

THE LORD AND HIS FAMILY

MATTHEW 12



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

T . M . M O O R E

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Lord and His Family: Matthew 12
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Matthew 12: Introduction

In chapters 5-7, Jesus taught about the kind of Kingdom He had come to bring near, one where the righteousness of the Law flourished, together with mercy. In chapters 8 and 9 He began showing the effects of the Kingdom's coming, and increasing the ranks of His disciples. In chapters 10 and 11 He sent the disciples out to proclaim the Kingdom, and then talked about the importance of the Kingdom as a place to be entered with great effort and energy.

In chapter 12, Jesus makes it clear that He is the Lord of the coming Kingdom. He is Lord of the Sabbath, Lord over demons and the devil, Lord over justification and forgiveness, and Lord over death and the grave. And as Lord, He is gathering a family of faithful and obedient followers, who hear and obey His teaching.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Lord of the Sabbath

Pray Psalm 92.1-4.

*It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night,
On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute,
And on the harp,
With harmonious sound.
For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work;
I will triumph in the works of Your hands.*

Sing Psalm 92.1-4.

(Sweet Hour: Sweet Hour of Prayer)

*How good it is to thank the Lord and praise to God Most High accord;
by day to let His kindness ring, His faithfulness by night to sing.
With ten-stringed lute, resounding lyre, and sweetest harp we'll lift You higher.
For You have made our souls rejoice; we sing Your praise with blended voice!*

Read and meditate on Matthew 12.1-8.

Prepare.

1. To what did the Pharisees object?
2. What did Jesus say about His disciples' actions?

Meditate.

The Pharisees – self-appointed Sabbath-police of their day – did not object to the disciples' plucking grain from someone's field. This was perfectly in line with the Law of God (cf. Deut. 23.24, 25). But they could not abide them doing this "work" on the Sabbath. Their traditions specified what could and could not be done on the Sabbath, and "harvesting" grain was definitely not on the list of accepted chores (v. 2).

Rather than address their specific complaint, Jesus responded to them categorically, using Biblical precedent to undermine their tradition (vv. 3-5). It was not a question of harvesting on the Sabbath, but of simple necessity. On the Sabbath – which was made for man's rest and good (Mk. 2.27) – works of necessity are always in order. Jesus first cited David's action in eating the holy bread as a precedent for the disciples' plucking grain to satisfy their hunger. Then He reminded them that on the Sabbath priests do a good bit of work to keep the operation of the temple going. No one ever objected to them.

Jesus next turned the argument from traditions – which were always in dispute in one way or another – to an indisputable icon and institution. The temple was most sacred to Jews in Jesus' day. He knew that, of course, and so took the next step to point religious worship away from the temple to Himself (v. 6), and what He desires – mercy, not the "sacrifice" of keeping tedious human traditions (v. 7). Here, as in John 2, Jesus identified Himself with the temple, but as of the greater to the lesser. Jesus is greater than the temple for many reasons, as the writer of Hebrews explained in chapters 7-10. In

asserting that He is Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus set Himself above all Hebrew traditions and institutions and the entirety of God's Law. Thus He instructs us to see the Law and all the institutions of the Old Testament as pointing forward to Him.

And He tells us what to seek from true worship: Not just the motions of worship ("sacrifice") but lives that express the mercy of those who have entered the Kingdom of God (v. 8).

Reflect.

1. Why did Jesus attack the religious traditions of the Jews of His day?
2. What do we learn from this episode about how to make best use of the Law of God?
3. What are some differences between "mercy" and "sacrifice"?

The faithful are more than priests. For the Lord of the temple himself has come to them. The Truth personally has arrived, not merely the image of the truth. John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 39.2*

You have called me to show mercy, Lord, so help me today as I...

Pray Psalm 92.5-15.

Jesus is Lord of all, Whom you go forth to serve this day. Ask Him to help you flourish and bear much fruit in all your endeavors.

Sing Psalm 92.5-15.

Psalm 92.5-15 (Sweet Hour: *Sweet Hour of Prayer*)

How sweet Your works, Your thoughts how deep: The fool cannot such knowledge keep.

Like grass the wicked rise each day; in judgment they are swept away.

But You, O Lord, abide on high; Your enemies shall fall and die.

