespect the temple of the Holy Spirit?)*

These are all heart related issues.

All these physical things hinder our relationship with Jesus because our eyes are on ourselves instead of Jesus.

That's why Jesus told people not to make Him known.

Jesus came to deliver us from the bondage of our sin.

Jesus was on mission to save us from our sins—and yet we are constantly trying to get Jesus to fulfill our mission.

*The trick is in our PRAYERS. — Are we telling God what to do or praying His will be done*

**Matthew 12:16**— He warned them not to make him known,

**Matthew 12:17**— so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

Matthew, our Gospel writer, turns to the OT prophet Isaiah.

Matt has done this several times so far.

However, this is by far the largest OT passage he has included.

An OT prophet was someone who spoke for God.

And one particular job of a prophet was to prophecy—to foretell and forecast the future.

A prophet wasn't predicting the future—he was relating divine communication from God to His people.

Examples: Speaking through the prophets:

- God guides His people by telling them how to act in specific situations,
- warned people when they disobeyed him,
- foretold events that he would bring about,
- interpreted events when they came about.

So, this got me thinking. How many prophecies are there about about Jesus?

There are between 400 and 500 messianic (specific to Jesus) prophecies in the OT.

In the NT, there are another 300.

Anyone can make predictions.

But having those prophecies fulfilled is entirely different.

Take, for example, many modern-day YouTube prophets—where God told them how the last presidential election would turn out.

Guess what? They were wrong! ~~oops~~

In the OT, we never see a true prophet saying, “OOPS!”

“OOPS” is not in a ~~true prophets~~ their vocabulary.

We see nearly 800 prophecies made about Jesus, some with great detail.

In fact, the more prophecies made and the more detail about those prophecies, the less likely they are to be fulfilled.

**Example:**

A Westmont College professor calculated the probability of one man, Jesus Christ, fulfilling prophecies.

In other words, he wanted to find out what the odds were of one man, Jesus Christ, fulfilling these prophecies.

The math itself was worked out by twelve different classes representing 600 university students.

The professor then took this math—the probability of Jesus fulfilling prophecy—

Submitted his work to the American Scientific Affiliation.

Upon their review and examination, they verified that his calculations were dependable.

Here's what they found.

After examining only eight different prophecies (out of 800), they estimated that the chance of one man fulfilling all eight prophecies was one in  $10^{17}$  power—a figure with 17 zeros.

The professor gave this illustration: HAT.

He put ten tickets in a hat. One ticket had a unique mark on it.

He then shuffled the tickets around the hat thoroughly.

The professor then blindfolded someone to draw one of the tickets out of the hat.

The odds of getting the right ticket on the first try was one in ten.

### Illustration #2:

Now, suppose someone took silver dollars and laid them all over the state of Texas—two feet deep.

So the entire state of Texas is covered with silver dollars two feet deep—~~this represents one in  $10^{17}$  power~~

Now mark one of these silver dollars with a unique mark—and throw that specially marked silver dollar anywhere within the state of Texas.

Now, blindfold someone—and tell him he can travel as far as he wants and take as much time as he needs.

From El Paso to Longview and Amarillo to Corpus Christi.

And his job is to find that marked silver dollar, blindfolded, on the first try.

What chance would he have of picking the right one the first time?

One in  $10^{17}$  power!

*that's an example*  
~~These~~ are the impossible odds the prophets had with only getting eight prophecies correct out of the nearly 800.  
*About Jesus*

Those are the impossible odds the prophets had with only getting eight prophecies correct out of the nearly 800.

All that to say, Matthew paraphrases this prophecy because he is proving to us that Jesus is the King of kings/Messiah/God in the flesh.

Secondly, Matt also setting the expectations of what kind of King Jesus is.

Before we read Matt's paraphrase, let's go to the original in Isaiah.

**Isaiah 42:1**—This is my servant; I strengthen him,  
 this is my chosen one; I delight in him.

I have put my Spirit on him;  
 he will bring justice to the nations.

