

Matthew 20-08-09a

Greetings, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're continuing our study in the Gospel of Matthew this morning. The chapter is 12.

The section is Beelzebub. Got some things to hear and see this morning out of Matthew chapter 12 beginning in verse 22. We started this last time and we'll continue it.

It's pertinent for us. We have a lot to think about when it comes to division. What is it to be unified? What is it to be divided? There are times when we are to separate, to divide.

There are other times when we are to preserve unity. And what is the criteria? How do we know when and where to separate, when to unite? So Jesus is going to answer that question for us. We're going to see some things from the Old Testament as well as the New.

As we look at this very fascinating passage which contains an attack, not only on the Lord Jesus but on the Holy Spirit. And all of these things weave together to give us fruitful meditation, reflection and application. So we'll ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and then we'll get started.

Father, we are so grateful for your forgiveness, for your cleansing grace when we fail. It seems inevitable that despite our aspirations and our intentions we err and fall short again and again. But you've made provision through the Lord Jesus Christ not only to secure our salvation and establish an eternal relationship with yourself for us, but to also achieve the cleansing and the restoration that is necessary after we sin and we fail.

We thank you for that. We thank you that there is a labor where we can be made clean, where we can be sanctified and qualified to approach as we do this morning before your throne of grace and present ourselves with thanksgiving and with appreciation for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, for your Holy Spirit who is constantly with us to remind us of who we are and why we're here. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this morning that it will be a blessing to each heart and will be a source of encouragement and motivation to invest the time that remains to us in this life to learn and to grow, to be equipped for every good work and to be prepared for that time when we will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and hopefully presented before your presence as well.

We thank you for the opportunity and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's read our passage in Matthew chapter 12 beginning in verse 22.

Then one was brought to him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute. And he healed him so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, Could this be the son of David? Interesting choice of appellation there

of all of the different ways you could identify the Messiah.

This is the title that is chosen. Could this be the son of David? Now when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Well, this is a fascinating turn of events here. Let me just briefly review where we are in the gospel of Matthew. You will remember that there are five basic sections in this gospel.

The first section after the prologue, after the introduction, which was the first two chapters, this introduces the Lord Jesus to us. There is going to be an epilogue at the end, which will be chapters 26 through 28. In the middle of those brackets, we have five sections.

Each of these sections begins with narrative, with the story, with the forward movement of the episodes, and then a block of teaching at the end. We saw the first one of these in chapter 3 and 4, where God identifies the Lord Jesus as His beloved Son. He is then tested by Satan in the wilderness.

And when He returns from the wilderness, many follow Him. That's narrative. Then you have the teaching section that follows that, which is in chapters 5 through 7. Teaching on the hill, sermon on the mount, right? Narrative, teaching.

The second section of narrative and teaching is in chapters 8 through 10. So chapter 8 and 9, we have three sets of three miracles. And in between those three sets of miracles, you have two focusing statements by the Lord Jesus about discipleship.

He emphasizes discipleship. So there are three miracles. Then Jesus talks about what it means to follow Him.

Then there are three more miracles. Then Jesus talks about what it means to follow Him. And then there are three more miracles.

That's chapter 8 and 9. Remember, we're in chapter 12, so we're working our way up to where we are now. And then in chapter 10, you have that block of teaching where Jesus sends out the 12. And He says, if this happens in a village, this is what you do.

This is how you behave. You're going to be persecuted. You will stand before kings.

Don't worry about what you're going to say. That teaching section. That ended the second section.

Now we are in the third narrative portion. Third narrative portion. In the first narrative portion, we had the identification of Jesus as God's beloved son, Satan testing Jesus, and the people beginning to follow Jesus.

It was three pieces of that narrative. In the second one, we had three sets of three miracles for that second narrative. Now, we're in three sections of narrative in this third section of the gospel where Jesus is beginning to encounter opposition and confrontation and challenge.

So, people have confronted Jesus in chapter 11. And Jesus is rebuking that opposition. He is countering that opposition.

He is answering it and challenging it. He's pushing back against it. But based on the response, he is withdrawing.

And we've seen that Jesus, having made the issue clear, not having gotten a positive response and a receptive audience, doesn't continue to confront and continue to challenge and continue to push back. He withdraws. He's essentially following his own advice.

