

Tensions Rise

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[0 : 00] Well, this past week we had some visitors stop by the building. Evidently, last century, there was a leader from the Baha'i faith who came and spoke in this building.

And so every once in a while we'll have people who are adherents to the Baha'i faith come and kind of check out the historicity of what happened. And if you're not aware, those people who align themselves with the Baha'i faith, the Baha'i faith embraces a kind of universal salvation that all religions lead to the same God.

Well, here we are and we have these people visiting the building who hold to a different belief than we do. And so I found it an opportunity just to ask very respectfully a question to this couple.

And I said, well, what do you make of Jesus? And it quickly became evident that both the husband and the wife, their understanding of who Jesus is was based upon what other people had told them. That they hadn't seen in the Gospels themselves what the claim of the Gospels is about Jesus.

What he says of himself. And so I asked, well, what do you think about Jesus' claims to be God?

[1 : 20] They're quick to say, well, we believe he's a prophet. And he's like a God. There's a lot of opinions out there about who Jesus really is, isn't there?

This morning, I just want to lay before I say, would the real Jesus please come forward? And in Matthew 12, the real Jesus comes forward.

We're going to see a series of conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees this morning. Tensions are rising. What's becoming clear is there is an incompatibility between who Jesus is and what he claims the Scriptures teach and what the Pharisees claim the Scriptures teach.

Jesus says of himself that he is humble, gentle of heart. He's revealing that he is the Messiah, the Christ, the all-authoritative King who has come to establish the saving reign of God on earth.

That's what the whole book of the Gospel of Matthew is about from beginning to end. To show that Jesus is the Christ. The Pharisees, though, have rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

[2 : 37] That's just going to become more and more clear as we move through the Gospel of Matthew. They reject him. They reject his teaching. They think he's a contrarian, that he is disruptive, and that he's a threat.

How about you? Coming in this morning. What do you think about the real Jesus? Maybe you've come in and just to be all honest, you know that you've been mocking Jesus.

You think that religion is a crutch. That Jesus is truly a historical figure, but you know what? All the stuff about him has just kind of gone to a little too far.

You may say religion is okay, it helps people, but you yourself don't buy it. Before you write Jesus completely off, would you listen this morning to what the Gospel of Matthew reveals about him?

Would you take it to heart what he claims about himself? Or maybe you've come into the building this morning and you're kind of on the fence. We're going to see a group of people in Matthew 12 to say, they're going to see him do a miracle and they're going to ask, can this be the Son of David?

[3 : 54] And maybe this morning you're approaching Jesus that way. Can this be the one? Can this be the one Messiah? Well, it's good that you're asking the question, but just to let you know up front, you can't stay neutral on who Jesus is.

You can't stay neutral on his claims. You're going to decide. You're going to have to decide whether he is the Christ or not. You're going to decide whether you're going to follow him. And if you are a follower of Jesus and you've come in here this morning and you're kind of like thinking, well, life's tough.

It's hard to be a follower of Jesus. And you know what, sometimes I kind of wonder if it's all worth it. This morning you're going to see some Christological fireworks out of Matthew 12.

And my prayer for you today is that you're going to find yourself strengthened in saying, oh, he is so worth it. He is awesome. So this morning, here's how we're going to proceed. We're going to walk through all of Matthew 12. We're going to walk through the four conflicts. Let me just summarize. There's a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees over plucking of grains on the Sabbath.

[5 : 05] That's the first one. The second conflict is a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on Jesus healing on the Sabbath. The third conflict is a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on by whose authority, power, Jesus is casting out demons.

The Pharisees say, by Satan you cast out demons. The second conflict is a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on the Sabbath. The final conflict is over the request for a sign. So Sabbath, Sabbath, Satan, sign.

That's what we're going to do. So four conflicts. And after that, we're going to come back. And I want you to see something in this passage that seems kind of out of place at first.

You kind of read it and you're kind of like, what is that doing there? We'll come back to that. And that's going to help you realize the good news of who this man is.

We're going to see the real Jesus this morning. So let's start by looking at Matthew 12, verses 1-8. The first, this conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees.

