

matthew

experiencing the presence of the Kingdom

----> **connect...** Because we are covering so much in our lesson this week, the “connect” portion will be simple, but rich. Take Psalm 150 and use it as your guide to praising God everyday this week. Remember, praise expands our view of God!

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 12:1-14.

1. What seems to be occupying the Pharisees’ time at this point? _____

a. What was their first accusation against Jesus? (v. 2) _____

b. Summarize His response. _____

c. What does He reiterate in verse 7? (See 9:13) _____

2. The Jewish law was given priority over people in need. Jesus didn’t agree with this principle. What claim did He make in verse 8? _____

3. Does your “personal agenda” ever make you insensitive to the needs of those around you? How might we apply the truth of God “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” _____

4. Look at the value Jesus placed on people as you read Matthew 12:11-14 again. How did the Pharisees react to Jesus’ act of mercy? _____

5. Read Matthew 12:15-21. Why did Jesus withdraw from that place? _____

a. What did Isaiah prophecy about Jesus in verses 18-21? _____

b. What do you learn about your King from this passage? _____

----> **consider...** Jesus transcends the law. He does not disrespect it—He is above it. Listen to His description from Isaiah again (vv 18-21). Verse 20 says “a bruised reed, He will not break.” Which means, He won’t hurt those who are broken before Him, but He will bring them to victory. He will draw us to hope in Him alone. Do you feel like you’re barely hanging on? Just a smoldering wick? Go before your King and share your heart with Him.

----> **apply...** Begin memorizing Luke 6:45.

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----> **connect...** Psalm 150.

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 12:22-37.

1. What did the people ask after Jesus healed the demon-possessed man? _____

2. Upon hearing this, the Pharisees gave an explanation. What did they say? _____

3. What logical argument does Jesus give? (vv. 25-29) _____

4. What bold statement does He make in verse 28? _____

5. Re-read verses 30-32. This passage has stumped many a scholar. For the purpose of this study, we will keep it simple and in context. (Note: "blasphemy" is extreme slander, equivalent to "speaking against"). What does verse 30 say to you about neutrality? _____

 - a. Look at verse 31. In context with this passage, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit seems to be attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 24-28). Faced with the facts, they reject the truth and give glory to Satan. Jesus says this sin cannot be forgiven. When we read verses like this it is important to remember the character of God. He is just. He knows the secrets of every man's heart (Psalm 44:21). Think about what the Pharisees are saying (v. 24). Why is this so damaging to the cause of Christ? _____

 - b. Verse 32 has a whole different message. It highlights the wonderful gift of forgiveness! We all, at one time, spoke against the Son of Man—in other words—we were all against Christ. Through repentance and forgiveness that relationship is restored. Do you see the difference between the two? Share your thoughts. _____

6. Read verses 33-37 again. What comes out of the mouth? _____
 - a. Could the Pharisees have said anything more evil? What does their statement reveal? _____

 - b. Why should we measure our words carefully? (v. 36) _____

 - c. What does James 1:19 say? _____

----> **consider...** The issue here is not so much our words as it is the condition of our hearts (v. 34). What are you storing up in your heart? Truth? Love? Obedience? Or anger? Bitterness? Jealousy? Unforgiveness? Jesus made it clear that He wants our hearts to be undivided—devoted—100%. Does He have yours? Talk to Him.

----> **apply...** Keep learning Luke 6:45

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----> **connect...** Psalm 150.

----> **discover...** In Matthew 12:38-42, Jesus compares His deliverance from death to that of Jonah's. A "sign" the Pharisees would be familiar with. If you have time today, read the story of Jonah in the Old Testament (the book of Jonah is only four chapters long).

1. Read Matthew 12:38-42. What have the Pharisees asked for and how did Jesus respond? _____

2. What claims does Jesus make about Himself in:

a. Verse 40 _____

b. Verse 41 _____

c. Verse 42 _____

3. Matthew 12:43-45 is another confusing passage, but again, let's keep it in context. Just removing the "evil" is not enough—the truth of Jesus must now fill that void. Why (according to these verses)?

