

HOME SECURITY

MATTHEW 12:22-37

Rev. Todd G. Leupold, Perth Bible Church, January 3, 2010 AM

INTRODUCTION: (mole theme adapted from Pastor Joseph Smith, Sept. 01, sermoncentral.com)

Have you ever had a turf war with a mole? Moles are unpleasant, destructive, and even dangerous animals. How? They dig and make ridges in the turf, often causing people to stumble.

They have very small eyes and, for all intents and purposes, are blind.. Of course, moles don't really need to see, because they spend most of their time in the dark, underground.

Nor do moles make any intelligent or meaningful noises. In fact, they have almost no voice. Oh, a tiny squeal of complaint comes out when your dog gets after a mole, but, for the most part, they do not make sound. Moles are not only essentially blind; they are mute as well.

The mole is blind and mute, yes; but that's not the worst of it. The mole is dangerous because he deliberately burrows the heart out of your finely tended lawn and makes dividing lines right through it. In the process they cause many to stumble and fall without even noticing or caring.

Jesus showed us one day that there are human moles in this world – blind, mute, and worse. They are divisive. Moles want to do damage. They do not understand, but they want to do harm. They will not speak a word of hope, but they will grumble about things and cause trouble. Blind and mute and worse; they are divisive and cause others to stumble.

PRAYER

I.) THE THREAT: **DIVISION** (vv. 22-25)

– The action is Jesus' miraculous healing of a blind, mute and demon-possessed man. However, the *contest* and *issue* from here on out is not miracles, or even Jesus' identity, but the threat of division among those who proclaim themselves to be God's children. The current form of the division is a smear campaign against Jesus.

– **The visible evidence and affect of this division is clearly exposed as:**

A.) **Jealousy** (vv. 22-24)

– The Pharisees are not objecting simply because they believe casting out of demons is wrong or not possible by any but Satan.

– Their real issue is jealousy over the fact that this young, unproven newcomer, Jesus, has demonstrated greater power and authority than they have and is exercising greater influence while receiving more attention and acclaim from their 'own' people than they are.

B.) **Slander** (v. 25)

– Unable to challenge the clear facts, the Pharisees resort to attacking Jesus personally through a slanderous accusation that they are convinced cannot be *disproved* (while disregarding that neither can it be *proved*).

C) **Infighting** (v. 25)

– The infighting we see here is between professed followers of Jehovah.

- It has already been seen multiple times in Matthew's gospel the propensity the Pharisees had of automatically and often maliciously questioning and putting an unfavorable 'spin' on everything Jesus said or did. It did not even seem to matter what it was, just so long as it was an opportunity to further disparage and undermine Him.
- It was an ongoing struggle over authority, power, influence, personal gain and personal preferences. The repetitive strategies of the Pharisees were: (1) question and criticize anything and everything hoping that enough would 'stick' along the way; (2) personal attacks built on assumption and inference; and (3) cutting down the other guy in order to make themselves look bigger by comparison.
- All of this, no less, was targeted at one of their 'own' and with determination, vehemence and persistence - even while their relationship with the Roman outsiders, oppressors and infidels was one of accommodation and tolerance.
- **The bottom line, according to Jesus, is that division and infighting can *only* lead to collapse and destruction!**

II.) THE OPPONENTS: **TWO KINGDOMS** (vv. 26-29)

- **Illustration:** *Home invasion. Professional thief vs. professional security installer.*
- Jesus' response, based not just on their actual, public words but on an intimate knowledge of their private thoughts as well, is to point out that there are **ONLY** two possible sides, two kingdoms, two allegiances.
- *Every person* is either on one side or the other. There is no middle, and there is no one foot in each.
- Further, one of the ways of determining which side someone is on is who are they fighting against and who are they fighting for. In this instance, the parties under question are Jesus and the Pharisees.

A.) The Kingdom of **Satan**

- The Pharisees accused Jesus of being a part of the Kingdom of Satan and, so, He Himself begins here.
- Notice, however, that through His response Jesus not only defends Himself against this false and slanderous accusation, but He simultaneously describes how it is actually the accusing Pharisees who have proven themselves to be vassals of the Kingdom of Satan.
- Christ's **first** point (v. 26) is that one can not serve the preservation of Satan's kingdom while at the same time tearing it down.
- **Second** (v. 27), Christ points out their own hypocrisy in applying to Him a judgment of condemnation for which they encourage and support others in doing the same. Jesus' reference to their 'children' is relational not biological. Therefore, Jesus points out that if they are to apply this judgment to Him, then it must also mean that their "disciples" and they themselves equally serve Satan.
- What this really shows is not just inequality and hypocrisy, but also clearly exposes that the Pharisee's true motive of opposition is based *not* on what is right and just, *but rather* on self-gratification, envy, and malice.

B.) The Kingdom of **God**

- Having established these truths, Jesus next turns attention to the Kingdom of God.
- **v. 28. First**, the Kingdom of God is here now and is evidenced through successful opposition of Satan and his cross-purposes.