If someone has ought against you, you go to them once and twice and again. Jesus met them initially through John the Baptist who prepared the way. Then Jesus himself addressed the crowds.

Then Jesus has sent his disciples. And remember, Jesus said, if someone has ought against you, go and attempt to be reconciled. If that doesn't work, go back with a few more.

If that doesn't work, go back with a few more. And if that doesn't work, withdraw. Heathen and tax collector doesn't mean be unkind or hostile or persecutory.

It means establish a separation. If you try repeated approaches to someone who is challenging and opposing your faith, you try, try and try again. If they're still not receptive, don't continue to cast your pearls before swine.

Withdraw. So Jesus is going to follow his own teaching here. And at the close of this section, he is withdrawing.

And that's where we are right now. There will be two more sections like this in the gospel that we'll see coming up. And after these, the teaching section, the teaching portion of this section we're in right now, which is going to be some kingdom parables in chapter

13.

Then starting in chapter 14 and going through chapter 17, we're going to have another narrative section, chapter 18. We'll have another teaching section and so on. Then there's one more section to go.

So we're right in the middle. We're two and a half sections through the five sections of the book. So we're, we're halfway.

And Jesus is, is pushing back. He is answering and challenging. This is going to be his final approach, his final argument.

And from this point forward, he will largely withdraw from this opposition and not attempt to answer its questions and persuade the leadership. And so many of the people that he is who he claims to be. He is who God has shown him to be and that the kingdom is in fact at hand.

And after these repeated, you can see it in the section structure of the book, that there are these demonstrations and then there is teaching. There are demonstrations and there is teaching. What is the response? And we can ask ourselves the question, what is our response to the teaching of the word of God? Do we dedicate ourselves to putting it into practice? When we do, we are the active and present body of Christ on this earth.

Some believers are in that category. Others are not. We are supposed to be unified.

The body of Christ is supposed to be without division. We saw this in first Corinthians. One of the major issues in Corinth was that there were schisms and arguments and factions and divisions in that church.

Paul said it shouldn't be that way. So we want unity. And yet it is almost inevitable that there is going to be some kind of division.

And the key to understanding this, whether it is current events in our society, when are we united with all Americans or all conservatives or all liberals or all moderates or all whoever, whatever your group may be. When do we stick with and try to promote unity? When do we say, that's a line I will not cross. You're over on that side.

I'm on this side. Well, these biblical principles are going to help us see that. So, first of all, this section begins with, in verse 22, One was brought to him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute, healed him so that the blind both spoke and saw, blind and mute spoke and saw.

All the multitudes were amazed and said, Could this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. Now, we've been traveling through Matthew for a while, and this

may or may not sound familiar. Turn back a few pages in your Gospel of Matthew to chapter 9, chapter 9, verse 32.

Chapter 9, verse 32. Jesus has raised Jairus' daughter. He has just healed two blind men.

According to your faith, let it be to you. See that no one knows it. But they departed, spread it to the whole country.

Then in verse 32, Matthew 9, As they went out, behold, they brought to him a man mute and demon-possessed. When the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. The multitudes marveled, saying, It was never seen like this in Israel.

But the Pharisees said, He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons. Now, that was three chapters ago. That is before the intervening material in chapter 10, which is the, in other words, that was in the second section.

Three miracles, three miracles, three miracles. And then Jesus launched into the teaching section of chapter 10. Harvest is plentiful.

The laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. And then Jesus is going to send out the 12.

And now we're in the subsequent section. So there's a sense in which this mute man with a demon being healed, the crowd says one thing, the Pharisees say another. We almost have a mirror image here, don't we? Almost exactly the same.

So much so that your source critical people who say these gospels were edited and put together, Matthew didn't really write it, that this is a conflation, that the sources got mixed up and they've done the same thing twice. And because you just had two blind men healed, when you get to chapter 12, the blindness ends up being with the mute man. But other than that, it's basically the same episode, just from two different sources.

And they've been conflated and the kind of things that are said. Well, if you want to go down that road, great. But you miss the reason that God, the Holy Spirit, inspired Matthew, the writer of this gospel, to include these distinct and separate episodes in exactly the place where they are found.

Now you either believe the Holy Spirit superintended the human authors in the writing of this material and that every word counts, or you don't. If you don't, obviously you've wandered into this church by mistake. But since you do, that's a first-class condition.