**Isaiah 42:2**— He will not cry out or shout  
 or make his voice heard in the streets.

**Isaiah 42:3**— He will not break a bruised reed,  
 and he will not put out a smoldering wick;  
he will faithfully bring justice.

**Isaiah 42:4**— He will not grow weak or be discouraged  
 until he has established justice on earth.  
 The coasts and islands will wait for his instruction."

The key word in Isaiah's passage is "justice." It appears three times.  
 Isaiah is referring to more than legal correctness.

This exact word, justice, is used in Exodus 26:30 regarding the plan to build the Tabernacle.

God has a plan — always had one.

In other words, justice is God's blueprint revealed from Heaven.

Justice is not only a sense of right and wrong, but it's a society/kingdom as God has determined it as it should be—no corruption or sin.

So it's through the lens of God's blueprint that Matthew paraphrases the prophet Isaiah.

**Matthew 12:18(a)**— Here is my servant whom I have chosen,

Jesus is the mediator between us and God the Father.

We can't barge into the Mayor's office without an appointment, do we really think we can come to God without someone introducing us to Him?

This word, Servant (*Pais*), is not the usual word for "servant."

It's often translated as "son."

*God the Father is telling us, "Here is my Son!"*

*There He is! Look at Him! When you look at His face, you are looking into the face of God!*

*When you hear His voice, you're hearing the voice of God!*

**Matthew 12:18(a)**— Here is my servant whom I have chosen.

"I have chosen" is a firm and predetermined decision used nowhere else in the New Testament.

In other words, God The Father had predestined and prearranged Jesus (God the Son) to be His divine Servant.

When did that happen? See Genesis 3:15!

**Matthew 12:18(b)**— *my beloved in whom I delight;*

Beloved—God the Father dearly loves and cherishes His Son—more than anyone else.

Delight—God the Father takes great pleasure in Him *Jesus*.

**Matthew 12:18(c)**— *I will put my Spirit on him,*

What does that mean?

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20)

~~And if~~ John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from His mother's womb (Luke 1:15), how much more so was Jesus.

We also saw a physical representation of the Holy Spirit at Jesus's baptism.

The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a dove (Matt. 3:16).

So, it means that that Jesus was divine from the very beginning.

Jesus was not a good man who worked his way up the spiritual corporate ladder and became God.

Jesus did not get a spiritual promotion.

Jesus is both God and man—and it was that way before He created the cosmos.



God the Father empowers God the Son, who is now in a human body (Christmas), with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. *AS A MAN.*

**Matthew 12:18(d)**— *and he will proclaim justice to the nations.*

Your translation may say, “justice to the Gentiles.”

That may not sound like a big deal to us today, but to the first century Jew, this thought that God cared for the Gentiles was repulsive.

After all, God chose Israel as the chosen race!

Regardless, Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would proclaim a message of truth and justice even to the Gentiles, which is what Jesus did.

The first person where Jesus revealed His identity as God was a Samaritan woman, half Jew and half Gentile (John 4:26).

We see this proclamation again today as Matthew and Mark tell us where the crowds are from. — *Gentile / Healer NATIONS.*

The purpose of the Holy Spirit’s power was to proclaim justice.

Administering justice was a primary responsibility of any king.

However, few kings administered justice correctly.

Too many kings, presidents, and politicians use their power to beat people down instead of caring for and protecting them.

**Matthew 12:19**— *He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear his voice in the streets.*

Isaiah shows us what kind of King Jesus is.

Jesus is not like the Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus will not raise his voice or shout at people to attract attention to Himself.

Jesus is not some religious zealot who acts with brashness or arrogance like the Pharisees.

Instead, Jesus ministers in gentleness and humility.

Jesus doesn't get people all worked up into a frenzy state of our emotions and then pass the plate.

use our emotions AGAINST US

And because Jesus isn't a spiritual bully, only a select few will truly listen to his voice and believe.

guy's state

We see the gentleness of Jesus...



**Matthew 12:20(a)**— He will not break a bruised reed,

A reed <sup>was</sup> a tall plant with a hollow stem that grew in marshes (Psa 68:30; Isa 19:6).