- Jesus then points out that one Kingdom cannot come and reign unless the prior is first defeated.
- **v. 29**
- In other words, the Kingdom of God cannot be established on Earth until the Kingdom of Satan has been immobilized.
- This echoes and re-affirms what Jesus said earlier, as recorded in **Mt. 10:32-39**.
- Satan and his Kingdom must be invaded, attacked, tethered and muted before the Peace of God and His Kingdom can be realized. There must be *holy* war before there can be any kind of peace.
- By what strategy is this achieved? Through Jesus' 'sword' – the Word of God, Scripture, The Bible!
- **Hebrews 4:12-13** *For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart. No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.*

III.) **THE DIVIDING LINE** (vv. 30-37)

- Through the rest of this discourse, Jesus holds nothing back in defining the unpopular but clear and solid dividing line between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan, Peace and discord, Unity and division, Acquittal and condemnation.

A.) **Absolute Allegiance** (vv. 30-32)

- The Pharisees, although they profess to believe in and serve God and go through most of the motions better than most anyone else, are declared by Christ as “*against Him*” and therefore of the Kingdom of Satan rather than the Kingdom of God.
- In other words, there is no such thing as neutrality or partial or tempered allegiance to the Kingdom of God under the leadership of Jesus Christ and instruction of The Scriptures! There are NO wishy-washy vassals in the Kingdom of God. Either one is in ALL the way or one is out.
- Dr. D.A. Carson explains: “*The general thrust of v. 30 is straightforward: in our relationship to Jesus there can be no neutrality . . . in the great struggle (vv. 25-29), neutrality is impossible. The claims of the kingdom and the demands of Jesus are so exclusivistic that to be indifferent or apathetic to him is to be on the side of those who do not confess that he is the Messiah . . . And this form of statement could serve as both a rebuke to the Pharisees and a warning to the questioning crowd (v. 23) that failure to follow Jesus wholeheartedly is as dangerous as outright opposition*” (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8, pg. 290).
- Dr. Ronald Shultz, pastor and combat vet, points out: “*There are only two sides in this war, but many regiments in both armies. While we must be careful to not lob friendly fire on another regiment we must also be able to tell whether a person is an infiltrator, collaborator or deserter. Many have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof and show that their true colors are those of the enemy though they may wave the flag and wear the uniform of the true army.*” (No Neutrality, Oct. 04, sermoncentral.com).
- **Verses 31-32**, about the forgiven vs. unforgivable sin is – in short – distinguishing between an ignorant rejection of Christ (forgivable) and the knowing, conscience and willful rejection of Him and His salvation (unforgivable). Forgiveness is available ONLY through Him and His salvation. If this is categorically and knowingly rejected, then the only means of forgiveness is rejected.
- **How, then, can anyone presume to reasonably know if they themselves or some other is genuinely on the LORD's side or just delusion-ally believing so?**

B.) **Fruit** (v. 33)

- One's attitude, disposition and actions reflect the condition of their heart and the true kingdom of their allegiance.
- In particular, Jesus is here confronting the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who proclaim themselves and their cause as righteous and yet seek to achieve these ends through ungodly motives and means such as pride, ambition, envy, malice and slander.
- So what are they really? Good, bad, somewhere in between, some of each? Jesus makes emphatic there is only good and bad and anything that is not *entirely* good is bad. Such a one must also be truly of the kingdom of Satan. Their attempts to lurk and conceal in the dark, destroying from below and out of sight like a mole, only further confirms this truth.

C.) **Speech** (vv. 34-37)

- “**Brood of vipers!**” This epithet was used to refer to people characterized by their secret, subtle approach followed by sudden, vicious attack. Much like their father, the Great Serpent.
- Christ proceeds to further narrow his focus to one's speech as an indicator of good or bad fruit and, therefore, whether they are a good or bad tree.
- **It is not so much the quality or character of the speech itself as what that says about the quality and character of the speaker's heart and spirit.** [repeat]
- John Calvin cautioned: “*This passage shows how highly valuable in the sight of the Lord truth is, since he maintains and defends it with such rigour . . . In a particular manner, Christ waxes wrath against those whom ambition, or envy, or some other fraudulent design, prompts to slander, even when there is nothing that their conscience condemns . . . an ordinary warning had no effect upon them. And till hypocrites are sharply pierced, all that is said to them is treated with scorn and contempt . . . Though good speeches do not always proceed from the inmost heart, but originate (as the phrase is) on the tip of the tongue, yet it is an invariable truth, that bad speeches are indications of a bad heart.*” (Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XVI., Harmony Of The Evangelists Vol. 2, pg. 80-82).
- “**every careless word.**” If even every careless or idle word is subject to God's judgment, then how much more the intentional, pre-meditated word of malice, slander or blasphemy?
- Dr. Frank Stagg summarizes this account: “*The ugly charge made by the Pharisees against Jesus could come only out of ugly hearts. In the very act of presuming to judge Jesus, they judged themselves*” (The Broadman Bible Commentary, 1969, Vol 8, pg. 150).

CHALLENGE:

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF MY/OUR HOME SECURITY?

Moles do not see the light of day. They die as they lived, buried in a burrow. So very sad. Faithful believers, on the other hand, who truly see and speak the Kingdom, live constantly in God's encompassing light and pure air.

In light of all we have examined, then, **the main issue is to what extent am I truly willing to be under the reign of God?** The only answer, according to Christ, is “**all**” or “**not enough.**”

Which is it really for me? Do my words and actions consistently testify to this?

In 1858, three years before the start of our country's Civil War, ABRAHAM LINCOLN DECLARED:
“**A House divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not expect this union to be dissolved . . . I do not expect this house to fall . . . But I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become one thing or all the other will fail.**”

How did Abraham Lincoln solve this issue:
A call to prayer and unity.