

**Lesson 12. . . Lord of the Sabbath
Gospel of Matthew**



Notes From the Podium
By Fr. Matthew Kauth

***These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson.
Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.***

Matthew 12:1-50

I. Fluidity of Scripture

- A. The Unity of the Whole of Scripture
 - 1. By virtue of the human author
 - 2. By virtue of the Divine Author, the Holy Spirit
- B. Chapter and Verse
 - 1. Not included by the original authors.
 - 2. Imposed on Scripture long after it's composition for the sake of organization.
 - 3. Often causes us to feel there are breaks in the text.
 - a. Chapter 11 ends, section ends.
 - b. Chapter 12 begins, new section begins.

II. Review Chapter 11

- A. Discussion of the "yoke" of Christ
 - 1. It is a double yoke.
 - 2. It is sweet and light because of the company we keep.
- B. This concept is important and continues as we move into the discussion of Matthew 12.

III. Disciples return from their missionary journey.

- A. They went without sandals on their feet
- B. They went with no money in their pockets
- C. They return hungry.
- D. "At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat."
 - 1. How poor they are that they have to eat grain for sustenance.
 - 2. To be "yoked" to our Lord doesn't mean that they won't suffer, be hungry or thirsty.
 - 3. To be "yoked" to our Lord means that you're going to go wherever He's going, which means you will be hungry and thirsty but you will be satisfied by the company that you keep.
 - 4. Blessed will you be, as He says, if you are hungry and thirsty.
- E. "But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."
 - 1. Remember that our Lord has just invited us into his rest.
 - a. To enter into His rest was the purpose of the Sabbath.
 - b. Those six days were for the purpose of the seventh.
 - 2. God didn't "rest" on the seventh day because he was really tired,
 - a. The seventh day is called the Sabbath, the day of rest, because that is what creation was leading up to.
 - b. It is the pinnacle; it is worship.
 - c. It is the ability of man to be able to rationally and volitionally enter into the knowledge and love of God.
 - 3. We were made for the Sabbath; We were made for that rest.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- a. Because the Sabbath is a particular day in time, that particular time is made for man.
 - b. In this sense, Man is made not for the Sabbath but the Sabbath for man.
 4. God invites us into this rest, “come to me and I will give you rest.”
 - F. What “unlawful” thing are the disciples doing?
 1. Being in his company, hungering and thirsting for the living God, plucking grain?
 2. The Pharisees would not even give them a cup of cold water to drink.
 3. How blessed are those who give these disciples even a cup of cold water
 4. Now the Pharisees would refuse them even a few scattered grains in the field.
 - G. Jesus says to the Pharisees, “Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?”
 1. As if to say, “These, my companions, are going to be priests, and even more than priests because there is something more than the temple present here.
 2. Christ, the High Priest, is inviting them into His intimate priesthood, into Communion with Him, into His rest.
 - a. A priest has offering, sacrifice and victim.
 - b. All unite in Christ, as He is
 - i. The one who offers
 - ii. The one who is offered (the victim)
 - c. Those who follow Him, who sacrifice their own lives for the sake of the sheep are invited into this communion, this rest.
 - d. For this they are allowed, permitted, and even commanded to work on the Sabbath.
 3. What kind of work? -sacrifice and offering
 - a. Taking all of the created order and offering it to the Father
 - b. This, the natural priest was supposed to do in creation.
 - c. We do this now by virtue of the sacramental priesthood and our participation in the priesthood of the baptized.
 - d. We are to take all of creation and offer it to the Father, to rest in him.
 - H. “Or have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and yet are guiltless?”
 1. In the book of Numbers the priests were commanded to work on the Sabbath - To offer sacrifice. Yet they were guiltless.
 2. The followers of Jesus are also guiltless.
 3. They sacrifice their own flesh and blood and they are so hungry.
 4. When they offer this sacrifice to the Father, He sees it as beautiful and he protects his little ones.
 - I. “I tell you something greater than the temple is here and if you had known what this means ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.”
 1. Our Lord does not desire the sacrifice of rams and bullocks.
 2. He desires the sacrifice of the human heart, the offering of one’s self, the sacrifice of the cross.
 3. “I desire mercy”, “misericordia”, suffering of the heart, the offering of one’s self, to feed others with the drink from your own heart.
- IV. “...a man with a withered hand”
- A. The Pharisees ask, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?”



