

September 17th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Striving With the Maker: The Ruin of Resistance
Sermon #9 Title: Evil People of the Same Kind
Sermon #9 Text: (Matthew 12:38-42)

We are nearing the end of this chapter that we have been preaching through, and the tension between Jesus and this group of people has just grown more and more acrimonious.

Now some godless brained earthling may take the position that this is not good, and Jesus should have been more accommodating In this passage Jesus is helping clear things up! He is giving us some clear lines of demarcation that helps keep things easier to see, and more difficult to confuse.

The Lord identified, qualified, and certified for us the kind of people that He is dealing with in verse 38-42; and it is not a kind and cuddly description.

- Now mind you, He did not start this back and forth, but He will finish it.
- In verse 39 He gives one description of an “evil and adulterous generation.”
- Then in verse 41 and 42, He applies that description to a particular group of people that no one living or dead wants to be a member of.

Three general characteristics that the Lord gives us this morning about an “evil generation.”

Looking at verse 39, the first thing we need to do is define the subject that Jesus focuses on.

- “**An evil and adulterous generation.**” –
- The phrase here is introduced, and twice applied later in the passage.

“**evil**” – Greek Word – poneros – “evil, wicked, bad, worthless...”

“**adulterous**” – Greek Word – moichalis – “unfaithful” with the more pointed use here speaks of one who is “married that is unfaithful”

“**generation**” – genea – same race, or “people of the same kind”

Now when we put those things together, we have “a people of the same kind of evil” and a people of the same kind of adultery.”

- Adulterous generation, when applied to Israel throughout the scripture is the accusation that Israel as a people were not faithful to God.

- The Old Testament calls Israel the wife of God.
 - Jesus said here that they were an “unfaithful, disloyal, and unloving” toward the God that chose her, saved her, and married her.
- With that being said, let's gather our setting.
- This group of Pharisees have fought with Jesus over the Sabbath day.
 - They have attacked Him for healing in a Synagogue on the Sabbath day.
 - They have accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan.

- And the Lord has just taught everyone standing around about the Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and the judgment on the actual condition of the heart.

It is at the end of Christ's statement about the heart, that we hear again from some of those who absolutely just hate Jesus. —

Looking at our text, we notice three general things:

I. Their Mocking Mind - “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.”

*Note – Now notice the care that Matthew takes not to paint with too broad of a brush. He writes “certain of the scribes and Pharisees.”

- What is about to happen, is too serious and too grave of a label to put on people that do not need it. — The idea is simple — “A portion” of these groups spoke up.

(Never paint with too broad a brush. Christ will judge men individually, surgically, and specifically, and not in some sort of collective guilt.) —

Let's note some things about what they said to Jesus:

A. Their Disgusting Insult — “we would see a sign from thee...”

*Note – It is hard to accept this question with any semblance or pretense that it is spoken in a serious tone.

- 1.) They had already declared Him to be working with the power of the devil.

*Note – No one with a modicum of a single brain cell can with an honest heart declare Christ to have the power of the devil, but want to see a sign from Him.

*Note – If this question does anything at all, it is a full-color picture of the satanic character of their mind.

- They have absolutely no fear in mocking Him to His face, or before the eyes and ears of those standing around.
- Empty, evil, souls.

B. Their Diminished Intellect — “a sign”

*note – Just for a second though, let's look at the question as though it were honest. Notice it, as though nothing had come before it.

- 1.) the word literally means, “a signal – whether normal or miraculous”

- 2.) what good would a sign do?

(a.) Suppose Jesus said, “alright, and he took his finger and drew clouds in the sky for all to see!” or maybe used his finger and wrote words in the sky for all to see”!

*Note – Now that would've done it! For sure! Right? No, all it would mean is that Jesus could use His fingers to write words in the sky? – What is that a sign for?

- Friend, all that a sign does is demonstrate the Supernatural! – It does not demonstrate which KIND of Supernatural power is doing it!

