

September 10th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Striving with the Maker: The Ruin of Resistance
Sermon #8 Title: What's Down in the Well...
Sermon #8 Text: (Matthew 12:33-37)

In this exchange with these Pharisees, the LORD Jesus reveals to us some of the most uncomfortable dynamics of life. He pulls back the veil between Spirit and the flesh to teach some "laws of spiritual physics" as the scriptures do many times throughout the Bible.

- If these things that Jesus reveals are true; (and they are), then Jesus is going to remove a lot of the fog that some men take refuge in; and shines a light of clarity that makes too many people nervous.

(Always remember, the Word of the Lord, spoken by Jesus, or inspired by the Spirit never wants to make saved people think they are lost, and it never wants lost people to feel like they're saved. – Christ's Word when dealing with saved and lost, is always to Comfort the Saved, and Confront the Lost, leaving no confusion in the middle.)

Before we go into this passage, we need to remind ourselves of the context, and the setting.

- These people (Pharisees) in the big picture, have gone from wondering Who Jesus is; to challenging Who Jesus is; to denying and rejecting Who Jesus is; to defaming and slandering Who Jesus is.

This particular exchange was actually set off in verse 24 – "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said *This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils.*"

Understanding this passage rests on understanding what happened in their accusation.

- The Pharisees

- #1 – Admitted that Demons had in fact been cast out of a man.

- #2 – Believed that Demons being cast out was a Divine ability, due to the fact that they had their own people trying to practice "exorcisms."

- #3 – But claimed that even though Jesus did what They themselves had tried to do; He did it by the power of the devil himself.

Now those are the circumstances that Jesus is addressing here. – He just gave us the clear warning on "The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" so that all could hear. Now from the "Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" – He continues to address those Pharisees who accused Him of doing evil.

- It is only in that framework that we get the right picture in verses 33-37.

*Note- There are Three Monumental Dynamics that are to be etched in your heart like concrete.

I. A Fixed Rationale – "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by *his* fruit."

*Note – No one gets to manufacture their own laws of logic; everyone must either get under the logic of the Lord Jesus, or be crushed by the weight of it.

-What the Lord is declaring to the Pharisees here, is that “You can’t have it both ways!”

- You cannot say, “the fruit may be good; but the tree is bad!”

- (Too often, people try to split hairs that cannot be split, and Jesus nails that down today.)

*Note – Now note the characteristics of a Rationale that actually is rational, and actually is the right way to think. Two characteristics Jesus addresses:

A. Mental Honesty – “**Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt.**”

1.) The phrase – “either make the tree good” or “make the tree corrupt” – is a phrase that speaks to “mental consideration”.

Illustration – John 5:18 – “**Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**”

- The phrase “making himself equal with God” – He considered Himself equal with God.

- The way that it is used in John is the same way that it used here in Matthew.

- Back to this text, the Lord is saying – “either consider the tree good or consider the tree bad” – But you cannot honestly split hairs that cannot be split...

- Jesus said – “You cannot say the fruit is good but the tree is bad” and you

cannot say well the tree may be good, but the fruit is bad” – Jesus said you are dividing natures that cannot be divided!

*Note – No one can say – “well, I may have bad fruit, but I am a good tree!” – Jesus said – that is unreasonable and dishonest thinking.

*Note – Now this is a rebuke to those who Know they are doing it; and it is a revelation to those unaware that they are doing it.

- You cannot split things and divide things the Lord has unified together.

2.) The fruit – “good” and/or “corrupt”

*Note – Good and Bad have to be defined; and we have to use these words the way that Jesus used these words. – This is not an interpretive free-for-all, where we all get to throw in what we think is “good” and or what we think is “bad.”

a.) “good” – kalos – advantageous, fitting, and appropriate.

*Note- NOT that it appears advantageous, fitting, and appropriate – but that it something ACTUALLY, in the Economy of God, advantageous, fitting, and appropriate.

- Jesus is not speaking to “how something appears” but to the nature of what something actually is!

b.) “corrupt” – saphron – “rotting, harmful, useless, and/or worthless.”

*Note – The same thing goes here – Jesus is not addressing your perspective of something or appearance of something – but the ACTUAL nature of it in truth.

(Note – He does not use terms like “right or wrong” – He uses terms “good or corrupt, or good and evil”- (those are not the same)

- Christ is talking about the “actual substance and actual nature” of this fruit; not whether or not someone is “correct or incorrect.”

- (Note – He does not use terms like “right or wrong, correct, or incorrect.” – Why?

- Because He is not dealing with a person’s “level of knowledge” He is dealing with a person’s “inward condition.”

