

Matthew 12:22-32 | Tom Grass

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Preacher: Tom Grass

[0 : 00] Good morning. Get to bat again today. Two weeks in a row. There were a lot of people that were at camp.

! And so that was part of the thoughts behind it.

This is really unrelated to the message, but just a couple things that came to mind to me are interesting, or whatever they are. When I was a kid growing up, I was the youngest of five, so my oldest brother was ten years older than I am.

And I don't know when this discussion came up at home, but I might have been eight. He might have been 18 or 17, and I was seven. I don't know, but my oldest brother, Gary, wanted to go to church.

Well, I don't know if he wanted to go, but we were going. And he wasn't wearing socks with his penny loafers. And that was a big deal to my dad. You can't go out of the house.

[1 : 21] You can't go to church without socks on. And when I see people go up here without pants on, they're wearing shorts. To me, it's like, I don't know if I could speak and wear shorts.

I mean, that might be a mortal sin, you know? And then, so for me, I'm like, I don't know. Like, I don't know about anybody else, but wearing jeans to church was kind of like this transition. You know, it's like, I don't think that's right. You know, or, there's a lot of things we put rules on ourselves, or these expectations about things. And it's just interesting how your mind doesn't forget those things.

Another thing that, when I was a child, my dad, well, I was actually an adult, and late teens, even. My dad would come home from work, and if I was sitting in the chair watching TV, he would come in the garage, and the TV was right there in the family room.

He wouldn't say much to me, like, hey, you want to go do something? And he'd just say, don't you have something better to do? And walk on. I'm like, well, no, I don't. That's why I'm watching TV, you know? It's not that I like Ironside.

[2 : 28] It's just, I don't have anything else to do, you know? But it was just kind of interesting how some of those things just stick with you, you know? Those things you're brought up with. Another thing that, I don't know why this came to mind, was before I came up.

When I was a young man, like 23 to 30 years old, in the morning you'd go to work, you'd shave, right? If you went to a meeting that night, what would you do? Or out to dinner, what would you do? Shave again. And so when you get into this era where you don't have to shave, five to seven days of growth is like, okay. I'm like, that's not okay.

But I like it, you know, obviously. But it's interesting, you know, it's just random thoughts, but how culture changes, how our mind changes, and the things that we perceive as being right.

Today we're looking at a passage that talks about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and then Jesus is the son of David, and these miracles that Jesus did, and it's a continuation of this narrative of the rejection of Jesus by the religious establishment, and then the people realizing maybe who he is, or understanding what he's doing and asking for his help by way of healings and things like that.

[3 : 59] So we'll continue that in Matthew 12. So let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. Thank you for your word, which is truth. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who guides us in truth, and actually is, by design, he is meant to elevate or speak of or lead us to Jesus.

And there's many other things the Holy Spirit does, but those are some things that he does. Thank you for your word. May you bless it. In Jesus' name, amen. I want to read these verses out of a different translation I have here.

Sorry. You know you have things... Do you know that... Do you know that the synoptic gossip...

what do the gospels mean? What are they? How many are there? Three. And they're Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Synoptic means that similar, unity, that kind of thing. So the synoptic gospels, just by way of information or background, are the gospels that are not John, is another way to look at it.

[5 : 23] John's gospel is not part of the synoptic gospel. It's different. It's different flavor, different purpose. The synoptic gospels speak more of the life of Christ.

A lot of the stories, accounts, I like to call them accounts, are all... in all three. And this is one passage where we're in right now. Matthew chapter 12 is also in Mark chapter 3.

So you can kind of get a different flair to the message or to the writing if you read it in another gospel. And then some of the things that come up in the synoptic gospels, when the scripture repeats something, that generally means it's significant, right?

Hey, like if you're an instructor in a class, you say, alright, listen, this is going to be on the test. Or, this is a foundational building block for your understanding of this principle in a field of study.