If, and it's true, if you believe that this is an inspired account and that these things are here for a reason, we ask ourselves, isn't that curious that in this section, we have this mute demon-possessed man healed. The crowd says it was never seen like this in Israel. It was never what? Never seen like this in Israel? No accident.

Not it was never heard. It was never seen like this in Israel. And the Pharisees say he casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.

In the account before us in chapter 12, the man is blind and mute and it's emphasized he healed him so that he both spoke and saw. Both spoke and saw. It's emphasized.

There's no accident. So what's the difference? And what's the similarity? Similarity is demon. Jesus is going to heal him.

In both cases, he's mute. In the second case, he is blind. In the first case, the people say it was never seen like this in Israel.

Now it is being seen. It was never seen before, but obviously we're looking at it and we're seeing it now. So in the second episode, this man speaks and sees.

In both cases, the Pharisees say the prince of demons, one of Satan's names, Jesus' name here is, could this be the son of David? Satan's name is prince of demons. Beelzebul. Beelzebub, Beelzebul is such an interesting thing.

You remember Antiochus Epiphanes in the days of the Maccabees. He's the one that came in and profaned the temple with pig's blood on the altar and the blood of human Jews that were killed and so on. You remember that? His name was Antiochus Epiphanes.

You know what an epiphany is. You come to a great height and have a high revelation, and it's an epiphany. It's an inspiration.

So he's Antiochus Epiphanes, but the Jews hated him, and so their nickname for him was Antiochus Epiphanes, Epiphanes, which is refuse. He's Antiochus the trash boy, basically. Well, the same thing here.

Beelzebul was a Canaanite entity that came to be associated with Satan directly over the course of the decades and the centuries, and Beelzebul was lord of the skies. Baal is lord, and Zebul, it's a little bit murky, but it seems to be something like lord of the skies. He's the sun of the morning, if you will.

He's way up there. Well, the Jews didn't like Baal Zebul, so they changed it to Baal Zebub, which is lord of the flies. Yeah, he's in the sky, all right.

He's in the air, but he's lord of the flies. So some texts, some English versions will say Baal Zebul here, Baal Zebub, and both of them occur. You say, which one is right? And I say, yes, because that's the wordplay, and there's a lot of this.

God even engages in this kind of wordplay, and the Jews probably picked it up from their heavenly father. So that's what's going on here. Instead of lord of the skies, he's lord of the flies.

It almost works in English. But if you compare these two, and it's important to compare them, they're put here for a reason. They're not accidental.

They're not conflated. It's not a goof. It's on purpose.

And the difference is that this man both spoke and saw. Now, I ask myself, if this is supposed to be a picture of the people and their response to Jesus, why wasn't this a deaf man? Because they couldn't hear, but Jesus comes, and now they hear. Hearing they hear and don't comprehend.

Seeing they see and don't perceive, right? And you could say, well, the blindness and the deafness. So if this was standing in for the people, this could be one way God would have done it, right? I have come that they might have life. I have come that they might hear and that they might see and that they might have the opportunity to treat John as Elijah, and if you will, if you are willing, this is Elijah and this is the kingdom.

If you embrace it and you receive it, you were deaf, you were blind before, now you can hear and you can see. But it's not deaf, is it? The man is mute. Not just mute the first time, mute both times.

So I ask myself, what does the man represent? It's not time for the people to speak. So who does the man sort of represent? I don't think he represents, he's not like the everyman. He's not an example of the people.

Well, before you couldn't hear, but now Jesus has come and you can hear. Before you couldn't see. I see him now, but not near, you know, the star of Balaam's prophecy in the smite the brow of Moab.

Not that. This is speaking. Speaking is the other side of communication, right? I pitch, you catch.

I speak, you hear, right? So there was not the clear communication, but when Jesus comes, now there is speaking. So this might be something representing the prophetic ministry or the teaching ministry or what the Pharisees and the chief priests and scribes should have been doing for the people, but the word of communication had gone mute. So who's doing the speaking now? What has happened? Remember the reason I reviewed the structure of the book here and what happened in the preceding section is what has Jesus done? He has not only addressed the crowds and taught the crowds and given the sermon on the mount.

