

Sermon Reflections

Safe in the Family of Faith (Matthew 12:38-50)

Summary: Trust Christ and so join the family of faith. Put away perilous unbelief in all its forms.

1. Skepticism Heightens Our Condemnation (vv. 38–42)

- The Jewish leaders witnessed a great sign in vv. 22–32, but demanded another on their own terms in v. 38, belying their purported search for truth about Jesus' person and mission. The fact of the Resurrection was no silver bullet that caused all who observed it to believe in Jesus (e.g., see Matthew 28:11-15).
 - How do unbelievers today demand evidence of God's existence, as well as the truth of His Word, and what motivations cause them to make such demands?
 - How should we respond to those demands? (Describe some unbiblical ways you have used to try to persuade unbelievers to believe in Jesus. What means would God have you use that are effectual to transform elect hearts from hardened unbelief to embrace of the Gospel?)

2. Neutrality Hardens Our Evil Hearts (vv. 43–45)

- The unclean spirit in v. 44 finds a house with no committed resident to be very inviting. This picture of a person indifferent to Jesus, and the spiritual catastrophe that results, warns us of the peril of those with a hard heart. From Ephesians 6:10-20, how can Christians fight Satan's temptations to have an evil, unbelieving heart (Hebrews 3:12, and as well considering 3:13's remedy)?
- In what ways does our culture try to undermine our belief in the Bible? How are you preparing yourself against future attacks? Where are you failing in the battle even now? Have you gotten in touch with another believer and asked that they help strengthen your resolve against the ways you are failing to display your allegiance to Christ and what His Word says before your family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, or wherever you are failing? Do you see a believer whom you should strengthen?

3. Assumption Hides Our Exclusion (vv. 46–50)

- Our relationship to God and His family of saints is not through physical family connections, but only through Christ. Whom do you know that is trusting in some perceived connection with the family of God? Are you or someone you know trusting in physical connections to spiritual benefits from God, even if not salvation? How do these physical means subvert biblical faith and replace Christ?
- Through the tumultuous happenings of 2020, did your dependence upon your relationship with your church family strengthen or decline? Why is that? Did you choose to spend time in outside relationships or other pursuits that would have been better spent with events and persons at GBC?
- What specific changes do you need to make in your time (especially!), finances, etc., to reprioritize relationships with those who will build you up spiritually? Whom can you build up at GBC?