So I think God does that with the synoptic gospels. And he also is trying to speak to or engage in different people's backgrounds and their purposes for them.

[6 : 40] Does that make sense? So that's what this section is part of it. So today we're in Matthew chapter 12, 22 to 32.

And when we read that the people say, not the Pharisees or religious leaders, when the people say, could this be the son of David? They understood that the prophecies of the Old Testament, that this promised Messiah would have these characteristics.

And the scripture foretells that or prophesies that this would be a characteristic or quality of Jesus. And the people recognize it and yet the religious leaders don't.

So when you see son of David, that's kind of, we'll talk about that also. And then at the very end you have this little passage where you can blaspheme against Jesus, but he who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, that's a bad thing and there's no forgiveness for that sin.

Whoa! What does that mean? Right? Well, sometimes to understand a truth you look at the opposite. Does that make sense?

[7 : 54] So sometimes if you want to look at a truth you look at what's not true and then you see truth. Or when you talk about currency or dollar bills used to be a hundred dollar bill was a big deal, you know.

Now it's like a twenty. So they used to teach people that handled cash, bankers and things like that. You can get a highlighter type pen and it'll tell you if it's authentic or not.

But they would tell you know the original or the authentic so well that when you see the counterfeit you recognize it as a counterfeit. Right? Just because a Honda Accord has a BMW sticker on the back or a Toyota Camry has a BMW on the back but it doesn't make it a BMW.

Right? Like who did that? Nathaniel did that. He had a BMW sticker on the back of his car. Well, it wasn't. I wanted the reason I mention that if I can remember my train of thought is that when you come to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit what do you know about the Holy Spirit and the believer? Can a believer sealed by the Holy Spirit ever not become sealed by the Holy Spirit? Who can break that seal?

[9 : 09] No. If you deny him he won't deny you. You're sealed forever because of what Christ did on the cross. It's not based on your own works your own good works.

It's not based on it's based on what Christ did for you and the Holy Spirit seals you. There's one other point about that.

So, that should be an encouraging statement. Correct? It's very unlikely. I could say there's very things that you could say are certain in this world but I could tell you looking at the people that are here today with certainty that if you're here today you have not blasphemed the Holy Spirit and you won't because you're here as a seeker of some type.

So, anybody that's still open to or will listen to anything about the good news of Jesus Christ more than likely will not have blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

The challenge in this section is well, what does he mean then? And we will talk about that a little bit more but the charge of the warning was really to the religious leaders again.

[10 : 25] I keep bringing that up. But you guys are going down such a path of rejection of Jesus Christ and everything that he is and shown you and what he's going to show you that you're going to be guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit and there'll be no hope for you.

That's quite a stern warning. You know, if you write people up in a job you get three strikes or whatever the number is, you know, it's like, I mean, when I was a manager I'd have like this one guy go, I can't even write you up.

You know, I can't even bring this up to HR because if I do you're out. I mean, you have gone that far, right? That's what the warning is and the charge here is really toward the religious leaders. Let's read our verses today. Let's read our verses today. Matthew 12, verse 22.

And this is after Jesus had already healed some people in the previous verses and last week we ended on Jesus' name will be the hope of the Gentiles and I read two verses at the end.

[11:45] One was Acts 3, 25 and 26 and then Romans 1, 16. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God and salvation to everyone who believes the Jew first and also the Greek.

And many of us know that verse by heart, right? That's it. Then a demon oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him and healed him so that the man spoke and saw.

And all the people were amazed and said, can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, it's only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons. Satan himself is Beelzebul, is how they, everything you read about. So they're accusing Jesus of being in cahoots with Satan. Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?

[12:59] Or if you actually do cast out a demon, how are you doing it? You see me do it, occasionally it might happen for you. But, verse 28, but if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

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. Whoever is not with me is against me, and who does not gather with me scatters.

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. So here it is, like I already mentioned, this continual rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders. This demon possessed man, what does this section of Scripture reveal to us about him?