Notes From the Podium (cont)

1. The priests could offer sacrifice on the Sabbath.
 2. God himself both gave life and took life on the Sabbath (in terms of birth and death).
 3. The Pharisees attempt to lay a trap for Jesus, "...so that they might accuse him".
- B. Jesus replies, "What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath."
1. Irony:
 - a. Jesus gives speaks of a sheep falling into a pit, a trap.
 - b. Here are the Pharisees, at that very moment digging this pit, so as to entrap Him, not to then pull Him out but to slaughter Him.
 - C. Jesus says to the man, "'Stretch out your hand.' And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, whole like the other."
 - D. The Pharisees took counsel against him to destroy him.
 - E. Jesus withdrew from there.
 1. Many followed him, and he healed them all, and ordered them not to make him known.
 2. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:
 - a. "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased."
 - b. Recall the Father's voice at Jesus' baptism: "This is my beloved Son, with I am well pleased." –Mt 3:17
 - i. Implication: If the Son of God is sufficient for the Father why is he not sufficient for the Pharisees?
 - ii. Ultimately, the Son is of the Father, whether he's rejected by man or not.
- V. "I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles..."
- A. Justice – to render to someone what they are due?
 - B. Our justice is death, the wages of sin.
 - C. Although our justice is due us, Christ will assume it in Himself, incurring both death of the body and the eternal death of Gehenna.
- VI. Healing the blind and dumb demoniac
- A. The people ask - "Can this be the Son of David?"(The Messiah)
 - B. The Pharisees respond - "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."
 - C. "Knowing their thoughts, (Jesus) said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand; and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your Sons cast them out?"
 1. "Your Sons" - His own apostles perhaps.
 2. "Therefore they shall be your judges."
 - a. The apostles will be set up on 12 thrones of judgment.
 - D. Jesus continues: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house."
 1. Who is the strong man that has control over the house?
 - a. The house of God, the *oikos* of God, creation
 - b. Man was given dominion over creation
 - c. Man handed that dominion over by becoming a slave of Satan
 - d. Satan, having dominion, is the strong man.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- e. Man must be set free by the only One who is stronger.
- 2. Violence of the Kingdom
 - a. Christ would not commit violence to another but receive it in himself and thereby in that act of love, set us free.
 - b. Christ comes and He is stronger.
 - i. He plunders his goods.
 - ii. Then He may plunder His house, the house of God, the temple.
 - iii. He takes back His own.
 - c. The Son of God, Jesus Christ is stronger and binds Satan
 - i. Interesting that Christ will later give to his apostles, the power to “bind on earth”.
 - ii. Christ enjoys the spoils of victory: His beloved children, the neipiois, the ones that he loves.
- VII. “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”
 - A. No position of neutrality in this war.
 - B. You must be on one side or the other.
- VIII. “... every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”
 - A. Forgiveness in the world to come. (Reference to purgatory)
 - B. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
 - 1. The church offers many examples.
 - 2. The important point: The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of sin.
 - a. We might confess our sins and ask for mercy (misericordia).
 - b. A sin against the Holy Spirit is presumption; it is not calling out to him. There is no perceived need for forgiveness.
 - c. He can only heal what is presented to him. If we don’t bring to Him our sins He can’t take them away.
 - 3. Ultimately a sin against the Holy Spirit is that impenitence.
 - a. Our Lord can do anything with a sinner. Sin is never the obstacle. He’s already died for sins.
 - b. The problem is not sin; the problem is impenitence - that we will not repent. That we will not ask for His mercy.
 - c. His mercy is given only by the price of truth - we confess our sins and we give them to Him and He gives us His mercy.
 - d. Through impenitence, we bind ourselves in our own sins, pretending that we’re free.
- IX. “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good.”
 - A. “Kalon” the word translated as “good” means beautiful as well as “good”.
 - B. Beauty is arresting even though it’s not imposing.
 - 1. St. Thomas says that when we catch something beautiful, the first movement in us is love.
 - 2. Beauty is the apprehensible good, when we see something that is beautiful, it is the good that is understood by our senses.
 - 3. In love, there is a movement that goes out of ourselves to possess, to participate in that which is beautiful.
 - 4. Anything that has ever captured you, that is beautiful, whether it be music, whether it be a painting, whether it be a person, has a certain arresting affect.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- a. You stop cold, dead in your tracks and the movement out of yourself begins.
 - b. You can't continue in whatever direction you were going and you go out of yourself to participate in the beautiful, in the good.
 - c. This is a movement of love.
- X. "You brood of vipers!"
- A. "How can you speak good, when you are evil?"
 1. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.
 2. I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter."
 - a. St. Teresa of Avila said she repented of most and feared most at judgment were all of the idle words that fell from her mouth.
 - b. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
 - i. The Son is the word of God and that word never goes forth from Him, without accomplishing the work that He sent it to do.
 - ii. We are made in the image and likeness of God, so our words, by analogy are like the word of God.
 - iii. Words are like seeds, if we speak that which is true, good and beautiful and the words land in soil that is receptive then the words will bear fruit, however if we speak evil, the words return void and they make void aspects of the person to whom we are speaking.
 - iv. Every word we speak we will render an account for. Consider idle chatter, detraction and calumny.
 - v. We either breed death or life because we cannot speak without casting seed.
- XI. "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."
- A. Jesus answers, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah..."
 1. "...behold, something greater than:
 - a. Jonah is here
 - b. Solomon is here
 - c. the temple is here
 - d. the priest is here
 - e. the Sabbath is here
 2. All of these were signs that pointed to Jesus.
 - B. What need is there for a sign when the reality is right in front of you?
- XII. Demon Psychology
- A. "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, but he finds none."
 1. Demons are looking for rest and cannot have it; they cannot find it.
 2. When the unclean spirit has gone out of the man, he passes through waterless places. He has nowhere to drink, he has cut himself off from the living waters. He seeks rest but finds none so he takes his habitation in a human person, trying to drink from their soul, but he neither satisfies his thirst nor gives any drink to the soul.
 - B. "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."
 1. Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast from her.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

