

# Matthew 12:43-50 | John Messerly

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Date: 21 July 2024

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[0:00] All right, well good morning everybody. It's great to be here with you guys again. I was just telling Dave that a year ago I was here and I was back in the office scrambling to get together my last minute printouts for day spring and a little nervous about my first time directing down there and then I heard this big announcement being made and it was Dave saying that he was planning to step down in a few months.

And so what a year it's been, a year of transitions and excited to see everything that the Lord is doing with Dave and with Bethel and he mentioned to me, I don't know how many people know he has a job interview on Friday so you can be praying for him about that.

Well, I struggled with what to call this sermon and at first I came up with this idea of a job half done is as good as none but it's really not true in certain circumstances.

If I do half the dishes, I'm like, well, at least half the dishes are done. But the reality is that what we see here is two examples of people who they've got something that they're trying to do to have status or to have favor with God or to enter the kingdom but it's not enough.

It's not what is required. As a reminder, which all of you probably don't need the reminder, but it's good to remind me that going through the book of Matthew, so I was blessed to be able to share with you guys back in March or April or sometime like that, but Matthew is the gospel that portrays Jesus as the king.

[1:41] You know, Matthew is the king, Mark is the servant. Luke is the human, John is the God. Different facets of our savior. And so we're looking at Matthew that's portraying Jesus as the king.

One of the things I talked about last time, and I'm sure you've seen evidence from time to time throughout here, is the king controls his kingdom. We talked about that with the Sermon on the Mount.

He finishes by saying, you know, there are many who will in that day, in that last day, will say to me, Lord, Lord, haven't we done many great things in your name? And in your name cast out demons and done all these miraculous works.

And he will say, depart from me, for I never knew you. Because it says the one who will enter the kingdom is the one who does the will of my father.

And they were trying on other merits. And so we have lots of imposters trying to get into the kingdom. Those who say, Lord, Lord, and they say, we've done the works to get into the kingdom.

[2:43] And those who, you know, show up like the man with no wedding clothes. Like, oh, I was invited to the wedding, but I'm not willing to change anything about what I'm doing.

People who think, just because of my status, I should be able to get into this wedding. Don't you know who I am? But the terms of entry, the king is clear that he wants belief. And so we're going to look at two groups today.

We're going to look at the Pharisees, and we're going to look at Jesus' family. So our passage today is Matthew 12, 43 through 50. Before I, well, I'll read, and then we can open prayer, and then we can dive right into it.

Now, when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, I will return to my house from which I came.

And when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits, more wicked than itself. And they go in and live there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.

[3:56] That is the way it will also be with this evil generation. While he was still speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and brothers were standing outside seeking to speak to him. Someone said to him, Behold, your mother and your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to you.

But Jesus answered the one who was telling him and said, Who is my mother and who are my brothers? And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, Behold, my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.

Father, let's just open with a word of prayer. Our God and Heavenly Father, we do want to come before you. God, we're so grateful you've given us your word, that you've revealed yourself to us. And you've revealed the Lord Jesus Christ through four different gospels. We have this chance to look at the Lord Jesus Christ now and just peer into your word, see what you have for us. God, I pray that you bless our time this morning. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So the two groups we're looking at today, the Pharisees and Jesus' family.

[5:00] And the Pharisees were a picture of Israel in their repentance. They were showing forth good works.

And as we know, reliance on good works is not enough to get into the kingdom. It takes belief. Jesus' family was a picture of Israel as in the children of Abraham, the children of the promise. And it's showing us that reliance on heritage won't do. Reliance on your status won't do. In both cases, what God is looking for is belief.

Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Belief in his son who he sent to be the salvation of the world. So as we look at this first part, it talks about a demon, an unclean spirit going out of somebody, looking for rest, not finding it.

Then it says, I'm going to go back where I came from, finding it swept and clean and unoccupied, put in order. And then it brings seven other spirits more wicked than itself.

[6:08] They go in and live there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So putting this passage in context here, this is actually kind of the summation of this conflict that's starting in chapter 12.

So this is when we, in Matthew, when we first see this real conflict coming between the Pharisees and Jesus. And it started off in chapter 12 with plucking grain on the Sabbath.

So they were, you know, they were basically publicly rebuking him and saying, what are you doing? Don't you know you're breaking the law? So they accused him of plucking grain on the Sabbath and eating that as violating the Sabbath.