[6 : 14] Verse 1, we see the situation. Jesus and His disciples are traveling on the Sabbath. And there were actually regulations of the day on how far you could travel on the Sabbath.

And Jesus and His disciples were well within those regulations. But the disciples were hungry. And they're walking through a grain field. And His disciples start picking grains of head off the crops.

And all of a sudden, there's this Pharisee on the scene. Whip, whip, whip. Whip, whip, whip, whip, whip. Yeah, I'm Jacob. Jacob Ben David.

I'm with the GPD, Galilean Pharisee Department. Yeah, I'm here to enforce Sabbath regulations. It appears as though, verse 2, your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.

Leon Morris in his commentary helps us to understand what's going on. They were plucking grain, which technically is reaping. They were rubbing to separate the grain from the husk, which was technically threshing.

[7 : 21] They were blowing away the husks off the grain, which was technically winnowing. And altogether, technically, this is food preparation. Something that you're not to do on the Sabbath.

Whip, whip, whip. So according to the man-made regulations of the Pharisees, Jesus' disciples were declared guilty for breaking the Sabbath. The Pharisees were seeking to honor the Sabbath in a way that stayed nicely within the regulations, the man-made regulations, the tradition of the elders.

So the issue here is the right honoring of the Sabbath. The Pharisees insist a good Jew must adhere to the tradition of the elders.

And there were so many rules governing the Sabbath, no one person could really remember them all. But Jesus doesn't roll that way.

Jesus responds in verse 3. And the way He responds is not by appealing to the tradition of the elders. He responds by pointing them right to the Scriptures.

[8 : 33] And Jesus points to two different passages that raise exceptions to what they are saying. First, He points to David in 1 Samuel 21.

You see that in verse 3. He says this, Have you not read that David? What David did. And back in the Sermon on the Mount, He's talking to the people and He's saying, Have you not heard?

There were uneducated people. Now He's talking to the Pharisees who are well-educated. Have you not read? Have you not read what 1 Samuel 12 says about David?

David, on His fleeing from Saul, He shows up in a town and talks to the priest and says, Hey, you got any bread for my boys? My guys?

The priest says, No, we don't have any common bread, but we do have some holy bread. And the holy bread of the time was reserved only for the priests to eat. And so the priest asked David, David, are your guys clean?

[9 : 34] Are they holy? And David says, Yeah, they're holy. And so the priest gives them the holy bread intended for just the priests. And so what Jesus is saying, Hey, that was kind of out of bounds.

But the point of Jesus bringing up is saying, David was never condemned for that in the Scriptures. He goes on to raise another point.

Let me just say this. Jesus is making the point that there's a place for mercy. Mercy trumps the practice of ceremonial law.

There was a need and it was met. The second appeal, he points to a practice that the Pharisees would have been very familiar with as well. In verse 5, he says this, Have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?

What does that mean? Well, priests would serve on the Sabbath. They would work on the Sabbath in order to facilitate all of the offerings and all of the other things going on in the Sabbath in the temple.

[10:52] And so Jesus is raising, are you guys not aware of what the Scriptures say about priests serving on the Sabbath? And the point is that there are situations when godly people profane the Sabbath but are guiltless in God's eyes.

So you take those two together and Jesus has just demonstrated through two biblical examples that the Pharisees aren't right.

These two examples contradict what they are saying. And so Jesus is saying what my disciples are doing is not unlawful on the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath does not mean we are unable to pluck grain and eat it as we advance the kingdom of heaven.

And so then he drops a rebuke in verse 7. He's quoted, he's already mentioned this back in Matthew 9. He says, And if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

You would not have condemned my disciples if you knew what this meant. But the Pharisees, if the Pharisees were actually looking to love their neighbors, as themselves, they would have been merciful, not insistent on keeping small details of man-made traditions.

[12:20] They would know what God meant when he said, I desire mercy and not sacrifice. They wouldn't have condemned them. They would have said, Yeah, you do what you need. You advance the kingdom. You go.

What Jesus is saying to the Pharisees is, you don't get God's heart revealed in the Scripture. My disciples are guiltless.

The Sabbath isn't meant to deny mercy. The Sabbath is actually a mercy. Jesus makes some claims here.