All those who sin shall scattered be, but, Lord, You have exalted me!

My eye my vanquished foe shall see; my ears hear those who threaten me.

Yet in God's house, where he belongs, the righteous like a tree grows strong.

Then let us green and fruitful be and flourish like a mighty tree,

to tell God's righteousness abroad: He is our Rock, our sovereign God!

2 More Sabbath Instruction

Pray Psalm 72.7-14.

In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him,
And His enemies will lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and of the isles
Will bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba
Will offer gifts.
Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
All nations shall serve Him.
For He will deliver the needy when he cries,
The poor also, and *him* who has no helper.
He will spare the poor and needy,
And will save the souls of the needy.
He will redeem their life from oppression and violence;
And precious shall be their blood in His sight.

Sing Psalm 72.7-14.

(Martyrdom: [*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*](#))

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures,
Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low.
Let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

The Lord the needy rescues when he cries to Him for grace.
All they who suffer violence find mercy before His face.

Read Matthew 12.1-14; meditate on verses 9-14.

Prepare.

1. How did Jesus justify His “working” on the Sabbath?
2. How did the religious leaders respond?

Meditate.

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Previously, He showed us that works of necessity are appropriate for the Lord's Day, and not just those works that facilitate religious services. Here He shows us that works of mercy should also be performed on the Sabbath. Jesus put the question to the people in the synagogue, whether healing on the Sabbath was to be allowed. This was to get them thinking – something a good many of them had not done for years, no doubt. They simply marched in lockstep with the traditions foisted on them by their leaders, without ever thinking about whether those traditions had any validity. Jesus invited them to put on their thinking caps and pay attention. That's

always good advice.

Next (vv. 11, 12), He framed the work He was about to do. Of course, no one would leave a sheep to suffer in a pit, if it fell in on the Sabbath. If they would have such mercy on an animal, then it must be “lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” That phrase “to do good” is important, because it categorizes the work of Jesus in restoring things to God’s original good purposes (Gen. 1.31).

The stage now set, Jesus commanded the man with the withered hand to stretch it out. As he obeyed by faith, His hand was “restored” – good as new. Works of mercy bring the goodness of the Lord to light, restoring His world for His glory and for the benefit of His creatures.

So for this good work, this goodness-of-God-restoring work, the religious leaders began their plot to murder Jesus. Sin is a terrible blinding power. The more it excites self-interest and preserving the status quo, the more insane it makes us. A man is healed, and the Man Who healed him must die. Why? Because Jesus threatened the privileged status of the religious leaders, that’s why. They were invested in their traditions, their place, and their power over the people. And they were not about to sit by while Jesus threatened to overturn all that.

Sin not only makes you crazy; it makes you stupid.

Reflect.

1. What would be some other examples of works of mercy?
2. How would you explain the role of grace and the role of faith in this work of restoration?
3. What’s the lesson here about doing things mindlessly, without thinking them through?

Jesus’ desire was to heal first their bitterness before he healed the withered hand. But even in his various attempts to offer them healing, both by what he said and did, their malady proved all the more intractable. John Chrysostom (344-407), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 40.1

I go forth today, Lord, to restore my world to Your goodness and glory, as I...

Pray Psalm 72.15-20.

Rejoice in the Lord and His Kingdom, and pray that His reign and rule will increase in you today, and through you, into your Personal Mission Field.

Sing Psalm 72.15-20.

Psalm 72.15-20 (Martyrdom: [*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*](#))

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right.
Let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim.
And may our King forever reign and nations bless His great Name.

Now bless the God of Israel Who wondrous works performs.
And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forevermore!

3 The Larger Plan

Pray Psalm 22.23-25.

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.
My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

Sing Psalm 22.23-25.

(Darwall: [*Rejoice, the Lord is King*](#))

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,
Nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

Read Matthew 12.1-21; meditate on verses 15-21.

Prepare.

1. Why did Jesus warn people not to make Him known?
2. What do we learn from Isaiah about Jesus' ministry?

Meditate.

This passage strikes some readers as strange. Didn't Jesus come to earth to proclaim the Kingdom? To call the nations and peoples of the earth to repent and believe the Gospel? Why did He warn the people not to make Him known?