It was often used as a measuring rod or staff Isa 36:6; Ezek 29:6; 40:3).

In ancient times, people used reeds to make flutes, pens, and many other things.

However, when the reed became soft or cracked, bent or bruised, it was useless.

After people were done using it they would throw it away.

So, a reed is a symbol of weakness.

A bruised reed is a picture of something utterly useless, something that looks beyond repair.

In reality, every person is a spiritually bruised reed. Why?

Because we can't save ourselves.

We can't fix the things of this world—let alone address the things of the spiritual world.

**+** **Matthew 12:20(b)**— *and he will not put out a smoldering wick,*

When a lamp burned down all the way down to the end of the wick, it would smoke without making any light.

If a lamp doesn't produce light, it's useless.

So people put out the wick and threw it away like the broken reed.

In other words, The bruised reed and the smoldering wick represent people whose lives are broken and worn out.

In other words, the world doesn't care about these people.

Jesus, however, does.

As the perfect servant, Jesus serves people who look like they are about to be snapped off or snuffed out—the “good for nothing,” and “the marginalized.”

**+** **Matthew 12:20(c)**— *until he has led justice to victory.*

Jesus will right every wrong.

One day, very soon, Jesus will be ruling and reigning as king on this Earth.

**+** **Matthew 12:21**— *The nations will put their hope in his name.*

There is no other name like Jesus.

Jesus means "God Saves"

Christ is Jesus' title and means "anointed/chosen One."

And when you put Jesus and Christ together, you get "God Saves through His Chosen One."

There are an additional 150 titles found in Scripture for Jesus.

There is no other name like Jesus Christ!

We know this as Believers and disciples of Jesus.

We know the power of Jesus' name.

We know that Jesus has brought us from death to life.

We've seen the proof in our own lives.

We're not the same people we used to be! Praise God!

But the world also knows the power of Jesus' name.

We know this because it's the only name they will take in vain.

Why is it that when someone gets angry, slams their finger in a door, or stubs their toe, they take the name "Jesus Christ" in vain?

Why not Gandhi? Buddha? Joseph Smith?

Because those names don't have any power.

And they don't have any power because those people are still dead in their graves.

Jesus has all the power because He walked out of His.

And the world hates Him for it.

So instead of believing in His Gospel message—the world gnashes its teeth at Him as they take his name in vain.

This proves that the only name they take in vain is the only one that will save them from their sin.

**PREACH:** *our passage to be taught us that*  
No Jesus is the perfect servant.

What does that mean for us?

If we're born-again disciples of Jesus, it means that we are also to serve.

*Plain & simple.*  
Question: Why are so many people unhappy and angry today?

Many reasons—but a primary reason is that they refuse to serve.

They insist on people serving them!

Something drastically changes in our lives when we get our eyes off ourselves and on to other people.

The more isolated we become the more crazy we become.

That's why solitary confinement in a maximum security prison is the worst form of punishment.

And yet, we are living in an age where we willingly walk into this self imposed prison cell.

*Shutting out everyone around us.*  
*And if we do choose to see people - it's on our schedule.*

Anxiety, fear, drug use, pornography, alcoholism, and domestic violence all up at staggering levels since COVID.

What's the solution? Face to face relationships. Community.

Dying to yourself, picking up your cross, and following Jesus to serve others.

Do you guys know that your personal gift of servanthood and your God given talents to serve are the reasons we don't support formal ministries here at RBC?

In other words, when you come to church, you come for the sole purpose of worshiping God and to be fed the Word of God.

Throughout the week, you go to Bible studies and small groups to have fellowship and be fed the Word of God.

Then, we are to use that feeding of God's Word and give it away. *to the UV.*

*Share Jesus by life. → 100 ministries.*  
\* Our servanthood doesn't get us into Heaven. — *intro UFO.*

That's called 'works-based salvation.'

We serve because we are so grateful that the Lord Jesus came to first serve and save us.

New Year plans on servanthood?

*ASK The Church!  
Come see me so we can help you.*

**PRAYER**

**BENEDICTION**

*Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col 3:16-17).*

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