What qualities was he possessing? We don't have anything that tells us like he was among the tombs cutting himself with stones or whatever, like the one man, right?

[14:32] This guy was just blind and mute, but it says he was demon possessed. One of the things that at that time they might have done or there were some understandings about demon possession or how you get rid of it, like maybe the demon had a name.

If you knew the demon's name, you could reach in there and call that demon out if the demon's name was, I don't know, make up a name, you know, and then you could speak to that name or that demon and say, you need to get out of that guy, you know, or they would do these rituals with herbs and things like that and try to get a demon out of a person.

But what's interesting is how do you communicate with a blind and deaf man? How do you call the name of that demon?

I think it's kind of interesting. If that was their mentality, the religious leader's mentality, how do you call out that demon? They can't hear you. The man who the demon is in can't hear him and you can't do sign language to him.

You can't write him a note. If you ever wait on somebody who's deaf and you don't know sign language, you can write it or you can do a word doc and you can communicate with that person that way.

[15:51] But this guy can't hear and can't see. So I don't know. So this was a miracle that showed Jesus' power over the spirit world.

And the Pharisees, of course, rejected, but the people of the day said, could this be the son of David?

They reacted with messianic expectation. Maybe this really is the Messiah, the anointed one, the one we've been waiting for. In Isaiah chapter 35, verse 5, I'm going to turn to that verse.

It's interesting, these prophecies come out of Isaiah. 35, 5. It just says, then the eyes of the blind shall be open, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

The lame man will leap, tongues of the dumb will sing, and these kind of things were predictions of what the ministry of the Messiah would look like and how you could identify him in the world.

[17:10] If you remember, at the beginning of Matthew, chapter 1, verse 1, it says, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, son of Abraham.

So here Matthew comes back to that theme, the son of David. And we also saw that in Matthew 11. this is when John the Baptist, now when John had heard in prison the works of Jesus, he sent some of his disciples, and he says, are you the one that has to come, or do we look for another?

Jesus responds to John's question, are you the Messiah? He says, go and show John again those things that you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear.

Dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed are those who shall not be offended in me. So we see where these are characteristics of the Messiah.

That the people say, oh, is this the son of David? But the religious again rejected. The Pharisees, one of the commentators said, the Pharisees accusation amounts to a charge of sorcery, one which would be continued to be leveled against Jesus and later Jewish polemic.

[18:38] I think that's how you say it. I had to look the word up. P-O-L-E-M-I-C. You literally scholars will know that means writings or teachings. So they continued this narrative, if you will, that Jesus was not who he said he was.

Then as we move on, verse 25 to 29, Jesus answers the accusations that he works by Satan's power. It says, Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?

Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house?

The first argument Jesus presents here is that every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. That's such a logical statement, isn't it?

[20:00] Any division in an organization or a kingdom or a household leads to desolation or waste. When you talk about marriage, if you are opposed to each other in a marriage relationship, what's the end of that?

That's not good. It's not good at all. If in the demon world, they have one objective, Satan's objective is to nullify the work of Christ, to oppose the work of God in the world, to deceive the nations, to deceive everyone so they won't believe in the promise of Christ, the salvation.

If he's divided against himself, Satan's divided against himself, and his demons aren't working toward that goal, what good is it? They wouldn't do it, would they? If demons come to kill and destroy, the thief comes to kill and destroy, what good would it be if they were fighting amongst each other?

What good would an army be if they're fighting against each other, right? One commentator, Spurgeon and Bruce, they say, Satan may be wicked, he says in effect, but he's not a fool. Whatever fault the devils have, they are not at strife with each other. That is reserved for us, the servants of the master, right?

[21:25] You see that more in the kingdom, people, than you see that in the demonic world. Pretty strong argument, if really.