There is a simple practical explanation for this. Jesus knew that the religious leaders had begun plotting against Him (vv. 14, 15). He also knew that, as of yet, they didn't have a leg to stand on in trying to build a case against Him. He had offended them by setting aside their traditions; but He clearly showed from the Scriptures why their traditions were invalid. They were miffed, but they would need something much stronger to have their way with Him. And with the Romans, an hysterical, growing mob would be just enough.

Jesus' ministry was, in the first place, to the people of Israel. Ultimately though, as Isaiah showed – and as we have seen from the beginning of this gospel – bringing salvation to the Gentiles was the larger aim. By warning the people to remain quiet about Him, Jesus intended to keep the enthusiasm for His work to a minimum, if any consideration of “multitudes” (v. 15) can be regarded as a minimum. He did not want to be taken into captivity before His proper time. The parables in chapter 13, the outreach to a Gentile woman in chapter 15, and the decisive parable of the unfaithful workers in chapter 20 would show the worldwide, all-nations scope of the Kingdom of God, and would make clear the Lord's intention of giving the Kingdom to Gentiles as well as Jews.

But He needed to be able to do all those things, to lay down a trajectory of teaching and works that would confirm Isaiah's prophecy (and many others, cf. Ps. 22.27, 28 and Mic. 4.1-8) and make it possible for the disciples, from Acts 10 on, to take the Gospel confidently and joyfully to the Gentile world.

Jesus was buying time by this warning, time for the ancient prophecies to come to full realization.

Reflect.

1. Why does the warning of verse 16 no longer apply to the followers of Christ?
2. The word translated "justice" in verses 18 and 20 is better translated "judgment". How does Jesus send forth "judgment" to victory?
3. What does it mean to "hope" (NKJV, "trust") in the Name of Jesus (v. 21)?

*Then so that you might not be troubled at the events and their strange frenzy, Jesus reminded them of the prophet who had predicted them. For so great was the accuracy of the prophets that they did not omit even these little matters. But they foretold his travels, changes of place and the intent with which he would act, that we might learn that they spoke by the Spirit. If human secrets cannot be easily discerned, how much more difficult it is to discern Christ's purpose, except when the Spirit reveals it to us. John Chrysostom (344-407), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 40.2**

Lord, open my mouth to declare Your praises today as I...

Pray Psalm 22.26-28.

Pray for the nations and peoples of the world, that God would send witnesses to them, so that the Good News of Christ and His Kingdom might become theirs.

Sing Psalm 22.26-28.

Psalm 22.26-28 (Darwall, [*Rejoice, the Lord is King*](#))

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.

Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.

Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;

All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.

The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

4 Plundering the Strong Man's House

Pray Psalm 35.9, 10.

And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD;
It shall rejoice in His salvation.
All my bones shall say,
“LORD, who *is* like You,
Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him,
Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?”

Sing Psalm 35.9, 10.

(Creation: [*Exalt the Lord, His Praise Proclaim*](#))

Thus shall our souls rejoice in You
and hold Your salvation ever true.
Our bones as one aloud shall cry,
“Lord, who is like You, enthroned on high,
Who cares for those too frail and meek
to save themselves when they are weak?
Who rescues His afflicted ones
when foes their warfare have begun?”

Read Matthew 12.1-30; meditate on verses 22-30.

Prepare.

1. How did Jesus silence the religious leaders on this occasion?
2. Who's plundering whom here, and what does that signify?

Meditate.

Jesus continues tossing out demons, healing those who are burdened with the effects of sin, and amazing the multitudes (vv. 22, 23). Imagine how that must have irked Satan. He though, having been bound by the Lord in the early days of Jesus' ministry (Matt. 4.1-11), could do nothing to stop Him.

But he kept trying. Here he enlisted the Pharisees against Jesus, by suggesting a scurrilous but stupid rumor: The only reason Jesus can cast out demons is because He is the devil himself – or at least, in his employ (v. 24). They had tried that same lame notion once already (Matt. 9.34); now they personalized it even more.

Jesus showed the utter stupidity of that explanation for His power in two ways (vv. 25-27). First, He demonstrated the folly of thinking that Beelzebub would attack his own house. Who does that? Next, He pointed to the Jewish exorcists, and asked whether they, too, might be in Satan's employ? Were the Pharisees willing to label their own colleagues with that taint? And if not, then why did they do so to Jesus?