And then he healed somebody on the Sabbath. And they said, well, you can't heal somebody on the Sabbath. And then he cast out a demon. And they said, well, you're only doing that by the power of Satan.

You only have power over Satan's people because you're in league with Satan. And you're just the boss telling him what to do. And then finally they have this demand for a sign that Dave Thomas talked about last week.

[7:20] That, and as Dave pointed out, so many signs were done. I mean, right here, healing, casting out a demon. You know, isn't that enough of a sign?

You know, the mute are speaking. The blind are seeing. The lame are walking. That's not enough of a sign. They require a sign. And so he's, right before this, he has Jonah, the men of Nineveh, the queen of the south, standing up to judge them.

Basically saying that they're going to condemn you. They're going to condemn you because something greater than Jonah is here. Something greater than Solomon is here.

And you're not getting it. So there's this condemnation of them. And he's wrapping up by saying, so this is really what you are like.

In your behavior, this is what you're like. And he's using this example of the demon possessed, or the demon leaving a man. So he's going to use this example to talk to the Pharisees. And as a reminder, we've probably heard multiple times about the Pharisees.

[8:27] But Pharisees, that word Pharisee means separated one. And you can always think of Pharisees as the, like, if you looked up in the dictionary, for the definition of self-righteous, there would be a big picture of a Pharisee.

Because they were, at the time, they were the best, the most religious people. You wanted to say, who here in Israel is going to, you know, is going to follow God, is going to be pleasing to God? They'd say the Pharisees. Outwardly, they had everything down. They would even tithe their spice rack. They would take, okay, here's a tenth of my mint, and here's a tenth of my dill. And they would say, okay, I'm doing everything right for God. But Jesus called them out. You're going to get to this later in Matthew. But he called them whitewashed tombs. He said, you clean the outside of the cup, but not the inside. As a kid who did a lot of dishwashing growing up, like, the outside, man, but you wanted to get the inside. That's where everything has been.

[9:28] That's the worst part of it. The outside, that's just for show. But he said, you guys, clean the outside. Your inside is desperately wicked. And the Pharisees, as a reminder, they're already rejecting Jesus.

They aren't the people that are on the fence trying to decide what to do with him. They're already rejecting him. In verse 2, they had this public rebuke. They said, don't you know you're doing what's wrong? Stop. You're doing what's wrong.

And verse 14, it says that they're conspiring to destroy him. I mean, it's pretty harsh words already that they're just saying, ah, this guy gets on my nerves.

They're conspiring to destroy him. And then, ultimately, verse 24, that they accuse him of being an agent of Satan.

So the Pharisees have already made their bed. They've already showed themselves to be wicked through and through, despite them looking outwardly like they've got everything right.

[10:26] And so that's why he's taking this example of the demon going out of a man, to show them what they're like, to make a bigger picture of what these Pharisees are.

So it talks about the unclean spirit going out of a man. They had just seen a demon-possessed man released of demonic control. So back in verse 22, it says, a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute.

Blind and mute. No one had ever healed the blind before. Maybe somebody could have taught, you know, Helen Keller was mute. She was taught how to speak. But nobody's opened the eyes of the blind.

And Jesus healed him, so the mute man spoke and saw. So he did this incredible miracle. That was a healing connected to demon possession. It was the demon that made this man blind.

It was the demon that made this man mute. And Jesus threw it out of him. But what Jesus is using this picture at, so the image was very bright in everybody's minds.

[11:37] They just had seen this miracle of it, and they knew it was a demon going out. They'd seen this. But Jesus uses this object lesson to criticize the Pharisees' self-righteousness.

I want to turn back to Matthew 3 and just remind us of what happened at the beginning of the interaction with the Pharisees. This is when Jesus, or Jesus, his ministry was about to start, but it's talking about John the Baptist and what John the Baptist was doing.

And it said in verse 5, Jerusalem was going out to John the Baptist and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan, and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

So it was a baptism of repentance. That's what repentance is. It's confessing your sins. It's saying, what I've done, that's wrong.

I'm agreeing with God that what I've done is wrong. I repent. I shouldn't be doing this. This is not the way to be living. But when John the Baptist saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, so it's not just some, not just the occasional, many of the Pharisees, because it was the right thing to do, right?