4. Read Matthew 12:46-50. These verses are not meant to be a confrontation between Jesus and His physical family. What do you think is His point? _____

a. Obeying Christ's commands does not make us a member of His family; however, obeying His commands **identifies** us as a family member. Do you see the difference? What is it? _____

b. How does Jesus word this truth in John 14:15? _____

c. Can you relate this truth in context with Matthew 12:33? _____

d. What does John 15:13 say? _____

----> **consider...** Are you a member of Jesus' family? Does He call you His friend? Why? Our goal is to love Him—and out of that love obedience flows. Think about your actions in the last 24 hours. Do they reflect your love for Jesus? Do you need to draw close to Him? Is there one area of your life that immediately enters your mind as you consider obedience? Will you love Jesus today by surrendering that to Him?

----> **apply...** In your journal communicate to God where you know you need to obey. Claim Philippians 4:13: "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." Keep learning Luke 6:45.

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----> connect... Psalm 150.

----> discover... In Matthew 13 we are going to hear Jesus teach. He uses parables to do His teaching. A simple definition of a “parable” is this: 1) simple stories with a single point; 2) a narrative having two levels of meaning. Again, we could delve into all levels of interpretation as we study these, but for our purposes we will keep it simple and hear it at face value. Before you begin today, pray this simple prayer: “Lord may you give me ears to hear, eyes to see and a heart that is willing to obey.”

1. Read the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-9. The emphasis of this parable is not on the “sower” but the condition of the soil. What happened to the seed as it fell on the following four types of soil?
 - a. Path: _____
 - b. Rocky places: _____
 - c. Among thorns: _____
 - d. Good soil: _____
2. Jesus does not explain most of His parables, but He does this one. Read Matthew 13:18-23. What is the seed according to verse 19? _____
3. How does Jesus explain the four soils?
 - a. Verse 19: _____

 - b. Verse 20: _____

 - c. Verse 22: _____

 - d. Verse 23: _____

4. Again, Jesus is addressing the “heart.” We see four types here: 1) hard heart 2) shallow heart 3) strangled heart 4) open heart. How have you seen all of these hearts illustrated in human life? _____

5. Soil cannot change its own nature, but God can. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27 along with Luke 18:26-27. Share your thoughts. _____

----> consider... How’s your soil? “Humility” comes from the word “humus” or fertile soil. Ask God to create in you’re a humble heart—one that is teachable and ready to receive His Word.

----> apply... Keep learning Luke 6:45.

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----> **connect...** Psalm 150.

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 13:10-17.

1. The disciples ask a great question in Matthew 13:10. What is it? (Weren't you wondering the same?)

2. What is Jesus' answer in verse 11? Why, according to verse 13 and 15? _____

3. What prophecy is fulfilled from Isaiah? _____

4. Why did their hearts become hardened according to Romans 1:21-25? _____

a. Have you seen, or experienced yourself, a hardness of heart as a result of sin? What are your observations? _____

5. Read Mark 4:24-25 along with Matthew 13:12. What's our responsibility? (Mark 4:24) _____

6. Read Matthew 13:16-17 again. Who are the truly blessed ones? _____

7. Do you recognize this blessing in your life? _____

----> **consider...** Understanding the things of God is a blessing from God Himself. Are you hearing, seeing and obeying? We are told to use (apply) what we have been given. Are you using it? Ask your Teacher.

----> **apply/reflect...** We have covered a lot of ground this week. Matthew clips right along. The danger is that you won't have the time to allow God's truth to truly penetrate your heart. Take a few moments and flip back through your study (or your journal). Does anything jump out at you? Some unfinished business? Don't worry about soaking in everything, but pay close attention to what you hear God saying to you through His Word. Are you gaining a deeper understanding of your King? Are you realizing that His kingdom is counter-culture to the world's? Record what you are learning about your King in your journal.

