Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

September 8, 2019

"The Heart of the Matter"

8:00 ~ Service - Communion is for all Christians 9:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school 10:30 ~ Service with the King's Kid's - Communion is for all Christians

NEWS

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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- 1) Is there a transition zone, or an area of neutrality when it comes to Christ?
- 2) Is the unforgiveable sin, one that a person commits, and then afterward they continue to live this life without any possible hope?
- 3) Does the phrase, "Every careless word," mean that we can "Blaspheme the Spirit" by not carefully controlling our words?

MATTHEW 12:30-32 ~ ^{30NASB}"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. ³¹"Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³²"Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

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What does that mean in the simplest possible terms?
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Origen of Alexandria, 180-252 A.D. (Hebrews 6 and I John 5).
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"Make the tree good," isn't referring to an individual making good.					
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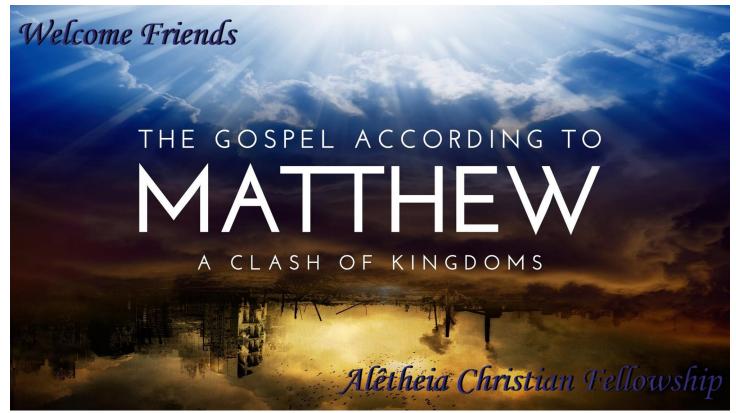
God Bless You!

offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or

Deacon of the church.

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Alêtheia ~ Matthew 12c ~ 090819



We covered a lot of Scripture last week. The reason we did, was so that we could get to the explicit point in verse 32 that was being suggested from verse 14 on. That point, that I called the "Overarching point," serves to support the central thesis, or central principle of the entire chapter. The "Overarching point" was that the Holy Spirit was bearing witness to the identity of Jesus through the things that He was doing. The larger central principle of the whole chapter is one we've seen repeatedly in the Bible... It is, as the Didache, the most ancient Christian document outside of the Bible, begins... "There are two ways, one of life and one of

death, and there is a great difference between these two ways."

From verse 1, the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Matthew, has presented a variety of episodes, quotations, questions, arguments and proverbs to drive a central concept.

The central principle of Matthew chapter 12, is that there are only two possible realities, in which a person can exist. There are any number of ways to say it... Every person has a brand on their forehead, visible to God, that is either the Seal of God, or the Mark of the Beast. Every person is either in league with Great I AM, or they are in league with Satan. That's all there is... It is impossible to be neutral. It is impossible to delay the decision. It is impossible to be partly one and partly the other.

What about people in transition - people coming to understand the Gospel? First, God already knows their final reality before the person is even conceived.

But the two-position only concept still holds because by default, every person is naturally a child of Satan through our inherited spiritual DNA - thank your

forbears Adam and Eve - we are all naturally - left to our own devices - children of the fleshly world. All in league with Satan, all members of his kingdom, which, by definition, means that we are all natively opposed to God and His Kingdom of Heaven.



We are all already travelling down the road to destruction. Only a "U" turn can fix that. Only through rebirth granted by Almighty God can our affiliation, our inheritance, our dead DNA, be changed.

That's the central principle of this chapter, there are those on one side and there are those on the other and the two shall never mix.

As I said, in support of the central theme, last week we saw that the overarching point was that the Holy Spirit actively pointed to Jesus as the means of that kingdom transfer... The enabler for the "U" turn. Only through Him, is there a rebirth and so a new supernatural inheritance.

That's what is being revealed here. Almighty God will allow humans to immigrate to His side when they renounce their former citizenship and embrace the citizenship He grants.