He has sent out the 12 and there has been abundant speaking. Excuse me, I got a frog in my throat. The speaking of the word of God has been taking place.

So what had been mute, that ministry is now speaking. At first, that's all it was. And there was demonic oppression.

There was active evil keeping the speech from happening. And you get the idea that this demonic presence was not only in demon possessed people, but was actively influencing the quasi religious leadership in Israel and that they were under the influence and that demons were influencing them to pursue their ambitions and encourage their selfishness and their hypocritical false attitudes that the manifestation of demon presence was in people like the garrison demoniac, but their influence is being felt among those who were supposed to be speaking. And I think the implication, my personal understanding of the implication here is that demons were at work in the religious leadership of the very place where that the last place they should be.

They are preventing the communication of the word of God to the people. Jesus has cured that. The major difference in the chapter nine mute demon possessed man being healed is this one is also blind, but now he sees.

And you say, well, the people, you know, we're in darkness, but now they see a great light. I don't think that's it. Again, we're talking about the communication ministry.

So who is speaking? Who's doing the communication now? Who is the, the unleashing of the tongue to speak the truth and, and present the gospel of the kingdom. It's Jesus and his disciples, right? They are now able to communicate. Jesus is pushing back the demonic cloud of oppression and obfuscation.

But what else is Jesus doing now? The blind man can see the man who speaks can also see. Well, to see is to evaluate, to see is to get the shape and the size and the scope and the configuration of things. What we did not see back in the chapter nine section in these first two sections of the gospel of Matthew is Jesus has not been pronouncing judgment.

He has been preaching the good news. What is going to happen now after chapter nine, after the sending out of the 12, after Jesus has been preaching for months and years, what's going to happen? Jesus is going to start talking about what he sees. Does it make sense? He's going to start talking about what he sees.

So what are we going to get in verse 31 and following? I say to you, sin and blasphemy will be forgiven, but blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. Verse 33, either make the tree good and it's fruit good or make the tree bad and it's fruit bad brood of vipers. Verse 34.

This is where Jesus is going to start calling out the evil and the hypocrisy and is going to talk about judgment. And from now on, verse 41, the men of Nineveh are going to rise up in judgment on this generation. Jesus is not only speaking, but he is seeing and that's the advance.

At first, the word came out, but in evaluating the response, why is Jesus needing to now withdraw? Remember he withdrew from there. We saw that when we were looking at the

Pharisees plotting to destroy him in verse 14 of this chapter, verse 15, when Jesus knew it, he withdrew from there. They, he sees that they are plotting to destroy him.

They're not responding and receiving. So I think this is why this bracket is so important to observe. It's telling us the spiritual reality.

There are spiritual truths being spoken and their spiritual evaluation now being made. Well, that having been said, I always like to find out or, or at least see if I can find out. Why did Jesus do a miracle that is recorded in scripture of this particular kind? Could have been a leper, could have been raised from the dead, could have been lame walking.

You could have had the guy let down through the house roof at this point, but this particular miracle at this particular time, every single time we have a recorded miracle of the Lord Jesus. When you look at the context, that miracle just shines a light that brings out the relief and the dimension and the, the nature of the account in spiritual terms. So what did the multitude say the first time it has never been, this has never been seen in Israel, but now we're seeing it.

What did they say this time in verse 23, the multitudes were amazed and said, could this be the son of David? Could this be the son of David? Not could this be the Messiah? Could this be the conquering King? Could this be the suffering servant? Could this be, this is the son of David and the son of David is the Messiah as political ruler, as King, King equals kingdom, right? The son of David is going to sit on the throne. The throne is associated with the son of David. Is the throne of David going to return? Now, interestingly, of course, the Pharisees it's he's, he's satanic.

Jesus knew their thoughts. He's evaluating their thoughts. And he says every kingdom, this is very pertinent because son of David is the kingly side of the son of man, son of God, Yeshua, the savior, the teacher, the prophet.

Moses said, another prophet will come like unto me many different titles, but son of David is his kingly title fulfilling the Davidic covenant. You will not lack a son on the throne. And so the first thing Jesus says is kingdom.

