

“Red Letter Words: Grace Abounding”

Matthew 12:38-50

Ray Cortese, February 8/9, 2014

Reflect on the Text

*Note: Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible itself. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

- Read Matthew 12:38-50. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Explain what G.K. Chesterton meant when he said, “Christians are more pessimistic than the worst pessimist and more optimistic than the greatest optimist.”
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in **one phrase or sentence** (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

THE GRACE OF OPEN EYES

- 3 Why were the Pharisees wrong in asking Jesus for a sign? Why is it arrogant for human beings to put God on trial?
- 4 What was the “sign of Jonah”? Why is the resurrection the linchpin of Christianity?
- 5 Why is grace needed to open our eyes to the things of God? When did God first open your eyes? Do you think he opened your eyes because of any good in you?
- 6 The Westminster Shorter Catechism #31 says:
What is effectual calling?

Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

What comfort ought the doctrine of effectual calling give to believers?

THE GRACE OF DIVINE INDWELLING

- 7 Do you have to become a Christian in order to improve yourself or your life?
- 8 In your own words, what was Jesus saying when he talked about demons and a clean swept house?
- 9 What is the core problem in each and every human being?
- 10 Discuss the following quote from Martin Luther:
"God receives none but those who are forsaken, restores health to none but those who are sick, gives sight to none but the blind, and life to one but the dead. He does not give saintliness to any but sinners, nor wisdom to any but fools. In short: He has mercy on none but the wretched and gives grace to none but those who are in disgrace. Therefore no arrogant saint or just or wise man can be material for God."

THE GRACE OF FOREVER FAMILY

- 11 Why were Jesus' comments about family radical for his time? What is the difference between saying church is *like* family versus church *is* family? What is wrong with saying, "I love Jesus, but I don't love the church"?
- 12 How can your biological family become an idol? What can you do to teach your children and/or grandchildren to love the family of God? Do you see other people at church as your brothers and sisters? What implications would believing that have?

Final Reflections

- How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for God and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?