Did you notice that? Verse 6, I tell you something greater than the temple is here. Priests serve in the temple. The two examples he gave, both with David and in the temple service, focuses on priests.

Priests are part of it. What Jesus is saying is, hey, priests up to me were imperfect, but you're looking at the perfect priest. He goes on to say that the Son of Man, it's a direct reference from Daniel chapter 7, it's a messianic reference, and then he says, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

[13:36] You've got to look at it in verse 8, for the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. That is a huge claim. What he's saying is this. He's got authority over the Sabbath.

The Sabbath belongs to him. He knows what it's meant for. The Sabbath is to refresh, not to condemn. The Sabbath is to give mercy, not to be merciless.

The Sabbath is to bless God's people, not to stress God's people. Jesus and the Pharisees have fundamentally different understandings of how to observe the Sabbath.

You've got the yoke, the teaching of the Pharisees, which was really heavy. And then you've got the yoke of Jesus, which was light and easy. Jesus won, Pharisees zero.

Let's move on to the next conflict. We see this in verses 9-14. It's again a conflict related to the Sabbath, but Jesus healing on the Sabbath. The situation, we see in verse 10, note verse 9, he went on from there and entered their synagogue.

[14:48] And so Jesus, from that first conflict, he doesn't linger. He moves on. He kind of withdraws a little bit, which should raise some questions, like, why is he doing that? But here in verse 10, he shows up in a synagogue and there's a man there with a withered hand.

And apparently, there are Pharisees there too. Whip, whip, whip. Yeah, Simon Ben-Jacob, I'm here with the GPD.

I noticed that there's a man with a withered hand here. Well, I'm just kind of wondering, Jesus, is it lawful to heal him on the Sabbath?

And Matthew inserts in verse 10 that he's asked that in order to accuse Jesus.

The Pharisees held that someone could only be healed on the Sabbath if that person was on the verge of death. So if you broke your leg on the Sabbath, so sorry, you're going to have to wait to the next day to set that.

[15:57] So the issue here is again what's permitted on the Sabbath and this Pharisee is baiting Jesus. He's saying, hey, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

And look at Jesus' response in verse 11. Jesus says, which one of you who has a sheep if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath would not take hold of it and lift it out? He's saying, hey, guys, let's be honest, seriously.

If you've got a sheep, if you've got an animal, you're going somewhere, it falls on the pit on the Sabbath, what are you going to do? He's going to pull it out, right? Right! He assumes that they're going to say yes. And then he kind of drops what's called a how much more argument in verse 12. So he's established the fact that people are going to pull out their sheep from a pit on the Sabbath because they want to do good to their sheep. And so Jesus then goes on to say in verse 12, how much more value is a man than a sheep?

Get the logic? If you're willing to do good to your animal on the Sabbath, how much more should you be willing to do good to a fellow image bearer of God?

[17:14] People are more valuable than sheep. So he draws a conclusion in verse 12.

So it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath. You've got to understand what he's saying. It's just not permitted to do good on the Sabbath.

It's lawful. It's right. It's to be done.

It fulfills the intent of the law. Showing mercy to others. Loving your neighbor. And so there's a subtle claim here. He's again saying I'm the Lord of the Sabbath. Let's make sure we know what the Sabbath is meant for.

In Mark 2, he says man was not made for the Sabbath, but Sabbath was made for man. Man? So the point of all this is this.

[18:16] On the Sabbath, God has given this day to refresh his people. To show mercy to his people.

To bless his people. We do good to one another. It's the right thing to do on the Sabbath. Sabbath. And then he pulls out a trump card.

In verse 13, then he said to the man, stretch out your hand. The man stretches out his hand and then in verse 14, what we see is it's fully restored.

Now, could you imagine that Pharisee what he's thinking at that point? Not only was he kind of rebuked, but then Jesus goes ahead and does the good thing on the Sabbath.

He does the very thing that he was being kind of baited on. He heals this man. So Jesus and the Pharisees have a fundamentally different understanding of observing the Sabbath.

[19:19] A day to do good to others. You do it if your animal got stuck in a pit. How much more should we do that for fellow image bearers?

Jesus 2, Pharisee 0. Did you notice verse 14? The Pharisees went out and start to conspire.