How does God grant it? To the people in the Matthew narrative at this point that's still a little ambiguous, but what has been revealed so far, is that The Father, or Will of God, sent the Son, or Word of God, to provide that path to citizenship and He sent the Spirit, or Breath of God, to confirm that fact.

Ignore, dismiss, reject, that testimony of God's Breath and you continue to travel your original road, you remain stuck in the kingdom to which you were born, to which you naturally inherited. The rest of the chapter is made up of several more seemingly unrelated episodes that are all designed to drive that central principle.

Let's start with the final verses we read last week and flesh then out a bit more. Jesus continued...



Matthew 12:30-32 ~ 30NASB"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. 31"Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. 32"Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy

Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Verse 30 is a very simple statement made to the Pharisees - made to people who are opposed to Jesus. Because of that, it also functions as a call to action for those who are still open to Jesus.

Jesus said. "You're either with Me, or you're not." There are only those two possibilities and beyond that, if you're not with Me, it is identical from My perspective - from My Father's perspective - from the Holy Spirit's perspective, that you are solidly against Me.



To us, it seems extreme. We generally understand there to be an intermediate position - we think someone could be neutral. They could simultaneously not be "With" Jesus, but not "Against" Him either. In 1930's and 40's Germany, you were either with the Jewish people or you were against them. We hate to paint the picture that black and white. Afterward, tens of millions of Germans said they didn't know - that they weren't responsible, but my friends, if a German citizen wasn't an active supporter of Jewish rights, they were, as a minimum, a passive supporter of the Holocaust.

Jesus made it crystal clear that there are only two possibilities - You're either 100% "With" Him, or you are 100% "Against" Him.



The specifics of the "Gathering" and "Scattering" is neither here, nor there. There are a lot of ideas, all the way from a simple shepherding metaphor to an elaborate "Gathering" or "Scattering" of the Children of Israel theory. It makes no real difference, because it only distracts us from the critical point, which is the fact that there is no middle ground.

The point we cannot afford to miss, is that there are only two types of people, only two camps, only two

paths, only two types of affiliations, only two possible eternal destinations and there is a no man's land between the two. Every person is firmly in one camp or the other.

The implied question behind the statement is so obvious, most scholars say it was never intended as a statement at all, but as a call to assess own's own condition. What path are you on - to whom do you belong - who is it that you are in league with? It is either God, or it is Satan - it can't be both - Old Testament can't be another - which one is it for you?

While the Pharisees would not have agreed to Jesus' classifications of the two realities, His statement/question in verse 30, would have served its purpose. They would have fully recognized and embraced the fact that they were solidly against Jesus.

Jesus helped them define their position. They would have, at that point, recognized that they were fully and irrevocably "Against" Jesus.



Now, remember that Jesus had already established the deeper meaning behind His healing and exorcism activity.

In verses 25 through 29, He had shown them that it was the Holy Spirit Who enabled the spiritual victory over Satan in order to ransack his kingdom and evict demons.

Further, Jesus explained that since the kingdom of Satan was defeated, the Kingdom of Heaven was upon them. By logical progression then, that meant that the Inaugurator of that Kingdom was also upon them.

The Holy Spirit pointed to Jesus as the One... Verse 30 makes it clear that anyone not "With," the One - anyone not "With" Jesus, was "Against" Him and was, in fact, actively denying the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

What does that mean in the simplest possible terms? Any such person, anyone "Against" Jesus was actively calling the Holy Spirit of God a liar. That is the epitome of blasphemy. The first sin - the sin that opened the floodgates of opposition to God and caused death to reign supreme - was, at the end of the day, a refusal to believe what God said. It was calling God a liar. In different ways, neither Adam, nor Eve trusted God - which means that neither of them believed Him - which, in effect, was calling Him a liar.

It has often been said that the Holy Spirit primary job is to point to Jesus. By necessity, it has to be so, because without Jesus, there is no transfer out of the darkness and into the light.

There is no work for the Holy Spirit to do in a person until that person becomes a Christian. Therefore, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to first and foremost point people to salvation in Christ. That is His primary witness - His primary illumination to us... So, to reject it

is to call Him a liar. It is a blasphemy that is unpardonable, because it is, by definition a failure to accept Christ as the means of Divine pardon.

Of course, it is an unforgiveable sin, because it is the sin of rejecting the only means of forgiveness for sin.