What about another argument? Okay, if I cast him out with the spirit, because Christ relied on the spirit, even though he was God, who do you cast him out with, or who do you your sons cast him out with, what power do you use then?

It's just a kind of, I would say it's kind of rhetorical. I'm doing it out of truth. Who are you doing it by? What power are you doing it by? Does that make sense? Okay. And then the third argument, if you will, is that it's kind of better to read it a little bit here.

It says, or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house?

[22 : 41] What is the argument there? You're going to come to my house and try to take my wife, my possessions, my kids, whatever. most men would say, you've got to go through me first, irregardless of what might happen to me.

I think most men in here would do the same thing. I think never poke the mama bear, right? When a mom is with her cubs, do you go up and try to grab a cub?

No. You've got to go through that mama bear first, right? I think that's kind of what Jesus is saying there. It's pretty obvious. There are people out by me in the country, they, you know, they don't, there are all kinds of signs, you know, this house is protected by Smith and Wessons three nights a week, you choose the night, you know, or we don't call 911, we call 811.

811 is dig right. That means, I know it's radical. I'm not going to call the cops, I'm not going to call the sheriff, I'm going to find out where the wires are in my yard because you're going to be buried after I shoot you.

That sounds awful. I have a neighbor and he will be unnamed. He got robbed one time and the sheriffs came and they had taken stuff out of his barn and he was telling me the story and he goes, you better find him first.

[24 : 06] Okay, well that makes sense. He goes, because if I find him, I'm going to feed him to the hogs, you'll never know who did it. I didn't know what to say. It was the first time I ever heard that.

I don't know how old I was in my 40s probably. I'm like, well that's, well hi, hi neighbor, I'm going home. I'm not asking to borrow anything, I'll never fish in your pond again, you know, see ya.

You alright? Okay, you know, makes you wonder. You know, hogs will eat everything, there'll be nothing left. So, don't take that as a suggestion by the way.

But really, you know, so that really got me down the rabbit hole where I can't find my way back. So, using this analogy, Jesus explained his authority to bind Satan's power.

He is stronger than the strong man is. And so doing, Jesus presented a valuable principle in spiritual warfare as we remember that Jesus gives us the permission to use his name and authority, giving us the strength we need in being the strong man.

[25 : 16] Jesus also made it clear that he was the stronger man who was not captive under the strong man. So he was telling them, I am not under Satan's domain. No way.

I am not under his power. I am proving that I am stronger than he is by casting out those he has possessed. The very fact that I have been so successfully able to invade Satan's territory is proof that he is bound and powerless to resist Jesus.

Right? Satan was bound by Jesus' power. If you remember, I mentioned the names of demons. there are other encounters where Jesus meets Damien possessed man and he says, what is your name?

Remember how I am Legion because there are many of us and that type of thing. In verse 30 and 32, it's Jesus says, he's who's not with me is against me.

Jesus in verse 31, you can blaspheme you against me, but against the Holy Spirit you cannot. and it's forever.

[26 : 39] It's not this to say just forever. So, is there neutral ground with Jesus Christ?

Can you remain neutral? What does Jesus say in this passage? You're either for me or you're against me. Is there neutral ground?

No. Are you a believer? Are you a non-believer? Are you saved? Not saved, right? There's no neutral ground. There really are, when you boil it down, there's two forces in the world.

There's Christ and his kingdom, God's kingdom, or there's Satan's domain. in his realm. So, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Jesus warned the religious leaders against rejecting him. It is especially considered after what they had seen him do and his work. That showed that they were completely rejecting the Holy Spirit ministry.

[27 : 55] And the Holy Spirit's ministry is to testify of Jesus. John 15, 26 says, He will testify of me. When the Spirit comes, he will testify of me.

When that testimony of Jesus is fully and finally rejected, one has truly blasphemed the Holy Spirit and he essentially called him a liar in respect to his testimony about Jesus.

Earlier I mentioned the fact that you're here or people that actually listen to or are open to Jesus shows that they have not been guilty of that sin.