[12:52] Outwardly, yeah, confess sin. That's a good thing to do. They would do the outward thing. So many of them came to be baptized, but he said to them, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Therefore, bear fruit in keeping with repentance. If you do repent, then show it. And do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.

For I say to you that from these stones, God is able to raise up children to Abraham. The ax is already laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance. Well, that's not enough, is it? But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I'm not fit to remove his sandals.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor, and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

[13:53] So he's making this distinction. John was, repentance, that's not enough. There's one coming after me that you need to be baptized with.

He'll fill you with the Holy Spirit. You need that baptism. So this spirit going out of the man, it's a picture of human repentance.

It's a picture of somebody saying, you know what, I'm going to give up what I've done. I'm going to stop that. This is something we see all the time in human efforts.

You know what, I'm going to stop. January 1st, right? January 1st is the day to clean house, sweep it up, to repent. Repent. We don't like to use the word repent, so we use New Year's resolutions.

But in reality, that's what it is. It's repentance. Saying, you know what, I've been eating too much.

Now I'm going to go on a diet. I haven't been working out enough. Now I'm going to go to the gym.

[15:03] You know, I've been drinking too much. Now I'm going to, you know, only drink every so often. You know, I've been gambling too much.

I'm going to only do scratch-offs. Whatever it is, we say, we're making a New Year's resolution.

We're going to stop that. And what does everybody say? The gyms are packed the first three weeks of January. Everybody's in there. Everybody's got their resolution.

But come February, what? The spot of Red Mill will open back up. Come that Super Bowl party, you're looking at those little cocktail weenies. You're looking at that tray of dip and chips.

You're like, okay, I'll just have a little bit. I can't, it's the Super Bowl. I've got to celebrate the Super Bowl. These attempts at resolution, nobody talks about when their resolution stopped.

Everybody says, oh, I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it. I'm going to tell people what I'm going to do. But it doesn't work. Every so often it works. But most of the time it doesn't work.

[16:08] Human attempts are doomed to fail. What does it say here? It says the house was swept. It was cleaned up. The house was put in order.

It was tidied up. But what was the real problem with the house? It was unoccupied. It was empty. And not empty as in the space was empty.

Unoccupied. No one was living there. If the Spirit goes out, it has to be replaced with something else. And it's a choice.

You can replace it with the Lord Jesus. Or you can replace it with the same habit you had plus seven others that are worse than it. You know, as an attorney, we have to do this continuing legal education.

And most of the time it's really good stuff on, oh, there's this new law passed on this will or whatnot. But they also pass this requirement. You have to have a certain number of credits of diversity-based thing.

[17:10] And so I always look for the oddball things. Like they talk about dementia being diversity. It's like, all right, sign me up for that class on dementia. But one time there was a guy who was talking about gambling.

Problem gambling. And he was an attorney, but his problem didn't start off with gambling. His problem started out with partying in college with alcohol. And I got to his first year of law school, and he found that it was so bad.

He said, I can't do this. I'm ruining my studies. And so with his willpower, he stopped. And he said, I'm not going to drink during law school. And he cut cold turkey, didn't drink during law school. And, well, during the first two years. Because the first two years, that's when you get your grades, that you have your class placement to get your job lined up for afterwards. So it really doesn't matter what you do your third year. So he started drinking.

And then when he started practicing law, he practiced law with some of his buddies who were also drinkers. And so he became an alcoholic. And so he went to his wife, and he said, I'm an alcoholic. [18:15] I need to quit. And he went to his friends. He said, I'm an alcoholic. I need to quit. I need you guys to hold me accountable. I'm going to quit. And last time he just quit with willpower. This time he said, I can't do it.

I need help. So what happened? And then he became what's called a closet alcoholic. And he detailed all these efforts he had. He was in a small town. Everybody knew what was up.

So he had eight different liquor stores. And he would rotate through to try and get his booze from different ones. So nobody would see that he was drinking all the time. And it became such a point that he got to, he would be in court, just shaking, not able to do anything.

And finally he said, my problem is so bad, I don't deserve to be with my wife. And he wrote a deed, signed the house over to her, took \$2,500 out of their checking account, bought a one-way ticket to Vegas, and was going to leave forever.

And he said that was the last thing he knew was getting on the plane. He had a blackout alcoholism episode and woke up next to two cops and ended up calling his wife.