Notice that it is not an event sin. Murder, adultery, theft, drunkenness, etc. are all events, that are sins. Do it once, at some particular point in time, and the sin has been committed period. This unforgiveable blasphemy of the Spirt is a sin of position. Every person, until the day they are transferred into the Kingdom of Heaven through believing the Spirit and embracing Jesus is already positioned in the kingdom of Satan.

Actively blaspheming the Holy Spirit means that one is still in the wrong camp. Once the blasphemy against God's Holy Spirit ceases and the person embraces Jesus they are transferred and are no longer guilty of the unforgiveable sin.

Where do people get the idea that this unforgiveable blasphemy is a sin a person commits once - even unknowingly - and they are eternally doomed from that moment?

I have had many people come to me over the years afraid that they had committed the unpardonable and now, no matter what they did, they were bound for the Lake of Fire. Where do people get that idea?

There was an early church father named Origen. He was born and raised in Alexandria, Egypt in about 180 A.D. and died in 252 in Caesarea, Palestine. He was incredibly intelligent and wrote commentaries on nearly every Book of the Bible. He had some great ideas and he some really weird ideas. He is responsible for the idea that we were living spirits before we were conceived as humans and for the idea of Purgatory where souls would pay for their sins and eventually be allowed into Heaven.

He is also responsible for the idea that the "Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" was a Christians sin, not a pagan sin. His reasoning was that since only Christians had the indwelling Holy Spirit, only Christians could blaspheme Him.

He then tied the idea to Hebrews chapter 6, and I John chapter 5, concluding that Christians could reject the Holy Spirit within them, either intentionally, or through

neglect, and so lose their salvation. Once salvation was lost, it was impossible to get it back.

The problem with Origin's idea is that Jesus wasn't talking to Christians. Jesus was talking to the Pharisees who had already set their hearts against Him and against the Holy Spirit Who pointed to Him.

Since there are only two camps and nothing inbetween it can make one wonder if they are truly in God's camp or not.

Such thoughts occur because we think our position is related to what we do or don't do. That's the fundamental lie of Satan.

Satan got Eve questioning God's Word by appealing to her desire to have a better handle on things.

Instead of just believing God was good and that He had her, she wanted to obtain a bit more control for herself - she wanted to know good from evil herself, rather than merely relying on God to accept her, she wanted to make herself acceptable.

We do the same when we think of our position as anything other than God's merciful acceptance of us based upon Jesus' sacrifice. When we try to make ourselves more worthy.

The blasphemy is not trusting God and His plan. The blasphemy is saying I need to figure this thing out for myself.



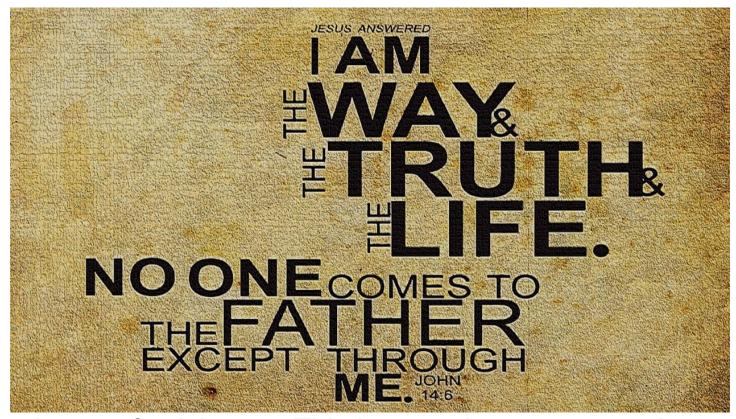
Some people use verse 32 to support the Arianist idea that Jesus is a lesser god. They say, Jesus Himself affirmed that here by saying a person can blaspheme Him, but not the big God. Jews, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Spirit of God is

just another way of saying the big God. So, you can ridicule Jesus - call Him a liar, because He was just an Angel, or a Prophet, but you cannot call God a liar and survive.

Actually, what verse 32 does, is emphasize the point of verse 31. Jesus said that there is one unforgiveable sin and then He backs it up by saying you can do anything else - even blaspheme Me and be forgiven, but never will anyone survive blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Also, that clearly shows the nature difference between the sins involved. Where the first is an event sin, the second is a position sin.