- Before a sign can help – there must be a clear understanding of the “powers behind those signs.” – One had to have a clear understanding of “Powers that ONLY the Righteous God of Heaven could do,” In order to distinguish from the Lying signs and powers that the Devil of hell can do.

Now all of that being said, BOTH supernatural voices, recognized, and noted, had previously spoken as to who Jesus is!

- **Matthew 3:17** – “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- **Mark 3:11** – “And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying Thou art the Son of God.”

Both of those events had already happened, and Pharisees and scribes were there on both occasions.

- The supernatural had already SPOKEN
- The Scriptures had already SPOKEN
- The Savior Himself had already SPOKEN – when He put them on the horns of a dilemma stating...

- They believed only God could exercise demons
- They witnessed Jesus exercise demons
- They refused to admit Jesus was doing so by the power of God.

- And HE called them On IT! –

- They could not have it both ways!
- Since It could only be done by God; and Since Jesus had clearly done it, then as He said in verse 28 – “...**then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**”

C. Their Delusional Importance – “we would see”

*Note – Now lets again look at this question through a big picture lens, as though it were honest; and this question is a sample of the false sense of importance that men have.

- 1.) No one tells Jesus what it will take for them to come to Him.

- 2.) No man makes any demands, gives Christ any conditions to meet, negotiates the terms of his faith.

*Note -Much like when Jesus was on the cross, and the Lucifer filled Pharisees mocked Him saying, “Come down from the cross and we will believe.” – There was nothing but demonic spit coming out of those words; but nonetheless even those words, if spoken in honesty; leaves man in the place where he is in no condition, and holds no position, in which he can tell Jesus the terms of his own belief.

A people of this same kind of evil have a “**Mocking Mind.**” - Filled with *Disgusting Insults*; *Diminished Intellect*, and *Delusional Importance*.

*Note – The next characteristic the Lord gives us is their Hellish heart; and he does that by comparison. He tells us that “this kind of people” are in far worse shape than the people of Nineveh were.

II. Their Hellish Heart – “**The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.**”

*Note – What do we know about the “men of Nineveh?”

*Note – Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. Roughly around 800 BC, (give or take) the Assyrians conquered lands between Nineveh and into the northern part of Israel. In fact, the Assyrian king Shalmanezzar III required Jehu King of Israel to bow at his feet and to pay taxes and tribute to him. That being said, the Assyrians were most known for their cruelty.

- Skinning their captives alive

- Mutilating, and cutting people up pieces at a time.
- They were fascinated with torturing, raping, and pillaging the peoples that they conquered.

*note – These were some of the most brutal, merciless, and godless people that history has ever recorded. – Nonetheless, at the preaching of Jonah, they “repented.” – They turned from this mind and this heart toward the God of the Bible.

- Now why did they repent? – They believed the message that Jonah preached.
- Do you know what message Jonah preached? He didn’t even preach grace, he announced coming Judgment.

Listen to this exchange that took place:

Jonah 3:4-5 – “And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.”

- Just a short note here – “Jonah proclaimed Judgment to one of the most brutal cities in history; they believed the message, and turned to God. In fact verse 8 of chapter 3, the king of Nineveh said “...cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way.”

Now here is the point that Jesus is making. – The kind of evil generation these Pharisees are, is worse off than those men of Nineveh – the men of Nineveh heard of Judgment, and turned to God. The Pharisees of Israel heard of Grace, and dug their heels in.

Two things about this “Hellish Heart”

A. Is Defiant not Ignorant – “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it:”

1.) The men of Nineveh will stand as a witness, and as evidence – that even the very message of Judgment was enough to take seriously.

- a.) They saw the prophet –
- b.) They heard the message –
- c.) They believed God –
- d.) They turned away from themselves to the God that Jonah proclaimed.

2.) They had “less knowledge” – but enough

3.) They had “less light” – but enough

4.) They had “less grace” – but enough

*Note – The depth of the sin of the Pharisees was in the degree of the hardness of their heart. – It was with eyes wide open; and the light of God on.

- Ignorance will never be an alibi, explanation, or legitimate claim of anyone who has eyes to see, ears to hear, a mind to think, and an earth to live on.