If I'm a Pharisee at this point, I'm skulking back and laying low. And getting angrier all the time.

Now Jesus gives the real explanation of His spiritual power (vv. 28-30): He has bound the strong man – Satan – and He is about the business of plundering his house. Satan's “house” and “goods”

had been enjoying a several thousand year run by the time Jesus came around. Now He was taking it all back – souls, people, cultures, societies, and the very creation itself. As Abraham Kuyper put it, “There’s not a single square inch of all creation over which Jesus as Lord does not say, ‘Mine!’” Jesus’ ability to cast out demons signals that the Kingdom of God has come in the power of the Spirit, just as it has come to each of us.

And those who are “with” Jesus, Who is God with us, are joining the plunder as well (v. 30). We do not fear being plundered by the strong man, who wants to take away our freedom, joy, peace, and power to love. Rather, in the Name and power of Jesus, we are taking back everything in our lives – from the depths of our souls to the full extent of our Personal Mission Fields – and making it all obey Jesus (2 Cor. 10.3-5).

Reflect.

1. What does it mean for you to participate with Jesus in plundering the devil’s house and goods?
2. Every objection to Jesus anyone might make is as flimsy as that which the Pharisees made here. Why?
3. How can you make sure that you go “with” Jesus throughout each day?

Jesus here compares the earth with a house and human beings with vessels or possessions. Human beings have become possessions of demons and of the devil, having by evil means been brought under his authority. Thus it was impossible for the demons’ own possessions to be taken away unless the demons were first weakened and bound with chains.
Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428), *Fragment 68*

Give me strength to plunder with joy today, Lord, as I...

Pray Psalm 35.1-8.

Pray that the Lord will clear the path for you today, send His angels to guard you, and be with you as you plunder the devil’s house in your life and Personal Mission Field.

Sing Psalm 35.1-8.

Psalm 35.1-8 (Creation: [*Exalt the Lord, His Praise Proclaim*](#))

Contend, O Lord, with those who strive with me;
my shield, my strength and buckler be!
Engage with spear and axe to fight
and rescue me with all Your might!
My soul with Your salvation soothe,
and vanquish all who oppose Your truth.
Let those ashamed and humbled be
who would destroy and humble me.

Let all my foes be blown like chaff,
and let Your angel take my behalf.
No cause have they to hide their snare
or for my fall a pit prepare.
Upon them let destruction fall;
disperse, destroy them one and all!
And let the net which they have made

be for their doom and judgment laid.

5 Too Blind to See

Pray Psalm 1.6.

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Sing Psalm 1.6.

(St. Thomas: [*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*](#))

In Jesus' righteousness, though sinners fail and fall,
His flock He will preserve and bless, who on His favor call.

Read Matthew 12.1-45; meditate on verses 31-45.

Prepare.

1. How is the blindness of the Pharisees apparent in these vignettes?
2. How does Jesus warn us against wickedness?

Meditate.

The common thread uniting these four vignettes is the blinding power of sin. Throughout His ministry, Jesus warns against giving place to sin. Sin is the great enemy of life, and Jesus is the Lord of life, making Him the mortal enemy of sin. That should be our posture as well.

The unpardonable sin of verses 31 and 32 is clear: Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit – in effect, saying “No!” to every “Yes!” of the Spirit – condemns himself for as long as he continues to remain blind to the Spirit’s revealing powers. If a person *won’t* see the truth that is in Jesus, that person *cannot* know the forgiveness Jesus offers.

The proof of being right with God is not in one’s birth or attainments (vv. 33-37). A “tree” must be *made* good, so that it bears good fruit. Only God and His grace can do that, and only through Jesus. Those who oppose the good works of Jesus oppose Him, and thus, by definition, are evil. Because their hearts are set against Him – loving themselves and their traditions more than the Lord of the Sabbath and Liberator of the demon-possessed – they will find any excuse for not believing Jesus. Their words show them to be opposed to the Righteous One of God, and thus their own words condemn them.