[19:22] She forgave him, got him a ticket back home and said, you're going to rehab. And he went to rehab and he learned all these great things for coping with alcoholism. But he said there was one speech that he didn't pay close enough attention to.

And it talked about, if you have this addiction, you better be careful because you'll replace it with another one. You'll replace it with eating or with gambling. And it just, gambling was the thing for him.

Be a little bit here and there, a little bit here and there until he got to the point where he was taking money from his clients' funds. And he was gambling to the point where he didn't even like the gambling. It was just something to take the dopamine hit and just keep pulling the slot, pulling the slot.

And he would have blackout episodes gambling where he would not remember what went on and he just was going there. Finally, he turned himself, he said he was at the point where he had a gun against his head and he thought, this is my way out.

And then he looked at his family, he's like, I can't kill myself and leave them with this mess. And so he turned himself in and now he's a motivational speaker. But the thought is, human efforts to reform ourselves, yeah, just, but human efforts to reform ourselves are doomed to fail.

[20:36] It's, it's, you know, it's not something that we can snap our fingers and say, oh, we're going to deliver ourselves from this. It says that what is going to happen is you're either going to occupy the house or else that spirit is going to come back and bring seven more of its friends.

And they're going to, they're going to make the place worse than it was before. But he closes by saying in verse 45, this is the way we'll also be with this evil generation.

So he's not just applying it to the Pharisees, this talk of the generation. This is talking about Israel as a whole. And so there's a broader application to Israel here.

If you look at Israel when they left the Red Sea and came and entered the promised land, all the time that they were in the desert, all the time they were in the promised land, what were they struggling with?

Falling into idol worship. They would struggle with it. Then they'd turn back. The book of Judges, constant. Worshipping idols, getting to rock bottom, calling out for God, deliver, then a time of peace and then getting into idol worship and following that cycle all the time of idol worship.

[21:52] But then when they were taken away to Babylon and they came back, the nation largely gave up idol worship. The Jews largely worshiped God.

They said, you know, we're going to follow Yahweh. We're going to follow his way. And that's been the case from then. You don't see Jews now that are bowing down to Baal or bowing down to other, you know, they've always been, God has been their God.

But if you look at the book of Daniel, if you look at the book of Revelation, you see what's going to happen in the end times. There's this seven year period called the Tribulation.

And the Tribulation, it's going to start with the temple worship starting back up. And the Jews who don't acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah are going to start that.

But then halfway through, three and a half years, there's going to be an event that's called the Abomination of Desolation. Kind of rolls off the tongue, kind of snappy, but it's a really horrible thing.

[22:53] The Abomination of Desolation is when the Antichrist and the beast are going to be, there's kind of this unity of the beast from the ocean, the beast from the land, the Antichrist.

But he's going to go into the temple and he's going to set himself up as God. And it says in Revelation 13 that all the nations will worship him.

He's going to put away every other, Muslims, going to be gone. You know, Hindu, going to be gone. Everybody is going to be in the beast, Church of the Beast. And he is going to be God and he is going to be the idol, the Antichrist, the false Messiah that everyone is going to bow down to.

And that idolatry is going to be seven times worse. That's going to be the perfect, horrible, perfect in a horrible way.

The epitome of idolatry is going to be this Abomination of Desolation. And that's the way it's going to be. But we also know what goes on beyond that, that the beast will be killed, that Jesus will come back, he'll reign for a thousand years.

[24:02] It will be great. But looking at what's going to happen with Israel, the Israel who doesn't believe. Right now they're saying, well, we've got ourselves in order. We're doing the works of following God.

But they don't know his son. They haven't done his will. They haven't believed in his son. And so the end of them is going to be worse than even it was at the first.

Repentance isn't enough. If we want to be in the kingdom, repentance isn't enough. We have to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of a dry land, this spirit goes through waterless places seeking it.

It's dry. And it comes back to its house. Instead of being a dry house that it comes back to, it says in John 7, 38, that the Holy Spirit will indwell us and fill us with streams of living water.

We'll be a place that refreshes rather than a dry place. So repentance is not enough. Now we're going to go on to the second half of this passage, verses 46 through 50.

[25:14] We're going to see another parallel. We saw that works, repentance wasn't enough. Now we're going to see that status isn't enough. There's a parallel passage in Mark chapter 3 that I'm just going to read real quick to give us some more context.