2. Here Jesus brings the total is up to eight.
 - a. Eight is an inverse of the new creation.
 - b. Sunday is the eighth day
 - c. The original creation was completed on the Sabbath but on the eighth day by virtue of the resurrection, that Sabbath has now been changed to the eighth day of perfect creation.
 - i. This is why baptismal fonts often had eight sides to them because of the new creation
 - ii. Eight is the sign of perfection
 3. Here with 8 demons, we see an inverse to that perfect 8.
 4. The demons come back and they find the place clean, orderly, swept, but not inhabited.
 - a. We don't cast out our sin, just to put our lives in order or just to be "good people", we do it so that someone can dwell there.
 - b. If the demon came back and found Christ, then the demon will have nowhere to dwell.
 5. 2 Peter 2:20,
- XIII. "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"
- A. We already know that James and Joseph who are called His brothers have a different mother, because she is spoken of at the cross.
 - B. We know in the finding at the temple that no other child is looked for.
 - C. We know by virtue of Tradition that our Lady was perpetually a virgin, she only had one child.
 - D. The Son has one Father and he has one mother, an eternal Father and a human mother.
 - E. Only one child did the Blessed Virgin Mary have, which is why our Lord has to entrust her to John at the cross. (She has no other children to go to so she becomes the mother of all the living in the order of grace.)
 - F. Our Lord's love for His mother.
 1. No one except Christ could have kept so perfectly the fourth commandment, to honor your father and your mother.
 2. We know that he who chose her from the beginning, endowed her with every beautiful grace, in her Immaculate Conception, she the first fruits of redemption.
 3. We know that He would have loved her better than we have ever loved our mothers.
 - G. Why does He always seem to respond to her in a callous fashion?
 1. "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I'd be in my Father's house?"
 2. "Who are my mother and my brothers?"
 3. "Blessed rather is she who hears the word of God and keeps it."
 4. "What is that to you and to me, woman? My hour has not yet come."
 5. "Woman, behold your Son." (speaking about John)
 - H. Perhaps what our Lord does with His mother is protect her.
 1. No one on earth could have laid more perfect claim to Him than she.
 2. No one on earth who could have been tempted more to say, "he's mine,".
 3. No one could have pulled his heart more than she and yet she gives him away and assists him by standing underneath that cross.
 4. Perhaps His words are a protection against that natural temptation to make a claim that He belongs only to her.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- a. “Who is my mother, my brother, my sister?” He is placing her into the realm of the entire church where she becomes the mother of all living, and she moves so perfectly according to the winds of grace.
- b. Whatever is his will, there she is found, as his perfect handmaiden and he protects her from the wiles of the evil one.

I.