So blind were the scribes and Pharisees that they decided to settle for signs rather than good works (vv. 38-42). They had seen Jesus do many good works, but they wanted magic, not mercy. They tried to manipulate Jesus to satisfy their will and desire – like many of us do from time to time. Jesus pointed to the “resurrection” of Jonah and said that should be sign enough. Then He recalled the Queen of Sheba’s visit to Solomon, and how she extolled his wisdom, and He put Himself above even that (cf. 1 Kgs. 10.1-13). How blind could they be?

Finally, Jesus returned to the demon theme that began in verse 12. He casts them out, but, unless that spiritual void is filled with the Spirit of Jesus, they’ll be back and with more trouble in tow. Those who see in Jesus not Beelzebub but the true and powerful Lord of all spirits will clean up their act and turn to Him, lest, having tasted of His goodness and power, worse evils befall them (Jn. 5.14). Jesus says to the scribes and Pharisees: “Don’t be blind! See me for Who I am, and follow Me!”

Only the spiritually blind will resist that invitation and call.

Reflect.

1. Why were the religious leaders so blind? Do we sometimes make ourselves blind to Jesus?
2. Jesus pointed to Jonah as a sign of His resurrection. Can you think of some other “signs” pointing to Jesus from the Old Testament?
3. Who is guilty of the unpardonable sin? Does this mean that we don’t need to seek forgiveness for every sin? Explain.

By a sevenfold operation the Holy Spirit is committed to our care, so that we may have the “spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and fortitude, knowledge and true godliness, and fear of God.” Arrayed on the opposite side of this sevenfold good is the sevenfold evil: the spirit of stupidity and error, the spirit of foolhardiness and cowardice, the spirit of ignorance and impiety, and the spirit of pride against the fear of God. These are seven evil spirits. Augustine (354-430), Sermon 72A.2

Help me to bear good fruit today Lord, so that I might be a sign of You as I...

Pray Psalm 1.1-3.

What fruit will you bear for the Lord today? How will it be seen that you are His witness and servant?

Sing Psalm 1.1-3.

Psalm 1.1-5 (St. Thomas: [*Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*](#))

How blessed are they that shun sin’s vain and wicked ways.
For them has Christ salvation won; He loves them all their days.

God’s Word is their delight; they prosper in its truth.
In it they dwell both day and night to flourish and bear fruit.

Firm planted on the banks of God’s great stream of grace,
they raise unending praise and thanks to His great glorious face.

6 Family Ties

Pray Psalm 5.11, 12.

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;
Let those also who love Your name
Be joyful in You.
For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;
With favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.

Sing Psalm 5.11, 12.

(Angel's Story: [*O Jesus, I Have Promised*](#))

Let those rejoice who seek You and shelter 'neath Your wing.
Their tongues shall rise to speak to Your praise; Your grace they sing.
Your people You will bless, Lord, all those who to You yield.
Preserve them with Your best Word, and guard them like a shield.

Read Matthew 12.1-50; meditate on verses 46-50.

Prepare.

1. Why did Jesus' family come looking for Him?
2. Whom did Jesus identify as His family?

Meditate.

Readers sometimes think Jesus is being harsh on His mother and siblings here. But He does not necessarily exclude them from His true family. Indeed, we know that Jesus' half-brothers James and Jude came to strong faith in Him, and His mother believed in Him from before He was born. It's not unlikely that all Jesus' siblings learned to trust in Him, as He doubtless knew they would.

The point of this exchange is not to *exclude* from Jesus' family those who raised Him and with whom He grew up. The point is to *include* all as true members of His family who, like His disciples do the will of His Father (v. 50). Luke says the family of Jesus are those "who hear the word of God and do it" (Lk. 8.21). This, after all, is what Jesus did, and any who follow Him in hearing and doing the Word and will of God are His family, indeed.

And what a privilege it is to be so related to Jesus! He is our Savior, Lord, and King; He is also our Brother, and as such He has banished the bully in the neighborhood and invites us to enjoy the freedom we have in Him. As His family members we bear certain responsibilities. We are members of His household, and so must attend to every Word of God, and be quick and diligent in obeying the will of our Father. Thus we follow in the steps of our older Brother and King, seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. We are a worldwide family of brothers and sisters in Jesus, and our pedigree is to hear the Word of God and do it.

What a family!

Reflect.

