

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: December 30, 2018

Sermon Title: Jesus Christ is LORD of the SABBATH

Sermon Series: Matthew

Text: Matthew 12:1-50

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Theme: Jesus is everything He claims to be. We are now forced to either accept Him or reject Him.

Introduction:

“C. S. Lewis was an Oxford medieval Literature scholar, popular writer, Christian apologist, and former atheist. He used the argument outlined below in a series of BBC radio talks later published as the book *Mere Christianity*.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.”¹

What if instead of making New Year's resolutions, we simply resolved to confess Jesus as Savior and Lord each and every day? What if we resolved to see the Scripture as a single Story with Jesus at the center? What if we determined to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the Seed Promise and the completion of the Blood Picture? What if we confessed that Jesus is the fulfillment of all Old Testament promises, prophecies, and promises? How would such a simply confession change our daily perspective on the horizontal and perhaps even begin to shape our worldview and thus our goals and habits? Friends that is what I believe the Scripture calls us to.

1. What is the **author's structure** of this passage? Please a) show *sections with verse references*, b) state the *author's emphasis*, and c) explain what *strategies* you used to see this structure.

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (vv. 1-14)

“Matthew gives two examples of how Jesus' yoke is easy and his burden light (11:30).”²

A. Harvesting on the Sabbath (vv. 1-8)

² **But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath."**

- SOMETHING greater than the temple (v. 6 [The Garden])
- SOMETHING greater than Jonah (v. 41 [The Prophets])
- SOMETHING greater than Solomon (v. 42 [The Kings])

B. Healing on the Sabbath (vv. 9-14)

¹⁰ And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" --so that they might accuse Him.

¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

[This story stands in stark contrast to the yoke of Jesus. His "yoke" brings rest and their "yoke" brings enslavement.]

Jesus is God's Chosen Servant (vv. 15-21)

[Jesus withholds Himself from those who oppose Him. This is in keeping with Matthew 11:25-27. The Father hides Himself from the wise and understanding. No one knows the Father except those the Son reveals Him.]

Jesus is the Son of David (vv. 22-37)

²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

³⁰ "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

³⁴ "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

[The "word | words" are those spoken of concerning Jesus as the Christ. These "word | words" are confession words. Either you believe Him to be who He is or you reject Him. There is no middle ground. It is this confession "word | words" that will either justify you or condemn you. All of the imagery is tied to this idea of confession.]

"Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the unchanging conviction that Jesus is evil. In essence, the only 'unforgivable' sin is a conclusive rejection of Christ."³

Jesus is the Son of Man (vv. 38-45)

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

³⁹ But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

⁴⁵ "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. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation."

[Because of their unbelief the witness from the past shall condemn them. Those who reject Him are more wicked than anyone else.]

Summary - Those who believe in Jesus are the true People of God (vv. 46-50)

⁵⁰ "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

- What is the Father's will? (v. 50)
 - "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; **listen to Him!**'" (Matt. 17:5).
 - ²⁸ "Therefore they said to Him, 'What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?'
²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, **that you believe in Him whom He has sent**'" (John 6:28, 29).

Jesus terms belief in Him as the work of God. These Jews were thinking of various deeds of the Pharisaic type and rules. Jesus turns their minds to the central fact. "This simple formula contains the complete solution of the relation of faith and works" (Westcott).⁴

We seemed to muddy this simple idea. Jesus is the big deal. The nature of the Triune God is such that to believe in one is to believe in all three. You cannot say you know/love God and reject Jesus. You cannot reject the Holy Spirit without blaspheming God. The entirety of the Christian life is birthed from, built on and around Jesus. What you think and do with Him is the issue.

Author's Emphasis:

Jesus is everything He claims to be. We are now forced to either accept Him or reject Him.

Author's Strategies:

Each paragraph presents Jesus as Messiah. Each paragraph also has the religious leaders publically opposing Him and privately seeking His death. The summary statement shows how those who are trusting in their tie to Abraham are not the people of God. Only those who believe Jesus to be the Messiah are a part of God's family.

2. How does the **context inform the meaning** of this passage? Answer this question using a) the *literary context* (the passages on either side), b) the *historical context* (circumstances and culture of the audience), and c) the *biblical context* (connections to other places in the Bible).

Literary Context:

The King's Enemies Confronted (11-13)

Historical Context:

Jesus is the Messiah | Christ | King. Everyone will either accept Him or reject Him. Those are the only two options available. The religious establishment publically oppose Him and privately seek His demise. All those who accept | follow Him are His true family members. This pushes against the idea of privilege because of descent.

Biblical Context:

Each paragraph presents Jesus as Messiah. Each paragraph also has the religious leaders publically opposing Him and privately seeking His death. The summary statement shows how those who are trusting in their tie to Abraham are not the people of God. Only those who believe Jesus to be the Messiah are a part of God's family.

3. In light of the emphasis of this passage in its context, state the **author's main idea** for *his audience* (in one short sentence).

4. What parts of this passage **connect to the gospel** of Jesus Christ? What *particular facet of the gospel* is in view? [What are its Christological / Christo-centric contributions?]

Q. How does this descriptive in this chapter contribute to and advance our Christology?

A.

5. In light of your gospel connection, what **argument** (one short sentence) will you make to **your audience**? What **applications** from this argument will you make for the believer? The unbeliever?

To the believing: Keep confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord. Let everyone know that you believe Jesus is enough in this life and in the life to come.

To the unbelieving: No matter what else you might do or think about a world of thought, what you do with and think about Jesus will determine the destiny of your immortal soul. Will you accept/confess Him as Savior and Lord today?