So Mark 3, verse 20. And he came home, Jesus came home, and the crowd gathered again to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

When Jesus' own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of him, for they are saying, he's lost his senses. In verse 31, So Matthew here says he was speaking to the crowds.

Mark goes further to say that they were packed in so tightly in a house that they couldn't even eat bread. They couldn't even have a meal together. They were just sitting, standing, one all over another, just jam-packed in there.

Matthew says that his mother and brothers were seeking to speak to him. Mark says they came to take custody of him because he'd lost his senses. It's important to remember at this time that Jesus' brothers didn't believe in him.

[26:44] You look at John 7, 5. This is, you know, we see Jesus' brothers don't believe in him, and it says that they were almost trying to get him killed.

They said, don't stay here in Galilee. Go up to the festival. Go up to the feast in Jerusalem, where everybody's looking to kill you. So we see it's, we don't necessarily know why they come, but here we're seeing, so we saw opposition from the Pharisees.

Now we're seeing opposition from loved ones. And so we don't know exactly why they came. You know, it could have been that they were trying to intervene to protect their reputation. They're like, oh man, this guy is, he's going to, I don't want to be known as the guy whose brother, you know, got killed by so-and-so, you know, got killed by the Pharisees because he was a heretic.

I don't want to be known as the guy with the crazy brother. People are going to make fun of me. Some people, some of them, Mary probably was acting out of genuine concern. She probably was like, I don't want to see him get killed because of his, you know, he's going up against the Pharisees.

They're the most religious people. He can't go fighting with the Pharisees. And when we look at this opposition, opposition from the Pharisees, opposition from his family, his loved ones, the reality is that opposition from your family or from your loved ones is more insidious.

[28:12] You know, whether it's from good motives or not, the fact that that relationship is so close and that opposition is coming out of that relationship, that makes it a very, very tough, tough trial.

But the core problem, whether it was because they were concerned about their reputation or whether because they were worried about Jesus, the problem for both parties is that they didn't believe.

They didn't believe in who he was. Just like the Pharisees, they didn't believe that he was the Messiah, that he was God in human flesh. Because if he, if they believed that, they would have said, he can take care of himself.

And if he dies, it's because he allows himself to be killed. You know, they would have said, well, it doesn't matter if they revile him because he is the Messiah. But that wasn't their thought.

They didn't believe. So what's the king's response to this opposition? Well, he proclaims the rules of the new kingdom.

[29:07] And in here, this rule is that those who are closest to him are not his blood relatives. It's everyone who does the will of his father.

If you look at that phrase, will, will of my father, it's only used three times in the New Testament. The last time it's used in Matthew is back in Matthew 7, the passage I spoke from this spring with those who say, Lord, Lord.

He says, not everyone will enter the kingdom, but only those who do the will of my father. In John 6:40, that's the other place it's used. It says, this is the will of my father, that everyone who sees the son and believes in him will have eternal life.

And I myself will raise him up on the last day. Belief in the son, the will of my father, that's what Jesus is saying. He's saying, if you believe in me, then you're my brother.

You're my sister. You're my mother. What lessons do we kind of learn from this passage? You know, some people point to this passage and to, you know, others like Matthew 23, 8 that says, don't call anyone on earth your father.

[30:15] But they say that this family shows that the earthly family is replaced by the spiritual family. That now it doesn't matter about your earthly family at all. Your only obligations are to your spiritual family.

But that's really expanding the passage beyond what it says. There are other passages that do talk about the dangers of elevating family relationships above God.

We see that in like Matthew 10. That was the passage when we were at Dayspring and the power went out. We were hoping to be there to hear that. But that was kind of the tag team, four different people speaking on Matthew 10.

And the dangers of elevating your family above God. You know, I have anybody who wants their father to be, wants their father more than me, anybody who values their mother more than me, that's not what Jesus is looking for.

You have to forsake that. Other passages also talk about the conflict that can come when a family member believes in Christ. So that's earlier in Matthew 10. It talks about, you know, I haven't come to bring peace, but I've come to bring a sword.

[31:23] And I've come to set, you know, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law. I've come to set, you know, brother against brother. But so there's dangers of elevating family above God. There's dangers of family members trying to, you know, have conflict with you if you do come

to God.

