

MATTHEW 12: 38 – 50 WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

Responsibility is one of those things that some people want and others shirk. To those that want purpose and to be valuable, it is something to pursue. To those that just want to get by, it is something from which to run. The thing about responsibility is that once you have it, more is required of you. That has been a crucial point throughout Jesus' ministry. Once you know the truth about something, you are responsible for that truth. If one is ignorant of something, they generally get a pass. But once they have received a warning and know better, then they are responsible for the knowledge they have been given and must do something with it. The person that ignores or resists the truth will eventually pay a price for embracing a falsity.

Jesus brings this idea home today as we wind up chapter 12 of Matthew. His running debate with the Pharisees has come to a head as continually attempt to entrap Him. As always, Jesus uses their shenanigans as a teaching opportunity.

Last week Jesus challenged the Pharisees to either get in or get out by telling them to make the tree good or bad. Their hearts had already manifested by their speech. They were truly against Him, though they feigned interest in His Word. We now pick up the conversation in verse 38.

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

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41

The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a

greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

- How bogus? How many signs had they already seen and still weren't convinced. Signs and wonders have value, but their value as it relates to evangelism is short-lived.
- The only sign you will see is the sign of Jonah. This is a hint at the resurrection.
- (Three days and three nights – an idiom - doesn't have to be 3 whole days and nights.)
- Jonah was the sign. He looked like death after having been in the belly of the fish for 3 days.
- He had a simple message: I hate you, yet 40 days and the judgment of God is coming! They heard and repented. Yet one greater than Jonah is here now.
- The Queen of the South listened to Solomon and all his wisdom, yet one greater than Solomon is here now and you hear not.

43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

Jesus uses this analogy to make a point, not so much as a discourse on demon possession, but there are still many cultural points here.

- "Dry places" were thought to be a sort of no-man's land left to spooky animals and demon spirits. There were several of these areas, specifically to the east and north of Israel's borders. The scapegoat was turned loose in this direction. Anything unclean, such as a leper colony would have been located in this direction.
- When the house is cleaned; (i.e. a person has been exorcised of a demon) there is a vacuum. If the clean house isn't filled by something more powerful, (re-birth) it can and often will be refilled by seven more spirits even more powerful, making the house worse off than it was in the beginning.
- That was the state of the generation to which Jesus was speaking.
- Jesus had come with the knowledge of the truth, yet many were not convinced. Just as the man earlier had been exorcised of his demon, Jesus

had come with the truth. The light of the Gospel had “cleaned the house” so to speak, but the unbelief of the crowds had left a vacuum. They had not responded to or shall we say taken responsibility for the truth they were given. Therefore, their end will be worse than it would have been had they never heard.

46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47 Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” 48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

The kingdom of Heaven/ being a child of God is more than a bloodline.

- Jesus’ mother and brothers came to get Him.
- **Mark 3:21**
- **21 But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, “He is out of His mind.”**
- Mary had other children. The context can’t allow for the word, “brothers” to be translated, “cousin.”
- If there had been another son who was older, he would have been the successor to the throne of David and not Jesus.
- Those that do the will of the Father are the brothers and sisters of Jesus.
- Note brothers AND sisters. Jesus had not gender exclusion rules as did all other rabbis.
- Who is my brother or sister? Those who do the will of the Father. So, what does this mean for us?
- To whom was Jesus speaking? Not just Pharisees. There were lots of “church people there that day.”
- Jesus made a clear distinction regarding who was real and who was just there out of habit, custom or some other reason as opposed to those there to worship and commit to the will of His Father.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS AFTERMATH

- They have been warned. They are now responsible.
- Are you a brother or sister of Jesus?

- Are you doing the Father's will?