- If the Ninevites have enough to respond to in Jonah; the Pharisees have an ocean of evidence to respond to in Jesus.

- They are defiant not ignorant –

- They are Guilty, and not mistaken –

B. Is Guilty, not Mistaken – “behold a greater than Jonas is here.”

1.) No Pharisee, scribe, or respectable Jew would ever turn their nose up at the history of Jonah.

*Note – Jonah, as a prophet was well documented in the history of Israel. His period of time is well-documented, but his place of living had been well-forgotten.

Originally from “Gath-hepher” which was in the Old Testament region of New Testament Galilee.

(I believe that one of Jonah’s greatest failures was his forfeited witness. After the events of Nineveh, we never hear of any further times God used Jonah – and we do hear in John 7:52 the Pharisees arguing among themselves saying – “**They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.**”

- but there was – Jonah
- In spite of Nineveh’s repentance – Jonah pouted, and ruined his own testimony.
- You have a “minimalist story” in Jonah.
 - The worst of all missionaries
 - The harshest of all messages
 - The meanest of all multitudes
 - they believed and responded
- You have a “maximum story” in Jesus.
 - The Highest of All Messengers
 - The Kindest of all Messages
 - The Brightest of all Multitudes
 - they would NOT
- Their hellish heart sinned against Light, against Love, against Logic, and against the very LORD that stretched out to saved them.

We see their **Mocking Mind** – *Disgusting Insults, Diminished Intellect; Delusional Importance.*

We see their **Hellish Heart** (*Defiant not Ignorant, Guilty not Mistaken.*

The Lord brings us one more quality, or characteristic of the “Evil people of the same kind.”

This is condemnation not for their attitude; their defiance, their hard heartedness, and their spiteful spirit. This is a condemnation for their wasted blessing. – Their wasted favor and privilege.

- No one ever had a greater privilege than these Pharisees.
 - Even though they were under Roman occupation they had Full Freedom of Worship –
 - They had a Full Revelation of the Old Testament
 - They had the best of Educational Practices
 - They had the Wealth to use for the Ministry
 - They had been entrusted with, provided for, and protected to get all out of the God’s great blessings that He would give.
 - And THEY WERE ALIVE WHEN THE MESSIAH CAME!
 - AND THE MESSIAH CAME TO THEM!
- Now here’s the example that He is going to use. The queen of Sheba moved heaven and earth, paid a great price, and travelled a great distance just to learn from Solomon. And the One that gave Solomon his wisdom is here, at no expense to you; at no price, no travel, and no expectation of gifts – and its not just that you don’t want to hear Him, you want Him silenced, so that no one else can hear Him.

III. Their Wasted Blessing – “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.”

A. *The Testimony to Come* – “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; (why?) – for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon...”

1.) She travelled roughly 1500 miles according to Historians. – The journey would have taken her by most conservative estimates about 3 months.

2.) Listen to her testimony recorded in 2nd Chronicles 9:5-6 – “And she said to the king, *It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.*”

She had no idea that she was writing one of the most sung lines in all of Christian hymns...

*I have found His grace is all complete; He supplieth every need.
While I sit and learn at Jesus' feet, I am free, yes, free indeed.
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory, Full of glory, full of glory.
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory; O the half has never yet been told!*

What she saw, and heard, and learned from Solomon was far beyond all things that had captured her mind.

- She was willing to travel around the world to hear from the great Son of David.

- But they would not yield their hearts, minds, ears, and attention to the very one who gave Solomon His Wisdom.

Conclusion:

Now listen – You never want the LORD Jesus to say of you, that you too are in this same group. – An “Evil people of the same kind” – This kind of generation, this kind of people.

But He did not leave them sign-less. – They would get the same sign that you and I have. – The resurrected Jesus.

-Just as Jonah came out of that fish, walked on that shore and shouted out the judgment of God –

- Jesus came out of that tomb – Walked the lands of Israel, and announced the atonement and grace of God to all who will believe.