

July 23rd, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Striving with the Maker; The Ruin of Resistance
Sermon #1 Title: Have Ye Not Read?
Sermon #1 Text: (Matthew 12:1-8)

A friend of mine used to tell me that he had figured the world out. Since ignorance was bliss, we lived in a world full of blisters.

Well, I hope you will come to understand that Ignorance of some things may make for a comfortable ride; it can be categorically deadly when it comes to God's Word, and your Will.

One of the sternest warnings that the LORD God gives us in Scripture is found in Isaiah 45:9 – **"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!"** While no conscientious Christian would ever strive with the Lord purposely with his eyes wide open; there are those who have no hesitation, about doing all they can, to cut the legs out from under the Word and Work of the LORD.

- There are those who would never fight Him knowledgably and on purpose.
- There are, no doubt, those who do fight Him, but won't admit it.
- Then there are those who will fight Him with both feet, two hands, bad words and dirty looks.

This morning, we are going to begin looking at one chapter in Matthew, that records for us some exchanges between the LORD Jesus Himself; and those who wanted to do nothing more than argue, fight, resist and oppose all He said, all He did; and all others who would say and do what He did.

Your homework for the next several weeks is to study Matthew chapter 12. For a full reference study, the gospel of Mark chapters 2 and 3 are Mark's recording of the same period of time. Luke chapter 6:1-12 is the harmony for the first part of this chapter.

- Among all the things we can learn from this period of time there are a few things that I hope you will see in this chapter, if you see nothing else.

- 1.) The Absolute Futility of Striving with Jesus.
- 2.) The Certain Danger and Ruin that comes from Striving with Jesus.
- 3.) And the Sweet, Blessed Rest, Forgiveness, Freedom and Life that comes from Giving in to Jesus who's only reason for being here is to save the lost.

If you are here having never given your trust to the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, and salvation of the soul; this chapter is a powerful picture of people who fought Jesus and lost.

If you are here and you are saved, sealed, and delivered; then this is one more advanced course in knowing Jesus better, and learning deeper things about Him, as He has called you to do.

- To the saved – the Bible says – "Add to your faith knowledge."

- To the Lost – the Bible says - “There is no other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved” speaking of Jesus.

Beginning our chapter we need to note a few things right up front:

- 1.) Where We are – Capernaum
- 2.) When This Is – Most likely early in the second year of Christ’s ministry.
- 3.) What is going on. – According to Luke this is “the second sabbath after the first” which is a way of indicating that the timing is right after passover, during the spring.
- According to the passage in Luke these events take place in the Second Sabbath.
 - Those who understand the Greek Language tell us that this is a phrase that literally means the “the first second.”

(all that means, is that have scrambled trying to figure out which “first second sabbath” this is.)
 - according to some historians, the easiest thought is that during Passover and Pentecost, there are Seven Sabbaths; with Passover being the First Sabbath, and the next sabbath being, “the first second.”
- Which that being the case, this is during barley harvest which is at the close of March, and first of April.
 - The language here translated “corn”, literally means “grain, or head of grain” – which generically could refer to “wheat, barley, corn, oats or any other crop that produced heads with grains.”

- The popularity of Jesus was high and building with the common people.
- The hostility of his enemies had begun and was building.

All of that being said lets observe some wonderful things from the Word of God.

I. The LORD’S Daily Leading of His Disciples. – “At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of the corn, and to eat.”

*Note – If you ever have the idea that the Lord is watching a man’s religious behavior to the exclusion of all other things is an idea worthy of the landfill. – Here is a great example of Jesus leading His disciples through their natural daily needs, and He does things this way for a particular reason.

A. Is Beyond Mere Religion

*Note – There is some insight into the Lord Jesus attitude toward religious rules that didn’t come from God.

(The Lord Jesus here is going to put some distance between His Disciples, and the Religious people of the day.)

- Bible students know that in order to make sure the Jewish people didn’t break any of God’s laws, the Jewish leaders decided to initiate and create religious rules for the people so they wouldn’t get anywhere close to breaking the Laws that the LORD did set down.

- In an oversimplification of things, it went sort of like this. The Rabbis would apply daily scenarios and regular living to God's Laws, and interpret what they deemed to be acceptable.

(For example – according to Exodus 35:3 – “**Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.**”

- So, what if you kindle it the day before, and it burns throughout? – Is that acceptable? What if something you start on the 6th day, continues working, or functioning on the seventh day?