Now, what do you know about the kingdom that David was king of? How long did that kingdom last before it was divided? If you want to talk about divided kingdoms, you've got our entire study of kings and prophets to, to look back on, right? So when Jesus says every kingdom divided, who's he talking to? He's talking to people who know all about what a divided kingdom looks like and acts like, because that's what happened in the second generation after David, son of David. Is this going to be the king over a united Israel? Well, what happened to divide the kingdom? The kingdom had been fragmentary. It was kind of like the 13 colonies in this country during the days of the judges and a judge would rise up in a locality.

If he's on the Philistine side, he might be Samson. If he's on another side, he might be a Gideon or he might be a, a Barak and Deborah situation. It could be Ehud going in and getting rid of a, of a no good Nick, a local monarch.

And Ehud is one we'll be talking about in terms of our, when is civil disobedience. Okay. When can you take your sword and strap it to your thigh and plunge it in until it disappears beneath the obese exterior of this guy? That's what Ehud did.

And it seems that God blessed that effort. So how did he know that it was okay to go against a constituted authority? We'll be looking at that on Thursday, but you had these areas, you had these regions, they were sort of tribal confederations in the days of the judges. Then you have the unification under God's anointed King, Saul brought to its culmination and to its high point by David and his son, Solomon.

But why does the kingdom divide? You look at Rehoboam and he's a bad King. My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. And if you think he put taxes on you, wait till you see what I'm going to do.

So people say, well, we don't like him. And so we're going to split. But think about this.

This is your pop quiz question for the first session. Why did the kingdom of Israel initiated under Saul built through blood and conquest by David elaborated into Shalom and prosperity with Shlomo. And then Solomon's son, Rehoboam comes to the throne and the thing splits into the Northern and Southern kingdoms.

Why did it split? I would submit that it did not have to split. And who left whom? You know, the bumper sticker of God seems far away. Who moved? Well, who departed the unity? Who had the issue and said, we're leaving.

It was the 10 Northern tribes, right? They rejected the son of David, Rehoboam and said, we'll go our own way. And eventually you're going to have the establishment of, they're going to go back to trying to be a confederation. They find out that that doesn't work too well.

Eventually Omri, remember the Omri dynasty, and he's going to establish the capital. My memory serves in Samaria. He's the one that's going to make Samaria the capital of the Northern kingdom.

It doesn't happen right away. You've got Jehu and all the rest of that. Not Jehu.

Jeroboam. It started with a J. Pretty safe ground. Israelite names are going to start with a J. Jeroboam as opposed to Rehoboam.

But Jeroboam doesn't make Samaria the capital. That happens later. So here's the thing.

Rehoboam is a certifiably bad king. He's young. He's stupid.

He listens to the wrong people. He's got a bad cabinet, bad set of advisors. There's a legitimate issue with his kingliness, his fitness for office.

So what are your options? We're going to have civil war. We're going to split. We're going to leave.

Or what's the other option? Who authorizes the king in Israel? Who sent Samuel to anoint Saul? God. Who sent Samuel to anoint David? God. Who promised David that it would be the Davidic dynasty and that a Davidic king would sit on the throne ever after? 2 Samuel chapter 7. Right? God.

So if you've got an issue with the authority that is currently sitting on the throne, to whom do you go? What do you do? If you've got an issue right now with authority in various places in this country or in your community or in the states, at the local, state, or national level, who authorized those authorities? Who ensured that they were born and got elected in this country at this time and those places? Who's in charge of this whole civil authority structure? The same God that was in charge in Israel. We've seen this over and over in recent weeks. In Peter.

In Paul. Fear God. Honor the king.

We just saw it this past Thursday night. They serve at the behest of God Himself. Now, remember the verse that says, Who are you to judge another man's servant? They talk about public servants.

And well, they're supposed to serve the public and if they're not serving the public, the public can rise up and do something about it. That's true in a sense, but government, particularly high authorities in government, are servants of God. They are God's servants.

The president of this country is God's servant, whether he likes it or not. The governors of states are God's servant. The mayors of cities and towns are God's servants.

Chiefs of police are God's servants. So if you've got bad authority, like Rehoboam, you have a choice. You can try to overthrow it.

You can use civil disobedience and civil unrest and rebellion. But rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, the Bible says. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Why? Why is rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? What is witchcraft? I am not going to God for power and change. I'm going to the other prince, the other kingdom, the other authority. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft because it's basically idolatry.