Speaking against Jesus is an event-type of sin. Speaking against Jesus all the way until death becomes a Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and is then unforgiveable.

Some take the final phrase, "Either in this age or in the age to come," as confirmation of Purgatory. While Blaspheming the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven after death, they see... Implied from silence... that other sins could be.



It is pure foolishness. This is very simply a colloquial saying to emphasis the complete unforgivableness of the sin. Jesus said "I AM the way and the truth and the life - no one comes to the Father except through Me." Like it, or not, the only way to heaven is through accepting the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding Jesus as the Christ.

Reject the Holy Spirit inspired Gospel throughout your earthly life and there is no hope whatsoever.



Matthew 12:33-37 ~ 33NASB"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34"You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35"The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

"Make the tree good," isn't referring to an individual making themselves good. It is just an analogy referring to how orchards work. In an orchard there is an orchardist - a person who cultivates the trees, pruning, crossbreeding, controlling pollination and disease, to improve the trees' natural production.

If an orchardist knows what they're doing - if they are successful with their efforts at manipulation, they make the tree good, and as a result the fruit of that tree is also good. It logically follows then, that if the fruit is bad, it means the orchardist failed to make the tree good. Bad fruit is proof that the tree is bad.

In those days, most people would have thought of the Pharisees as the good people even if their fruit was bad. They were part of the good group - the fruit must be an anomaly. It's like assuming a pastor is holy, or a cop is honest, or a barber knows how to cut hair.

Jesus said, not so. If the fruit is bad the tree is bad, regardless of how awesome the orchard, regardless of how expert the orchardist. Bad fruit, bad tree - a theme He used a lot.

What was the fruit that Jesus was referring to? It was their unbelief. They didn't just see Jesus perform an exorcism. They saw the hand of God, ransacking the Kingdom of Satan. They saw the inauguration of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. They saw the Holy Spirit confirm Jesus as the Anointed One ushering that Kingdom in.



Here another nuance of the charge against the unbelievers is presented. A "Brood of vipers," specifically refers to being "Double-tongued." A viper is thought of as duplicitous, as speaking deception, as we would say today, one who puts their own spin on things.

Further, the expulsion of demons can only be thought of as good. That good, the unbelieving "Vipers," call evil. Jesus to cast out evil from a human victim, which can only be thought of as good, and because of their stubborn love of their own opinions the "Vipers" could only conclude that it was bad.

Isaiah 5:20&21, 20NIVWoe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. 21Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

In verses 34&35, Jesus is still talking to the "Vipers." His point here, is the same as He made in Luke 6:45, "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks," and in Mark 7:20, "It is what comes from inside that defiles a person."

Of course, people can be deceptive - Jesus just acknowledged that by calling them a "Brood of vipers," but His point is that evil on the inside will produce evil on the outside.

The Pharisees had made up their mind that Jesus could not possibly be God's representative. It was a certainty that painted them into a corner. No matter how much good Jesus did, they had no choice but to see it as evil.

Jesus' point stands today. What is in your heart?



Most modern Christians worry, fuss and fret over what's on the outside, just like the Pharisees did. They focus on the symptoms, rather than the disease.

Most Christians are fully wrapped around the axle of trying to externally conform to some, largely manmade,

standard of behavior. Don't drink, don't cuss, don't read Harry Potter books, don't watch cable T.V., don't dance, don't play cards, don't even think about enjoying yourself. Do go to church, do give 10%, do read your Bible, do pray, do wallow in guilt, do flagellate yourself with some form of penance.

It's like treating a brain tumor with aspirin for the headache. and thinking that you've fixed the problem. Spiritually, we fall into the same foolish practice as legalists throughout time.