- So the rabbis would take these issues, render “rulings.” And those “rulings” or “opinions” became Law.

- The rabbis have cited 613 laws that are intended to keep a man or a woman from violating the Word of God.

- I know not exactly how many the Jews had inscribed in Jesus day, but today there are 39 categories of behavior on the Sabbath that have governing laws for the Jews.

- According to their own Mishna - *“the rules about the Sabbath ... are as mountains hanging by a hair, for [teaching of] Scripture [thereon] is scanty and the rules many”*

- This is the issue that ignited the fury between the Jewish leaders, and the LORD Jesus, who would not acknowledge any of their imposed laws.

- Verse 1 of this chapter is the Lord Jesus openly and brazenly defying and denying any authority, or ability of man to create religious rules that God will accept and acknowledge.

(Verse one is no accidental encounter; it is a clearly intentional act. – How do I know that?)

1.) First, there is a sabbath in every week! – that was His idea.

2.) Second – the disciples generally eat, every day, of every week.

3.) Third – the Lord made no preparations for this day; knowing the circumstance He would wind up in.

*Note – Now the first thing to recognize here, is not that Jesus is goading the Pharisees; but rather He is teaching the Disciples.

- The Lord wanted them to be Hungry on the Sabbath, so He could teach them that His care of them, would never conflict with His laws over them.

- The Disciples then, just like now, need to know two things:

- God did have a Lawful Word for them! (Not the Religious Rulers)

- It will never conflict with His desire to care for them!

*Note – Every preacher, to the dead best of his ability, needs always to draw a clear line between the Word of God and his own opinion so the hearer can hear it.

- And every hearer needs to do his dead level best to hear a clear line between the opinion of the preacher and the written Word of God.

- (Here's why, and we'll move on. – Sometimes the things that people are fighting Jesus over; never come from Jesus in the first place; they just come resisting the man in the pulpit.

- If you are Striving with Your Maker, it may not be your Maker, it may be your resistance against something someone told you about your Maker that isn't true.

- Jesus here FIRST taught His Disciples – His Care above Human Religion.

B. Desires a Human Reaction – “and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.”

While the first reason Jesus did all of this was to teach His Disciples the difference between man’s rules and God’s Word; but it was also to let the Pharisees know there is a difference between man’s rules and God’s Word.

1.) Luke adds they were “**rubbing them in their hands.**”

- Matthew (being a Jew and writing to a Jewish audience) gives us the minimum picture of a disciple plucking corn, and eating it.

*Note – Whatever else Luke intends from this writing; one thing that is added here is the fact that the Lord and the disciples did this “without hesitation, hiding, or restraint.” They made as much motion as necessary, as though no one was watching!

*Note- Without question this would gain a reaction from the Pharisees.

- From Capernaum, and from the houses at Capernaum, these fields were nearby, and most likely easy to see from anywhere in town.

- Mind you, the Pharisees have often been “ridiculed” for “following the Disciples out in the corn field;” but that is most likely not the case.

1.) The Pharisees are not going to travel more than a Sabbath Day’s journey, themselves. (they tell us about 1100 feet. – not quite 3 football fields.)

2.) When they do rebuke Jesus, it isn’t for the travel, it appears to be for the work involved in plucking, rubbing, and gathering the ears of corn, not according to the religious laws.

- What that means is that Jesus and the disciples were in plain sight not merely of the Pharisees; but anyone else who may be watching; and with no hint of keeping a low profile.

*note - With all of that being said, Verse 1 should give you a clear insight into the fact that The Daily Leading of the Lord is always with purpose; He teaches His Disciples, and He Demonstrates the truth in the eyes of those who hate Him.

#1 – The Lord’s Daily Leading of His Disciples

II. – The Lord’s Constant Battle with Unbelievers – vs 2 – “But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.”

*Note - Now the people in the text are Pharisees. But what happens in verse 2 is repeated by multiplied millions of people who think that’s a race of people in Star Trek. The actions taken in verse 2 were taken by Pharisees, but one does not have to be a Pharisee to do what they did.

A. Against False Claims – (your own people do that which is not lawful.) – Not True....

1.) Their false presumption was that they in fact knew what was lawful, and what was not; and these Pharisees were so far gone, they did not know.

a.) the Pharisees rules: The disciples were committing up to four different sins:

In Alfred Edersheim's book, *"The Life and Times of Jesus"*; he writes – "The Talmud says: 'In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs the heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherencies, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing'."

