

Study Notes: Spotting the signs

John Farren 29 January 2017

Matthew 12:14-50

1. John F indicated that Mathew's gospel was addressed to Jewish people. Jesus actions created a volatile situation see v14 and v24. Why do you think the Pharisees got so riled? See vv 15-21 and v23.
2. John F suggested that the Pharisees were angry, naïve and stupid. What do you think he meant? Will anyone in the group confess to a time when they were angry when the process of recognising who Jesus was dawning on them? Why are we sometimes reluctant to accept the truth when it stares us in the face?
3. John F made the point very clearly that the Bible does not recognise a universe in which good and evil are equally powerful. How does this contrast with popular culture? NB the Bible teaches that God is sovereign - but for a time, Satan exercises a degree of power. In the light of this, what insights do we gain from vv 25-29?
4. What reflections do you have on the sin against the Holy Spirit – the unforgiveable sin? John F related this to the function of the Holy Spirit as the one who makes truth known. Does speaking against the Holy Spirit therefore equate to rejecting the truth of the gospel?
5. John F used the expression – 'What you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you're saying.' What does this suggest about the relationship between words and deeds? Would you agree with John F that 'You prove you are a Christian by good works.' cf James 2:14-26
6. Recall John F's illustration about the overflowing tumbler and cf Ephesians 5:18
7. How do you assess the request of the Pharisees in v38 – a genuine request? A trick question? And what about Jesus response? cf Luke 16:31
8. In the light of v39 how do we assess our periodic fascination with signs and wonders? Can this be a distraction or is this normal Christianity? What about making bargains with God – show us a sign and we will believe? Heal my relative and I will....?
9. Read vv46-49 How do we react to the suggestion that our spiritual family trumps our natural family? Is this right? What are the implications?

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