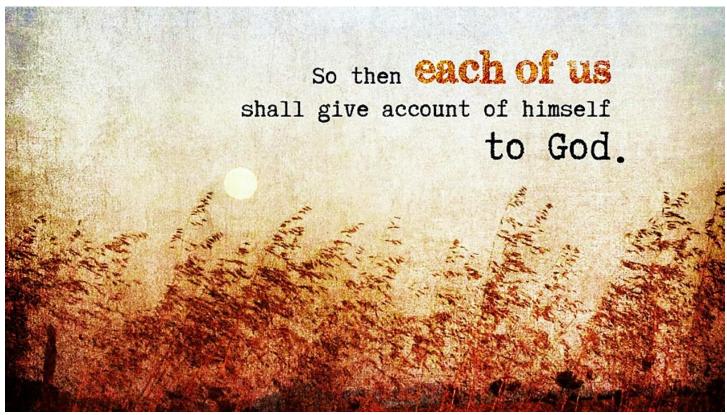
It's human nature, because it's far easier to evaluate and treat symptoms... behavior, than it is fixing the root cause... the heart. Get the underlying cause right and the symptoms will evaporate. Make the heart good and the external stuff will follow suit.

You cannot complete that task. You can recognize the Truth of it and you can actively yield to the Holy Spirit to change your heart and then out of the overflow of your good heart you will abstain from evil and you will do good and you will know the difference.

The Pharisees confronting Jesus were so evil inside they didn't even realize that their actions were evil -

they sincerely thought they were the ones who were good.

That's what darkness does. It blinds you to the Truth. Be open to God, to His Truth and to His transforming of your heart.



A change takes place in verse 36. Jesus goes from speaking directly to His opponents to making a general statement of fact that applies to all people. Every man, woman and child will stand before Almighty God the Creator of the heavens and the earth and give an accounting.

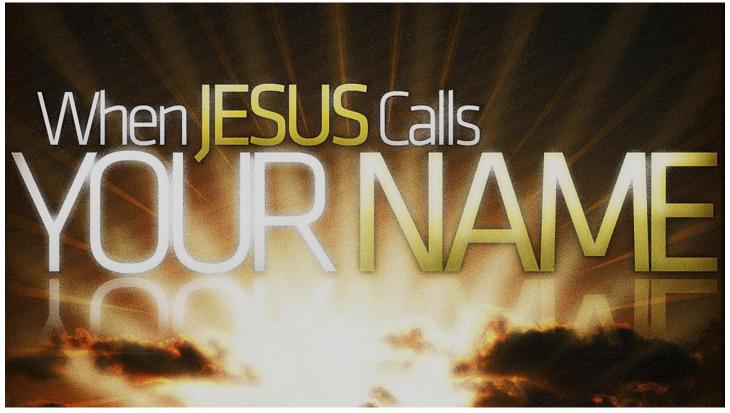
For the unbelievers, it is referred to as the Great White Throne Judgment. Since there is no Blood of Jesus applied to their hearts, it is their hearts alone, that God will judge. How? God judges each person's deeds, or we can say, that He judges every word ever spoken. Even the most trivial word spoken without thought or care, will be judged as it is the tangible evidence of the underlying heart condition.



Since such a heart has "Blasphemed the Holy Spirit" by calling Him a liar concerning Jesus, it remains evil and so evil proceeded from it and the only possible outcome is a guilty verdict followed by eternal expulsion.

It only makes sense. People choose to live their short physical life devoid of real relationship with God... Why in the world would anyone think they would want even closer relationship with Him for eternity? God is so good and so just, instead of destroying people, instead of forcing them to love Him, He simply gives them what they clearly showed they wanted during their life.

The problem is that eternal separation from God is "Outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12, 22:13. 25:30). It is "The lake of fire which burns with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20).



Those who are covered by the Blood, who accepted the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who are Christians... We will give an accounting to our Lord Jesus Christ for what we did with the resources that He entrusted to us in what is often called the Bema Seat Judgment.

We will enter fully into the Kingdom of Heaven where "There will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain" (Revelation 21:4). Even so, in that judgment there will be either gain or loss (I Corinthians 3:13-15).

You see, verse 37 then becomes a warning. Don't think of it as a warning to unbelievers - think of it as a

warning to you and to me and to every Christian. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Why would I say that? The flow of the passage indicates that this is the direction Jesus was going, because the "Vipers" were already lost - if they couldn't heed His appeal, they certainly wouldn't heed His warning.

The reality is that what we do is driven by what we say and what we say reveals what we believe and what we believe is who we are.

Who are you?