- (1.) sifting
- (2.) threshing
- (3.) grinding
- (4.) winnowing

*Note – The Pharisees, had an idea about something in the Bible, that wasn't true, and used a "manufactured claim of hypocrisy" to attack Jesus and His followers.

People do that all the time:

- 1.) Paraphrase – "You Christians claim the Lord answers your prayers; but He still lets traffickers, abusers, and criminals create more and more victims. – If He answered your prayers, He would answer everyone's prayers, and since He's not answering everyone's prayers, whoever you're worshipping is a discriminating bigoted hypocrite..."
 1. – The Bible says the Lord won't answer everyone's prayers.
 2. – The Bible says the Lord will not intervene in all tragedies and crimes.
 3. – The Bible says the Lord differentiates between His people and the wicked.

- People Create a False Version of Christianity, and when Biblical Christians, and God's Behavior doesn't follow that, it becomes their weapon of choice against the LORD Jesus.

2.) Don't you know the Bible says "Judge not"? – Nope. It doesn't. – Not like they mean it. That is not what it says; so quit acting like that's what it says, learn it before you use it.

The rest of the statement ends this way – **"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."** – Matthew 7:5

- The Pharisees attacked the Lord's people "religiously" – creating a "false standard" that the LORD Himself had no regard for, and used that an imaginary weapon against the Lord.

B. About Learning Christians – "Behold, Thy Disciples"

*note – Christians are often the first excuse people give for resisting Jesus.

- 1.) They aren't doing what we think they ought to be doing, so what are you going to do about it?

*Note – Now there is a subtle, but deafening silent arrogance that flows from these people in verse 2.

a.) Behold – "Look – Pay attention" –

*Note – It is a subtle, but certain accusation that YOU Jesus aren't paying attention to the things you ought to be paying attention to!

- Your disciples are violating the rules of religion, and apparently Mr. Jesus you have not noticed!

*Note – Subtle Digs, Implying Tones, and Pretend Piety just drip from the attack on Jesus in verse 2.

While the Pharisees will come to the point of Attacking Christ directly and personally; at this moment, they attack His disciples.

If there is anything that “Learning Christians” need to learn, is that the enemies of Christ will do all they can imagine to do, in order to undermine you and your LORD.

*Note – There is one other thing worthy of your notice. What were those disciples doing when attacked? – Just following Jesus.

- In Matthew, Mark, and Luke- Jesus Himself appears to be the first in the field. Had Jesus not gone there, these men wouldn't have gone there.

Very often, the very act of just following Jesus brings out those who desire nothing more than for the things of Christianity to be false.

Why? – They have everything to lose.

If the Bible were wrong, we'd be fools, yes, but that's it, we'd lose nothing but our time on earth in foolishness.

Since the Bible is absolute – they have everything to lose.

(Now know this – We do not want them lost, we want them won! – We want them convinced.)

#1 – The Lord's Daily Leading of His Disciples

#2 – The Lord's Constant Battle with Unbelievers

III. The Lord's Permanent Answer to False Accusers - “But He said unto them, **Have ye not read...**”

*Note-I don't believe that Jesus could have directly offended the Pharisees anymore than He did, when He asked that question. – That was ALL the Pharisees spent their time doing!
– Reading.

- It was an open and clear accusation that the Pharisees had completely missed the knowledge in God's Word, or misused the knowledge they had in God's Word.

(Let me give you piece of advice... - NEVER try to use the Word of God against the Son of God – there is only one fool in that scenario.)

The answer for the Disciples was in the Word of God

The answer for the Pharisees was in the Word of God

The answer for any onlookers was in the Word of God

- Not the Talmud
- Not the Mishna
- Not the writings
- Not the commentaries

(those things are helpful, but they are not Lawful)

- In Our Vernacular- They said to Jesus “You don't know what your disciples are doing?” Jesus said to them, “You don't know what the Bible says!”

Conclusion:-

The Bible says in dark, black, ink on bright white paper
– “**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.**”

Hosea 4:6

It is absolutely foolish and deadly, to judge the Lord Jesus by things He never said; to strive with Him over things He never instructed, promised, or spoke. Learn what He said, so that you may Listen to what He said, so that you may LIVE by what He has said.