Tensions are rising. You know they start conspiring? They start to conspire to do what? To destroy Jesus. Now, that's pretty interesting because it is the Sabbath.

And I find it quite ironic that these Pharisees go now to plan to destroy Jesus on the Sabbath. It shows you the hardness of their hearts.

They don't believe. They're standing against. Conflict number three. Jesus has a conflict with the Pharisees about casting out demons.

[20:23] It's in chapter 12 verses 22 through 37. Now, I know you're probably wondering, hey, we just skipped verses 15 through 21. And it's like, that's okay. We're going to come back to it.

It's going to make sense. But here's the situation going on in verses 22 through 37. A demon, 22 and 23, a demon-oppressed man, unable to see or speak, is brought to Jesus, and Jesus heals him.

And he heals him by casting out the demon that was oppressing him. That doesn't mean that all blindness and inability to speech is directly the cause of demonic oppression.

But in this case, it was. And so the man is immediately able to speak and see, and I would have just loved to know what he said. But in verse 23, what we see is this.

There was a group of people there who were watching this take place, and all the people were amazed. And they said, can this be the son of David? And what they're saying there is this.

[21 : 25] Could this be the Messiah? Could this be the one who's descended of David who's going to reign? 2 Samuel 7. Is this the guy? Is he the Christ?

The one who would inaugurate an everlasting kingdom? And in verse 24, we see the accusation. When the Pharisees hear about it, they kind of go crazy.

And by the way, it's not because it's the healing itself, and it doesn't seem like it's even the amazement of the crowd, it's what the crowd is saying. Can this be the Messiah?

And so the Pharisees are, are they actually thinking that this guy could be the Messiah? We've got to squelch this real quick. And so what they say is, you can read it in verse 24.

It's not, they say, it's only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons. And Beelzebul, the prince of demons, is Satan.

[22 : 40] They're reaching. They don't want him to get any kind of messianic credit, Jesus. And so they're saying, no, no, no, no, no. That is not the power of God at work.

That's the power of Satan at work. He's not the Christ. He's casting out demons by the power of Satan. So the issue here is, whose power is Jesus casting out demons?

Satan or the Holy Spirit? And Jesus responds with a multi-stage response. And so in verse 25-30, the first stage in what Jesus is basically saying is, are you guys ridiculous?

If you look at verse 25, he says this, 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's divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? His point is like, hey, Satan's not dumb. Even Satan knows not to divide his own kingdom by casting out demons in his name.

[23 : 46] The demons are doing his work. Why would he cast them out? It's a ridiculous argument that the Pharisees are making, but hard hearts are stubborn hearts, and hard hearts are unwilling to see the things the way they are.

Hard hearts have a hard time admitting when they are mistaken. So, Jesus is saying, hey, what you're saying is actually pretty stupid.

And then in verse 27, he takes it a step further. He says about the sons of the Pharisees, he says, if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?

Therefore, they will be your judges. And so, what's going on right there is, there was a group of people associated with the Pharisees who were casting out demons too. And what Jesus is saying, hey, man, I've been casting out demons for a while now.

I've been casting out way more demons than your boys have been casting out demons. And if I'm casting these demons out by the power of Satan and having a tremendous effect, whose power are your guys doing it by?

[24 : 55] Then he goes, they will be your judges. You should go ask them by whose power I am casting these demons out. They will give you an honest answer. And then he goes in verse 28.

He says this, but if it's by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. It's like he's saying, well, here's a possible alternative that I'm actually casting out demons by the power of God.

that it's the Holy Spirit working through me to cast out the very demons you're accusing me of casting out by Satan. And if it is that, here's what that means.

If I'm casting out demons by the Holy Spirit, it means the kingdom of heaven has come upon earth. And if the kingdom of heaven has come upon earth, that really seems to say that I am the Messiah. But they were unwilling to admit that. And he gives this illustration. It's kind of continuing with this thought of if I do this by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[26 : 14] In verse 29, he says, 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.

If I do this by the Spirit of God, that means I am binding the strong man Satan. It means that I am entering his domain and plundering his house for my kingdom.