3.) Fruit itself

a.) - Karpos – “usable produce”

Productive – life is in the result – the substance offers real sustenance, real nutrients, real health. – It is a product intended to actually benefit.

Proverbs 11:30 – “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;...”

*Note – Now to sum this point up it is simple – Jesus said, “You be HONEST in your thinking – Pharisees – You cannot say it is a Holy thing to cast out devils AND say I actually do cast them out, but I am from a devil who can do no holy thing!”

- Either consider the Root good and fruit good, or the root bad and the fruit bad – but do NOT try to Philosophically split, what God has united together!

A. – Mental Honesty

B. Mandatory Reality – “For the tree is known by his fruit.”

1.) At least 3 other occasions in the gospels, the LORD uses a similar analogy concerning “trees and fruit.”

2.) James 3:12 – “Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”

*Note – Here is a Divine Law of continuity! – Something cannot actually produce something different from its nature.

Apple trees cannot produce grapes! Pear trees cannot produce Walnuts.

(Now – let’s parenthesis something right here. Preacher, are you saying lost people cannot produce good things and saved people cannot do wrong things, or bad things? – No, Not at all! – That is a FALSE application of this passage.

- Learn some things here:

**There are some ABSOLUTE certainties that happen when someone gets saved. So certain, that if these things DO Not happen to them, they are not Saved!

#1 – They are Indwelt by the Spirit of Christ – In fact Romas 8:9 – “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

(There has never been a man or woman saved, who the Spirit of Christ did not enter!)

#2 – They are made New Creatures –

2nd Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he* is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Galatians 6:15 – “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

#3 There Will Be Some Fruit unto Holiness – “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” – Romans 6:22

*Note – Now note this. – Those are not conditions for salvation, they are evidence of; and they will happen!

***NOW NOTE what Will NOT Automatically Happen! –

- Your response to those things inside you!
- After you are saved, Paul said – “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Romans 6:11-12

Romans 7:6 – “But now we are delivered from the law that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.”

Paul further summed up this issue in his own testimony in Romans 7:18-19 – “For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would do, I do not, but the evil that which I would not that I do.”

Remember This: Faith in Christ births your Relationship with God. Your Obedient Walk Establishes your Fellowship!

Furthermore Remember this; as we come back to the Story at hand.

- One who has been Born again – Can BACKSLIDE, but they CANNOT Apostasize.

- Apostasy is the total rejection of the Gospel, from inside the circle of public Christianity.

It is the total rejection, in heart, will and mind, of the gospel of grace and faith in LORD Jesus Himself. – No saved individual can commit that, any more than they can blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Backsliding, and Carnality are NOT the same as Apostasy.

- This is why John said, in 1st John 2:19 – “**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us; but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**”

Now what does all that have to do with this text: - Jesus is dealing with those who have enough light, enough sight, and full knowledge to discern what is going on.

- When that is the case; With All Things Being Known – You cannot Get Holy Fruit; from an Unholy Tree;

Now Here is the Fixed Rationale – Mental Honesty – Stop Splitting Hairs that Jesus said Cannot be Split. Mandatory Reality – The actual nature of a tree – actually shows up in its fruit. – Never try to make foggy, what Jesus has said is clear.

(You may not get many apples off a weak tree – but you certainly won’t get cauliflower. – Root bears fruit; and fruit reveals root.)

I. – A fixed rationale

Now that Jesus has clarified some stinking thinking; He now applies it to the situation right in front of Him.

II. A Factual Certainty – (vs 34-35)

(Here is one of the most fearful interchanges that I can find in the gospels that Jesus has with these men.)

A. Christ's Personal Evaluation – "O generation of vipers..."

*Note – Let me say this – You are whatever Jesus says you are. His opinion is the only one that matters.

1.) Vipers – snakes – (which by the way was a common threat in Israel in those days.)

a.) most expressly the kind that are poisonous. (that's the only kind that are dangerous)

- To accuse someone of being a viper was to say, all you do for men is to poison them.

2.) The picture did not get lost on these Pharisees, they knew exactly what Christ was saying, because He would say it again later in the gospels, without the imagery.

a.) "generation of vipers" – literally means you offspring of snakes.

b.) Later Jesus would say – "ye are of your father the devil." – John 8:44

*Note -Guilty of the very label they were trying to vacuum seal to Jesus.

(Only Satan would be subtle enough, and only men would be stupid enough to use his name as an insult.)

B. Christ's Practical Application – "...how can ye being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

*Note – Here is the question that can never be answered in the positive. – "How can ye being evil speak good things? – The implied and underscored answer is simple – "YOU CAN'T"

- Jesus said, I cannot be done!

(Now, wait a minute; let's talk about this.

- Paul said, even if a an pretends to preach Christ, praise God Christ is preached...