We know the Father through the Son (Matt. 11:25-30). Matthew 12 will show how the many who profess to know the Father do not since they reject the Father's Son. We must read the whole *Story* in order to "feel" the weight of the unfolding.

Matthew 12

In chapter twelve we have open opposition to the person and work of Jesus Christ by the religious establishment. They go from lecturing Him about the Law (v. 2) to questioning about the Law with evil intent (v. 9).

¹ "At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, 'Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.' ³ But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, ⁴ how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? ⁵ Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? ⁶ But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath'" (Matt. 12:1-8).

I still find it amazing how quickly Matthew moves us through the fulfillment of *Story* to that of rejection. The tone of reception by the Jews of Jesus is part of God's unfolding *Story*. We cannot forget Matthew 11:25-30 as we plunge into the darkness of Matthew 12. Their rejection and Genesis 3 are part of God's *Story*. It isn't a part we wish to own. Often we dismiss it by using such language as "free will" or "allowing," but there is divine intent in the unfolding of God's revelation.

⁹"Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?' --so that they might accuse Him. ¹¹And He said to them, 'What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.' ¹³Then He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand!' He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him. ¹⁵But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all, ¹⁶and warned them not to tell who He was. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ¹⁸'BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL is WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. ¹⁹HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS. ²⁰A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY. ²¹AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE'" (Matt. 12:9-21).

Again, Jesus refuses to throw His "pearls" to the "swine." Verses 16 and following speak of Israel's rejection for the purpose of Gentile inclusion. This is Romans 9-11.

²²"Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. ²³All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, 'This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?' ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.' ²⁵And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, 'Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. ²⁸But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. ³⁰He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. ³¹Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. ³³Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. ³⁵The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. ³⁶But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned'" (Matt. 12:22-37).

Jesus is very popular among the people. To diffuse His popularity the religious establishment seeks to discredit Him. Jesus responds to their accusation with an illustration. The illustration shows how illogical their argument is. He drives home His point with precision (v. 30). He makes it quite easy. You are either for me or against me. The "unforgivable sin" is to reject the

authority of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is inviting everyone to come through the presentation of Jesus Christ. To reject His invitation is to remain unforgiven.

Verse 33 goes back to the fruit of Matthew 7. You cannot have good fruit apart from a good tree. Good fruit does not produce good trees. Good trees produce good fruit. Those who reject Jesus reveal the darkness of their own heart. Their unbelief is the evil fruit from their evil tree/heart. Their evil words come from their evil heart (v. 34). Verses 35-37 deal specifically with the matter of receiving/believing or rejecting/unbelieving. Those who flippantly reject Jesus reveal the darkness of their own souls and this unbelief shall be revealed in the Day of Judgment. Jesus is not teaching word justification, but **issues of the heart**. Your words reveal your heart. You are either for Jesus or you are against Jesus and the Day of Judgment will reveal this.

The Day of Judgment is the Day of revealing when everyone's standing before God will be unfolded and fully exposed. You either have Jesus as your great High Priest or you stand before God on your own merit having rejected His. O what a horrible day of revelation that will be for some and O what a happy day of revelation that will be for others.

³⁸ "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' ³⁹ But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; ⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. ⁴³ Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. ⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ 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. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation'" (Matt. 12:38-45).

Jesus is wise to their ill intent. Their questioning is not for learning, but for accusing. His use of the Old Testament narrative is compelling. Throughout His instruction He speaks to "its" veracity. In every Old Testament story there is more. Every one of the stories points to Jesus Christ. Jonah and Solomon pointed to Jesus Christ.

In verse 43 is Jesus picking up His thought from verse 26? All of this could be part of one story. Jesus is casting out the demon from the nation of Israel, but they refuse to embrace Him. He is bringing in His kingdom but they wish another. With His arrival and the rejection of Him by the nation, their last condition is worse than the first.

²⁰ "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them" (2 Pet.2:20, 21).

I believe there is overlap between our Lord's words here and what we read of in the Book of Hebrews (6:4-6; 10:26).

⁴⁶ “While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ Someone said to Him, ‘Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.’ ⁴⁸ But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, ‘Behold My mother and My brothers!’ ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (Matt. 12:46-50).

Herein lays the bottom line. **What is God’s will but to believe in the one He has sent.** You have not obeyed God if you reject the Son. The religious establishment looked to the Law for their righteousness and refused to embrace the one of whom the Law spoke. How deep is the tragedy of rejection one so close. The will of God is not found in the letter of the Law, but in the spirit of the Law. The Law points to Jesus. He is the fulfillment of everything preceding Him.

Matthew 12 is pivotal. Here we encounter the open refusal and outright planning to destroy Jesus Christ. They cannot, they will not accept the fulfillment of God’s promise and the completion of God’s blood picture. How dark is the night and yet from this comes light to the Gentiles and hope for the world.

Matthew 13

Jesus speaks of soils to explain why some receive Him and others do not. The soil parables reflect the fruit/tree statement of Matthew 12.

It appears we have a third section marker (see also Matt. 4:23-25; 9:35-38). There is a similar thought in Matthew 12:46-50. The issue is one of genuine discipleship. None of this makes sense if separated from the larger progression through Matthew.

Matthew 12 is pivotal. In Matthew 12 the religious establishment is set forth as antagonists to Jesus and His work. He explains why this is so. This section marker instead of celebrating all who come are healed leaves us with “He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.” This is critical. The issue with Jesus Christ is fundamentally one of authority. Can we fix ourselves or do we need help?

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis%27s_trilemma

² *Gospel Transformation Bible*, Matthew 12:1-14.

³ *Gospel Transformation Bible*, Matthew 12:31-32.

⁴ A.T. Robertson’s *NT Word Pictures* on John 6:29.