There is a warning, though, that there are tendencies for mankind to, when presented with the gospel, say, I'm not ready for that right now.

I understand that, but I'm not going to believe that. Have you ever met people like that? Have you ever been that person before you were saved?

[29 : 01] Oh, yeah, that is true. I'm not ready to do that. I would warn anybody that's listening or knows people that you might want to tell them that if you're rejected today of the offer of salvation, you don't want to keep rejecting it because you become harder and harder potentially.

You might end up being so hardened that you never will believe. Or your life might just be cut shorter than you think and you've lost that opportunity to believe. And then you don't want to be a blasphemer.

You don't want to go that far where you actually, which I think in our culture today there are a good number of people that are blaspheming God. They are shaking their fists at God like never before. That is the warning. don't put off receiving the gospel. If you're in the world today and you meet people like that, you want to warn them.

This would be a good warning passage to go to. Don't allow yourself to become so hardened that you become this person who blasphemes the Holy Spirit by not believing in Jesus who the Holy Spirit reveals or testifies of.

[30 : 11] If the musicians want to come up, we can wrap this up. I would like to conclude, I guess.

There's a lot more that could be said about all this, but let's go to 1 John chapter 5. I hope I covered the blasphemy well enough.

You may want to look it up yourself and get a good understanding of it. 1 John chapter 5.

Really this whole chapter, but just some reassuring verses as we end. Some assurance of salvation or assurance of the message.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is a Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

[31 : 17] For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world, and this is a victory that has overcome the world, our faith.

Who is that that overcomes the world except the one that believes that Jesus is the Son of God? Are you the son of David? Are you the son of God? Yes, I believe that.

At that time when Christ walked the earth, his miracles and his life proved that he was God, and those who believed were saved. Verse 9 of 1 John 5, If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning himself.

Testimony, isn't that interesting? The Holy Spirit will testify of me. If you don't believe the testimony that God has given us about Jesus Christ, you're going to die in your sins. Don't do that. And then one last verse, verse 19.

[32 : 41] I think this might sum up this passage pretty good. You know, these two world powers, if you will. We know that we are from God and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Don't be surprised what you see today. Don't be surprised when you see these evil forces being, well, celebrated in some cases, correct?

it's really tragic, some of the things that are going on. It saddens me when I see young people, meaning 30, 20, any age in their 18 to 30, and you see people on the street, interview them and say, oh, what does this mean, this phrase about Israel, from the river to the sea?

What river? What sea? They have no idea. They are completely deceived, if you ask me. They are completely uneducated and ignorant people.

They don't realize what they're saying. If you are somewhat informed, you would know what that means. It means the complete annihilation of Israel. That's what it means.

[33 : 57] When those young people who are wearing the multicolored outfits and hair say, from the river to the sea, we stand with Palestine, they're saying, they also are shaking their fists at God's people, if you will.

But, they do this on so many levels. In our culture, the evil one is ruling this world. I am going to change my gender. God made me special and beautiful in his own eyes, right?

I know I could go down a path there, but we see the whole world in the power of the evil one sometimes. The encouraging thing is we are not there.

Last week I ended also with we are going to win, like our friend Jack used to say. We are going to win. The gospel and Christ are going to overcome this world. He's going to come back and he's going to do miraculous, wonderful things again, rid the world of sin, and he's going to reign with righteousness and judgment, and he's going to suppress all this evil that we see, and he's going to bring in the new heavens and the new earth, and it's going to be a great time.

Be part of that kingdom. Lord, we thank you for your word. Thank you for clear teaching, and we thank you that your word is consistent.

[35 : 17] It doesn't vary. You can look through the Old Testament and New Testament, and we can see the message and the teaching is clear. And I think sometimes you repeat yourself like synoptic gospels so that we can learn it, hear it from another perspective and learn.

So we thank you for this word. In Jesus' name, amen.