1. How does one become a member of the family of Jesus?

2. What are the identifying traits of those who belong to Jesus' family?
3. How should the members of Jesus' family relate to one another?

To believers he applies all the terms of family relationship, those, namely, who had been joined to him in the kindred fellowship of obedience. Apollinaris (310-392), Fragment 75

Let me hear Your Word, O Lord, and send me forth to do Your will today as I...

Pray Psalm 5.1-8.

Seek the Lord's mercy and leading for the day ahead, that you may have grace to do all His will.

Sing Psalm 5.1-8.

Psalm 5.1-8 (Angel's Story: [*O Jesus, I Have Promised*](#))

O Lord, attend and hear me, consider how I groan.
Receive my cries and near be, and love me as Your own.
By morning, Lord I seek You, for You will hear my voice.
My every need You speak to, and make my soul rejoice!

In sin You take no pleasure; no evil dwells with You.
Vain boasts You will not treasure, nor those who boasting do.
Sin kindles Your hot anger, You crush all those who lie.
The violent live in danger of Your all-searching eye.

O Lord, Your lovingkindness escorts me in this place.
I bow before Your highness and praise Your glorious grace!
In righteous ways You guide me; Your pathway I will know.
No good will be denied me as I with Jesus go.

7 Lord of All

Pray Psalm 110.3, 4.

Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.
The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
“You *are* a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Sing Psalm 110.3, 4.

(Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation)
Filled with the Spirit's power, in holy robes of love,
from early morning's hour they serve their Lord above.
Christ reigns a priest forever, the King of Righteousness
and King of Peace who ever His chosen ones will bless.

Read and meditate on Matthew 12.1-50.

Prepare.

1. How does Jesus show Himself to be Lord in this chapter?
2. Who are members of the Lord's family?

Meditate.

In chapter 12 Jesus solidified His claim to Lordship, first by asserting that He is Lord of the Sabbath. The reasoning is clear: He gave the fourth commandment, so He should know best how to interpret it.

He further asserted His Lordship by explaining His power to cast out demons as the natural consequence of His having bound Satan (Matt. 4.1-11). Now He was plundering all that the devil had ruled over for so long, wherever sin and its effects were found.

As Lord, He sets the terms of forgiveness and justification. No forgiveness is available to those who deny the witness of the Spirit; similarly, those whose lives produce no good works should not expect to be justified before the Lord.

Jesus is the King greater than Solomon, and He promised to demonstrate that greatness by rising from the dead. For He is Lord of the Sabbath, Lord over demons and the devil, Lord of forgiveness, and Lord over death and the grave.

The true followers of Jesus will fill their souls with Him – hearing and doing His Word, and thus showing themselves to be true members of His household.

Chapter 12 is thus an apt prelude to chapter 13, in which, in a series of breath-taking parables, Jesus will set forth the nature and character of the Kingdom He came to bring near.

Reflect.

1. Why did the religious leaders want to destroy Jesus? How was He a threat to them? Is Jesus still a threat to people? Explain.
2. What kind of “plundering” of the “strong man’s house” have we seen Jesus pursuing thus far in Matthew’s gospel? What kind of “plundering” should we be doing?
3. What more have you learned about Jesus and His mission from Matthew 12?

It was nothing strange for Christ to be more than Jonah and to be more than Solomon, for he is the Lord and they are the servants. But who are those who looked askance at the presence of the Lord, whereas foreigners listened to his servants? Augustine (354-430), Sermon 72A.1

Lead me this day, Lord, as I serve You by...

Pray Psalm 110.1-3, 5-7.

How will Jesus manifest His Lordship in your life today?

Sing Psalm 110.1-3, 5-7.

Psalm 110.1-3, 5-7 (Aurelia: *The Church’s One Foundation*)

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the Lord says to my Lord,
“until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies;
while those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

The Lord at Your right hand, Lord, in wrath shall shatter kings,
when judgment by His strong Word He to the nations brings.
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,
in glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blessed!

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. In this chapter, how did Jesus demonstrate that He is Lord?
2. Why did He discourage people from spreading this news about?
3. How does Jesus' "plundering" the strong man's household instruct us concerning our own mission?
4. What does it mean to be a member of Jesus' household?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Matthew 12.1-50? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.