And there's also passages that talk about those who, that there are blessings for those who sacrifice their earthly blessings, which includes houses, farms, and their family for God.

But this passage, if you try and read this to say this is the abandonment of your earthly family and this is the creation of a new spiritual family, it doesn't really agree with Jesus' other teachings.

So Matthew 19:19, he's going to repeat the command to honor father and mother. When he's talking with the lawyer, he says, you know, what commands are important? He said, well, honor your father and mother. And that's one of the ones that the lawyer says, well, I've done all these since my youth.

Honor your father and mother. So he repeats it. It's important to honor that family, earthly family relationship. And in Matthew 15, he repeats that again in the context of also talking about those who try and stiff, get out of their support obligations for their parents by saying that their resources are dedicated to God.

[32:37] Like, oh, mom, you're in a nursing home. Sorry, I can't help you. This money is going for the church steeple fund. You know, I've set this money apart for God. I can't help you.

He said, no, you're not honoring your father and mother. And then we look at when he's on the cross, Jesus is on the cross. He directs John to care for Mary. He says, you know, behold your son, behold your mother.

That was Jesus' responsibility in Jewish society as the firstborn to care for his widowed mother. But he was dying. He was passed that on to John. And so he took that earthly obligation.

And so it's, you can't say that earthly family doesn't matter anymore. You really can't take that approach. The other passages that seem to support it, like don't call any earthly man father, well, that's in the context of talking about rabbi.

Don't call any man rabbi. Don't call any man father. Don't call any man teacher. Talking about that elevating some man to this, you know, source of wisdom that the Bible should really be in.

[33:41] So what this passage is actually saying, it's not saying that abandon your earthly family, only your spiritual family. But what it does say is that when we believe in Christ, we receive a beautiful, amazing, intimate relationship with him.

You know, the Jews thought that they had this intimacy because they were sons. They were sons of Abraham. But what did John the Baptist remind them? He said, God could raise up sons of Abraham from stones.

Galatians 5, 7 says, those who are of faith are those who are sons of Abraham. It's only those who believe that are the true sons of Abraham.

It's not just because of your status. It's not just because of where you were born and what your lineage is. And as we talked about this morning in the breaking of bread, we have that beautiful adoption of sons.

He has taken stones and made sons of Abraham out of us. We were far off from God. We were alienated. And he has brought us so near.

[34:48] Do you realize what it means to have that relationship with Christ? The thing that came to my mind, and I know I'm going to start raising flags here because I'm going into the political realm, but it's for an important reason.

Hunter Biden. Hunter Biden is a sex addict. He's a crackhead. He's a gun-running felon.

But you know what? The President of the United States loves him because he is his son. And he has not pushed him away.

Our President has actually done a great job of showing fatherly love, at least publicly. Who knows what goes on privately. But he has taken him and said, I'm not abandoning him. I'm not saying he's the black sheep.

He said, I love him. And he's drawn him close to him. He's refused to push him away. He gave a speech and he said, I'm the President, but I'm also a father.

[35:54] And despite all the things that Hunter Biden has done that could have pushed him away, he still says, he's my son. I love him. That's the relationship that we have with Christ.

That he says, you are now as close as that. No matter what you do, when you believe, you have this relationship with me. What an amazing access we have to God the Father.

To the Lord Jesus Christ. Through simple belief. Not through our good works. Not through our repentance. Not through, you know, if we are born a Jew.

But through belief. That we can come as close as that. That he loves us. He says, I will forgive you for what you did. Every sin that you did, I took its penalty on me.

Come and be my child. That is a love that transforms us. That is a love that we say, we love him.

[36:57] Why? Because he first loved us. We see the beauty of his love for us. So we're going to invite the musicians up here. But I just want to remind us, despite this growing opposition from Pharisees and family, King Jesus reminds us what he's been saying all along.

Belief is the key to the kingdom. Not works. Not status. We don't change our lives by repenting and trying hard to do good works and making those New Year's resolutions and having willpower.

We change it by inviting him to live in us. To put the Holy Spirit in our lives. We Gentiles who were once far off don't have to be intimidated by the special place of the Jews because by believing in Christ, we have that intimacy that earthly families can only dream about.

God is setting up his kingdom. Belief is the ticket. Let's continue to believe more and more. Let's go.