The kingdom is advancing in other words. It's a sign. If it's by the Spirit of God that he's doing this, it is signaling to everyone who has eyes to see that the kingdom has arrived and that the king is getting it done.

Advancing his kingdom. So verse 30 is the conclusion. Jesus says, whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters. He's saying you can't be neutral, guys. Either you're with me or you're against me.

Either it's by the power of Satan I'm doing what I'm doing or it's by the Spirit of God I'm doing what I'm doing. If it's by the Spirit of God the kingdom has come. That's his first stage.

[27 : 29] The second stage he goes a little talks about some things that might be uncomfortable for us to hear. In verses 31 and 32 he goes on to say start talking about blasphemy.

Blasphemy of the Spirit. Again this is in response to the charge by the Pharisees that he's casting out demons by Satan. And Jesus is responding to that in verses 31 and 32.

And what Jesus is basically saying is this. You have no idea what you're saying right now. Your hearts are so hard they point to the reality that you are now beyond the scope of God's forgiveness. You are saying things that are condemning you. The context here clarifies what Jesus means by blasphemy against the Spirit.

Now I'm guessing if you're a Christian in the room you've heard that phrase before the unforgivable sin and you can start stressing out a little bit and you're like have I blasphemed the Holy Spirit because if I blasphemed the Holy Spirit that means I am beyond the scope of God's forgiveness and I certainly don't want to be like that.

[28 : 42] The context makes it clear what Jesus means by blasphemy of the Spirit. Speaking against the Spirit. Remember I just want to see this remember in verse 28 Jesus is claiming to cast out demons by the Spirit of God.

And what blasphemy is is attributing a work of God to someone other than God. Jesus himself was accused of blasphemy back in Matthew chapter 9 remember he tells this paralytic your sins are forgiven the Pharisees are like only God can forgive sins you're blaspheming and then what Jesus does in response is in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth get up walk gets up and walks it points to the fact that he's not blaspheming he's God in the flesh now Jesus is not being accused of blasphemy here he is actually saying you guys are blasphemy you guys are attributing and he talks about two kinds of blasphemy there's the blasphemy against the Son of Man that can be forgiven and then there's the blasphemy against the Spirit which cannot be forgiven it is unforgivable an example of blasphemy that can be forgiven is a word against the

Son of Man it's like denying that Jesus is the Christ you go a long time in your life and you're like he's not God he's not my master he's not who he says he is that can be forgiven remember the apostle Paul remember how long he persecuted the church do you know why he persecuted the church because the church was proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ but Paul was forgiven of that so what is blasphemy against the Spirit and why is it unforgivable well contextually blasphemy against the Spirit is not only denying the Holy Spirit's work not only denying the Holy Spirit's power and casting out demons but it's actually attributing the Holy Spirit's work of casting out demons to Satan that's blasphemy against the Holy Spirit it's attributing to Satan what the Holy Spirit is doing and what it reflects is a hardened heart a heart so hard that it is not willing to consider that this is a work of God a hard heartedness so set in its ways it sets you outside of forgiveness God hands you over it's a blasphemy that goes too far and so when Jesus says it will not be forgiven in this age or in the age to come what he's saying is never if you reach that point of settled defiance against God and saying there is no way the Holy Spirit can do that that is a work of Satan you've crossed over generally speaking those who are concerned about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because you're concerned about it it usually indicates you haven't blasphemed the Holy Spirit because those people who do blaspheme the Holy Spirit they don't care they don't it doesn't matter they are set in their ways and there's no turning back but let me tell you something I'm not sure if you notice this I frankly find it amazing that God in His grace would forgive anyone against blaspheming the Son of Man could you imagine that God is willing to forgive that what a God so this is a sober warning to those willing to hear it who have yet to blaspheme the Spirit but maybe you've already blasphemed the Son don't go there you still can be forgiven that's stage two stage three of

[33 : 12] Jesus response to this charge that he's been casting out demons by Satan is in verses 33 through 37 and what he basically says is this hey there's a cause and effect relationship between what's in your heart and what comes out of your mouth and your evil heart that has rejected me as the Messiah and it's just becoming harder and harder as you see more and more of my work the harder it gets the worse you speak what you value most will inevitably show up in your

speech and what Jesus is saying to these Pharisees is your evil heart towards me is revealed by your evil speech attributing to the Holy Spirit that this work of casting out demons is by Satan what Jesus is saying is right there it's like your words condemn you it's your words justify the verdict that you're beyond forgiveness these three stages of