- Preacher, even a charlatan can say things that are good, and holy, and right; otherwise they wouldn't gain a following; isn't that, right?

- Here's what makes the Charlatan's speech evil – He doesn't mean it. If a man pretend to preach Christ, he is still just pretending. – The message on his lips has no reality in his heart still makes him evil.

- Take a man who says, "Oh, yes, I believe in Jesus!" – That's a good thing, right? – Only if it's the truth.

- Even a man speaks what is true, is lying if it is spoken with a dishonest heart!

Here Jesus said of the Pharisees, You cannot speak "good, useful, godly, holy things, because in YOUR mouth, coming from Your Lips they are not spoken in "Reality" but in pretense.

- It's like telling God you're sorry when you're not.

- Friend you can tell me all day long that you trust Jesus; but He knows if you really do or not.

But Christ is not talking here about “Charlatan’s” – He is talking to those “openly rejecting Him” and the honest results of their heart.

- The honest results of an evil heart is that they cannot actually speak forth anything that is substantially good or Holy.

-As a Viper can sink into the flesh, nothing but the poison that is in his glands; an Evil man can contribute Nothing to life but what comes from inside his nature.

- And the LORD explains – “That is clearly pictured for all to see in you, right here, right now.”

C. Christ’s Permanent Explanation – “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”

*Note- Here is that old saying that what is down in the well comes up in the bucket.

*Note – By now you’ve got the idea that good produces good, and evil produces evil; and we are not talking about appearances of good and appearances of evil, but things as they actually are.

1.) “bringeth forth”

a.) This is the exact same word that is used to describe Jesus “casting out” demons. – Ordering out – expelling out.

b.) to “Thrust Out”

*Note -The picture here is that the Heart “expels out” what’s in it.

- What is the most natural thing that comes out of your mouth when your passions are up?

- anger – biting – justice – sharpness – bitterness – lies – manipulations – exaggerations – Self preserving language? Etc.

- Gentle truth – Gentle grace – Biblical clarity with Spiritual Kindness – Selflessness – Wisdom, more than emotions; truth more than feelings – Honesty more than self-righteousness.

*Note – Now all of that being said, regardless of what we want to “present,” “imagine,” or “pretend” we are like, Jesus used this moment with the Pharisees to apply and illustrate this immutable law. – “Like Produces Like”

- Hatred, Deceit, and Self Righteousness, and Self-Preservation was all that was coming from the heart of the Pharisees.

A Fixed Rationale

A Factual Clarity

III. A Final Clarity – (vs 36-37)

*Note – The Lord right here makes sure that everyone knows that every word that comes from your mouth, will be measured against the truth that exists in your heart!

A. There will be a Meticulous Accounting – “...I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”

1.) “idle” – useless, meaningless, or non-productive word.

Dr. A.T. Robertson, the go-to authority on Word pictures in the New Testament writes this about this phrase...

An ineffective, useless. A word that does no good and so is pernicious like pernicious anemia. It is a solemn thought. Jesus who knows our very thoughts insists that our words reveal our thoughts and form a just basis for the interpretation of character.

- Words reflect our character according to the use of this word... therefore I'll say good things...

- which will be a lie if they are not true!
- which will be a lie if they are not real!
- which will be a lie if they are not Honest!

So often in the scriptures the Lord chides those whose “lips” are one way, but whose hearts are another.”

- you say, “I trust Christ” – is that statement TRUE? And Real!
- you say, “I believe the Bible is the Word of God?” – is that statement true? And Real?

- The veracity, validity, integrity, honesty, and productivity of what comes out of your mouth and mine, will be examined!

B. There will be a Remembered Thinking – “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

*Note Preacher – I thought we were saved by faith in Jesus Christ.... – Of Course we are – how does that happen? By Words...

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” – Those are words, that when true, when honest, when right – justify.

- “Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

- Spoken before the Judgment Saves. –
Spoken After the Judgment Condemns,
because when it is said after the fact, proves refusal before the fact.

Truth is made up of “Words” –

Error is made up of “Words” –

Lies are made up of “Words”

The Gospel is communicated through “Words”

Conclusion: - I am obviously no legal expert, but here is what I understand when someone goes on trial.

First a Deposition is given. -Meaning – Statements, Claims, Testimonies, Accountings are given and put on the Record.

Then at the Trial – The attorneys “examine that record before the court.” – Examined, Cross-Examined, picked apart for validity, for evidence, for light.

(sometimes it is found that people “perjure” themselves. – Their words don’t match the evidence. – Their statements don’t match the truth.)

- Life is the Deposition – The Trial is a cross examination and evaluation of the complete statement of your Life!