I'm going to switch to the other side. I'm going to be Benedict Arnold. I'm going to be a traitor.

I'm going to be one who forsakes, departs, and serves the other side. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. So what should the northern kingdom have done now, in a nutshell, if they're unhappy with Rehoboam? Go to Rehoboam's boss.

Go over Rehoboam's head. Call for the prophet. Demand that God have a reckoning with the king.

The people cried out to the Lord. Remember in the days of the judges? They would get all happy and self-interested and idolatrous and whatnot, and then they would be oppressed. The Philistines would oppress.

The surrounding neighbors would oppress. And then what did they do? They cried out to the Lord, and the Lord sent a deliverer. Rehoboam's a bad king? Cry out to the Lord.

Let the Lord send a deliverer. Let the Lord handle it. God makes the king.

God can break the king. He's there as a part of God's covenant. He's the son of David.

That's on God's watch. But what did they do? They took it into their own hands. A kingdom divided.

And a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. The highest authority is God. If there's a problem in intermediate authority, whether it is a husband, whether it is a pastor, whether it is a father, whether it is a boss, whether it is an administrator or a military rank-holding individual, if there are problems, you have a choice.

Are you going to rebel? Are you going to disobey? Are you going to upset and try to knock the legs out from under God-constituted authority structures? Or are you going to go to the architect of that structure, God Himself? The mistake in the kingdom of Israel was rebellion. And rebellion led. And notice who falls first.

Within 200 years, the northern kingdom is gone because they never recover. Even though God sent Elijah and Elisha to the northern kingdom to speak the truth and to call them back to God into repentance with miraculous interventions, they don't. It's a spiritual problem.

And because they did not listen, just as the people in this day, in the Lord Jesus' day, the tongue has been loosed, the eyes have been opened. It is a time to respond and to be evaluated for your response. This day, the day in which we live, is a time to respond and be evaluated for our response.

Where are you looking for deliverance? Where are you looking for power? Where are you looking for redress, for the fixing of grievances, for the peace and prosperity that should be the heritage of a godly and a free people? Where does it come from? What is its source? If you get the cart in front of the horse and you think that the structure itself is

the source, and if I fix the structure, I will have what I want, you're not in line with the Bible. You're just not. The Bible never says, fix the structure.

It says, call upon me. Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They're the ones who are going to mount up from a low altitude like eagles.

They're the ones who are going to run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. Those who wait upon the Lord, not those who wait on social change, not those who form a committee or start a crusade, it's not in the Bible. There is no biblically sanctioned, authorized, blessed, positively commented instance in the Bible of upsetting God's authority structure, however rotten the individuals may be who are in it.

God will address it in his own time and in his own way. You wind up with Athaliah in Judah, God's going to handle that. And he's going to use his priest to do it.

When God's people cry out to God, and you've got at least 10 of them in Sodom, change is going to happen and there's not going to be destruction. But we have to look at the biblical way. A kingdom divided against itself is not going to stand.

And people who begin with division and rebellion are not going to long endure. Witness the French Revolution as opposed to the American Revolution. Why did ours succeed? Why did theirs fail? Why did ours create the noble foundations of a free and great country? And why did theirs dissolve into the guillotine and into chaos and manifest evil? That's a fruitful question to ask and to investigate.

But the French rebels and the guillotine operators were not calling on God. The founders of this country uniformly did, and they wove it into our founding documents. That's the difference.

The kingdom of Israel need not have divided. It divided because there was a spiritual problem in the northern side. And it was actually the preservation, ultimately, of Jerusalem and Judah to have them split off.

And this is one of the reasons why the attempt to reunify is halted. You go back and read that account of Jeroboam and Rehoboam and they're not going to reunite the country by force. It would be interesting to think what would have happened in this country if people who were enamored of slavery had not been forcibly reincorporated into the Union.

I read you Lincoln's dedication, no matter what it took. If keeping slavery would unify the nation, he was willing to keep it. If dissolving it would unify the country, he was willing to do that.

But his issue was unity. Abraham Lincoln understood what Jesus is teaching right here. A house, a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

Disrupting and undermining authority is not God's way. God is God's way. We're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to move a little further into the words of the Lord Jesus. They are so pertinent to the situations that face us each day and the larger situation that has arisen here in recent months in our country. Let's pause and take our break.