Jesus argument in response to this charge is he goes from ridiculous you guys seriously Satan casting out Satan it makes no sense to blasphemous do you have any idea that what you're saying is horrid it's wrong to finally saying your words condemn you Jesus three Pharisees zero the last conflict is over the request for a sign in verses 38 through 42 situation some scribes and Pharisees in verse 38 they ask Jesus for a sign show us something to demonstrate who you're claiming to be but what you need to understand is the Pharisees are being less than genuine in Mark and Luke when you read similar accounts of this the asking of a sign is followed by to test him the Pharisees really don't want to be convinced that Jesus is the Messiah they just want him to do something so that they can accuse him more of things and so they're not asking for a sign to convince them that they are to follow Jesus so let me put it this way what is being shown about the Pharisees is they're not the poor in spirit they're not those who mourn their sin they're not the meek they're not the harassed and helpless they're not they don't feel the weight the weary and weight of being under something and needing rest that's not them we're going to see in just a moment that they're not bruised reeds they're not smoldering wicks of people they're hard hearted they want Jesus destroyed the issue here is proving to us what you claim to be and Jesus will have nothing of it his response is again to point to two different passages in the scriptures he points to Jonah the sign of Jonah he was in a whale belly of a whale for three days and three nights and then he says the son of man is going to be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights that's your sign what he's about to do his death burial and resurrection that will be your sign to this generation but you're going to reject it and he goes on to say just as as he goes on to say this the Ninevites who were Gentiles when they heard the preaching of Jonah and realized this guy came from the belly of the whale to preach to us they repented they turned they turned to the living God and that Jesus says something greater than Jonah is here Jonah was an imperfect prophet Jesus is a perfect prophet he already knows this generation this evil generation they're not going to respond even to his death burial and resurrection he already knows but he still goes on to say someone greater than Jonah is here and then he points to in verse 42 I believe this other biblical example the queen of the south the queen of Sheba in 1 Kings 10 she came to hear and benefit from the wisdom of Solomon and the queen of Sheba will on the last day rise up and condemn this generation because she responded to the wisdom of Solomon and someone greater than Solomon is here a greater king with a greater wisdom Jesus and so his response to the request for signs hey you had the sign of Jonah and now I'm telling you I'm going to be dead buried and raised and the Ninevites these Gentiles are going to stand up and condemn you and then the queen of Sheba came who is another Gentile and when she rises up with this generation she's going to condemn you too because she responded to the wisdom given to her and someone greater than Solomon is here Jesus refuses the request of a sign and tells the Pharisees that they will be condemned by Gentiles who repented for far less from a lesser prophet and a lesser king they stand condemned Jesus four Pharisees zero in each of these conflicts

[39 : 15] Jesus is graciously and firmly responding to them and it's the real Jesus and we're left asking kind of the question who is this guy and that's where I want to point you back to verses 15 through 21 who is this guy so far in chapter 12 we've seen some significant claims about Jesus Jesus has said I am the son of man he says it three times in this chapter verse 8 32 and 40 he's the one who's been given dominion of an everlasting kingdom he's the son of David verse 23 he's the Lord of the Sabbath verse 8 only God is the Lord of the Sabbath he has the authority to clarify the scriptures about David about priests on the Sabbath about Jonah and the queen of Sheba he knows the thoughts of the Pharisees in verse 25 he has the authority to bind Satan verse 29 all these

Christological fireworks going off in chapter 12 this is the real Jesus and then Matthew interjects in verses 15 through 21 he said just make sure that you really know who this is this is the one that fulfilled Isaiah chapter 42 verses 1 through 4 his withdrawing you may think it's weak it's not weak it's messianic his remaining silent you may think it's weak it's not weak it's messianic the suffering servant has come Isaiah 42 1 through 4 is a prophecy of a suffering servant who would come in the name of God in verse 18 you see my servant applied to Jesus Matthew saying he is the fulfillment

of this behold my servant whom I have chosen Jesus is the servant of his father we go on to read this my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased this is in stark contrast to the Pharisees they're not well pleased doing it for them he's seeking to please his father and then we read on I will put my spirit upon him do you know what why Jesus casts out demon in the power of the Holy Spirit because he is the suffering servant of Isaiah 42 1-4 he fulfills the messianic promise that's who it points to he will proclaim justice to the gentiles he's declaring the kingdom of heaven not just to Jews but it's going to go global and verse 19 the way that he proclaims it he doesn't quarrel or cry out loud nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets he's gentle he's not shoving it down people's throats and then in verse 20 a bruised reed he will not break in a smoldering wick he will not quench do you know what a bruised reed was

I walk here from my house and I walk through Lincoln Park and by the lagoon over there and it's just surrounded with reeds it's like a dime a dozen and you know what I'd do if I saw a broken reed there I'd be like whatever I'm moving on I'm not going to help that thing not out of the billions of people on the face of the planet if there's one bruised reed he is fully aware of it a smoldering wick you've all experienced it as a candle and the flame has gone out and you're just kind of smoldering and you want to put your fingers together and snuff it out it's a picture of another kind of person someone who is at the end of their rope end of their wick they're smoldering they're like this is done you know how Jesus responds to that out of the seven and a half billion people on the planet he takes note of smoldering wicks he doesn't roll over he's gentle

Isaiah 42 pictures a gentle messiah he's the hope of the nations do you know what the bruised reed and the smoldering wick you know what they point to there's a theme coming through the gospel the poor in spirit those who mourn their sin the meek the harassed and helpless those who are heavy weary and heavy laden who need rest those are who Jesus came for he came for the bruised reeds he came for the smoldering wicks he's not going to break a reed he's not going to squelch a smoldering wick he's going to restore it and so what Matthew is doing for us here is like this is the real Jesus he's the fulfillment of Isaiah 42 and he's going to be a servant who's going to bring justice to victory Matthew 20 28 says

[44 : 36] I came not to be served but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many the ultimate act of service is the giving of his life for bruised reeds and smoldering wicks in his name Gentiles hope who he is fully he is a glorious great and gentle Messiah his character is the very hope of the nations so what we see happening here in Matthew 12 is this Jesus is the son of man he's the son of David he's the Lord of the Sabbath he's the binder of Satan and he has come as a servant that's the real Jesus Israel the Pharisees were expecting their Messiah to come on a war horse to come with armies taken over trampling on bruised reeds smoldering just putting out smoldering wicks a Messiah to conquer in strength and brutality not

Jesus Jesus kingdom is not survival of the fittest Jesus kingdom is supernatural grace for the weak Jesus defied all the expectations of the Pharisees God came as a servant that's why he withdrew that's why he didn't abuse people in return that's why he went to the cross as a servant substitute for sinners he came as a servant and established his kingdom of the meek of the poor of the mourning of the harassed and helpless the labor heavy laden the bruised reeds and the smoldering wicks the poor in spirit comprised the kingdom of God because we realize he's our only hope the hope of the nations this is the real Jesus maybe you've come in here this morning and on Friday you were just mocking Jesus you're not outside God's ability to forgive that do you see him for who he is or maybe you came in here and you're kind of responding can this be the son of God you can't stay neutral you got to decide you got to come down one way or other and if you're there and you're like I'm ready to go I'm ready to follow here's what you just need to do you just call out to him you say something to the risen Christ you are the one who came for me you are the servant and if you're a follower of Jesus and you've been kind of asking the question is this all worth it when you look at Christ and his glory his greatness and his gentleness you're like oh yeah it's worth it you can reject

Jesus and end up like this generation in verses 43 through 45 or you can repent and trust Jesus and what you see at the end of chapter 12 is the promise for those who believe that we're part of his family that we're his brothers and sisters that we're set on doing the will of the father and the will of the father begins with bowing your knee to King Jesus let's pray God in heaven we're so grateful for your word now God would you take Matthew 12 and do your work with it would you bring it to bear in the hearts of your people and bring about the fruit that you have purposed from long ago for the

glory of your great name among the nations and it's in Jesus name we pray amen