

TITLE: Kingdom Bound: Kingdom Power – Matthew 12:22-32

AIM: Understand that the Holy Spirit is the power of the Kingdom.

INTRO: The president of the US is thought by some to be the most powerful, influential man in the world, tho others would disagree. Some might think it is Warren Buffet or Bill Gates, or Vladamir Putin or someone else. I think it likely that the one(s), even behind the scenes, who most influence these powerful people, are the more powerful – the “power behind the throne” so to speak. May be the wife, close friend & confidant, or a business man/women/group whose financial support or sage advice is vital. There’s always power behind the throne. Theme: Kingdom Bound – for/by. I would submit to you that God the Holy Spirit is the one, all sufficient power source for the Kingdom of God on earth. That’s not taking anything away from the Father or the Son, it’s is by design. Father, Son & Holy Spirit are one, the Father has set in action His plan for the ages, which required the Son to be the agent of carrying out that plan, coming to earth, taking on our likeness, proclaiming & establishing the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven, which has always been, but not always known/recognized, dying in our place on the cross, rising from the grave as conqueror & Lord over all, & ascending into heaven to the Father’s right hand to ever intercede & prepare a place for us. King Jesus reigns over His kingdom, & the agent of His kingdom, the Church, is being led by Christ the King thru the Holy Spirit, who came upon the Church at Pentecost & is w/in every believer to empower & enable us to do kingdom work in the harvest fields of the world. The Holy Spirit is the power behind the throne, if you will. That’s an imp truth for the Church & the individual believer to understand & is illustrated beautifully in our text today, which Joyce read for us (Mt.12:22-32). The 1st ½ of this chapter records some of the opposition Jesus faced, during His earthly ministry, from the religious leaders of His day. On a particular Sabbath,

His disciples were hungry, so they went thru some grainfields & picked heads of grain to eat. The Pharisees accused them of profaning the Sabbath. As David Gudzik pointed out, "There was nothing wrong with what they did, because their gleaning was not considered stealing according to Deuteronomy 23:25. The issue was only the day on which they did it. The Rabbis made an elaborate list of "do" and "don't" items relevant to the Sabbath, and this violated several items on this list." Jesus pointed out to them that David had done a similar thing when he "entered the house of God & ate the bread of the Presence" which only the priests were to eat. But David didn't profane the temple by doing so. He also reminded them that the priests work every Sabbath, w/out profaning the Sabbath. Then He said to them "something greater than the Temple is here," referring, I believe, to the Kingdom of God & Himself, the King. "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Then He healed a man w/a withered hand, again on the Sabbath, which enraged the religious leaders enough that they "conspired against Him, how to destroy Him." Then, as recorded in our text, He delivered a man who was possessed or oppressed by a demon or demons. To my knowledge, only the ESV reads "demon-oppressed." Most read "demon-possessed." The wd in Grk means "to be under the power of a demon." Let me just say that the spirit world is very real. I don't believe in ghosts of those who have died, but it's clear from Scripture that demonic & angelic beings are very real. Demons are messengers/minions of Satan. To be demon-possessed is to be controlled or influenced by an evil spirit w/in; to be oppressed is to be influenced by an evil spirit w/out. Probably all of us at some point have been or will be oppressed. Some may be possessed, tho I question whether a believer can be, because the Holy Spirit indwells us & there's not room for any other. However, it's possible that when someone comes to faith, he/she may have to deal w/demonic forces which have been present, sometimes needing prayerful help. But we digress. This man had been rendered blind & mute by the demon(s) which possessed

him. That tells us that some physical/mental ills may be spiritually based. Jesus recognized this & delivered/healed the man, so that he spoke & saw. This, of course, amazed the people who saw it & caused them to ask, “Can this be the Son of David?” – a term for the Messiah. All the miracles of Jesus were intended to reveal who He was/is – the Messiah of God. Some Pharisees were there & heard the peoples’ question & they wanted to quickly dispel the thought that Jesus might really be the Messiah. They couldn’t deny that Jesus had delivered this man, but their claim was that Jesus cast out (same wd used in Mt.9:37 for “send out” laborers into the harvest – forceful action – drive out, thrust out – a notion of violence) demons by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Beelzebul means “lord of the house” & was a name used for Satan. Even the Pharisees recognized Satan as ruler of this present world/age, w/a kingdom of his own & servants - minions to do his bidding. The Pharisees were saying that Jesus was nothing more than a minion of Satan, doing his work. Matthew wrote that Jesus knew their thoughts, whether or not He heard their words. He quickly dispelled their claim. It only makes sense that a kingdom divided against itself is doomed to ruin, desolation. Civil wars prove that truth. A nation/kingdom (or a church) w/infighting will not last long – almost destroyed the US, but by the grace of God, I believe. Likewise a city or house divided against itself cannot stand. Families which are divided are no families at all. So it makes perfect sense that if Satan casts out Satan – if the lord of the house casts out the lord of the house – how can that house/kingdom stand? Not even Satan is foolish enough to use one of his minions to cast out another of his minions. F.F. Bruce wrote, “Satan may be wicked, [Jesus] says in effect, but he is no fool.” Then Jesus asked, “If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?” The Jews had those who claimed they cast out demons & had mystical power/practices by which did so. Again Bruce wrote, “The Jewish exorcists operated in conventional fashion by use of herbs and magical formulae, and the results were probably

insignificant. The practice was sanctioned by custom, and harmless. But in casting out devils, as in all other things, Jesus was original, and His method was *too effectual*. His power, manifest to all, was His offence." Now to the point of the whole passage & this message – vs28. Jesus casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit could only mean one thing, which the religious leaders didn't want to acknowledge – it meant that the kingdom of God had come upon them. The reign of God had come upon the realm of mankind in the person of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Everything Jesus did while He walked & ministered on this earth – every miracle He worked, every word He spoke, the work of redemption He carried out on the cross, & the triumph of His resurrection – was by the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, that was by the Father's design. Keep in mind what that means for the Church, this church & you, yourself. The same Holy Spirit is w/in us who believe. Jesus went on to ask an imp question & make an imp statement – vs29. Jesus was saying, "There's a new sheriff in town!" If you want to rob a strong man's house, you had better 1st bind up the strong man. Then you can do whatever you want w/his house. What Jesus was saying is that the strong man, who is Satan, had been bound. Jesus had bound him by His coming, by the power of the Holy Spirit, & He was plundering his house, seen in such miracles as the deliverance of this man. From the time of his fall & being cast out of heaven, Satan has been under the delusion that he was in charge of the realm of mankind. Has certainly appeared that way thruout history & certainly appears that way today in many instances – disease, terrorism, disasters. But he has been & remains a puppet under the control of the puppet master, Almighty God. He is given enough leash to carry out the purposes of the God he hates & opposes, but he is no more than God's lackey. Jesus came not only to redeem us from the curse & power of sin, but to reclaim the kingdom of mankind from the rule of Satan & deliver it into the hands of the Father, thus making it part of & one w/the eternal kingdom of God. Tho it may

not always seem it, Satan is bound, defeated by the work of Christ. We have not yet seen the finish of that, but the die is cast & he is defeated. Then Jesus made a statement directed at the Pharisees & religious leaders, but it certainly applies to us today & sets before us an imp choice – vs30. Jesus was saying to these religious leaders, “You’re either w/for Me or against Me, but you won’t stop what I’ve come to do. You either w/Me gather others into the kingdom, or you scatter – your choice.” That begs the question for us: are we w/for Jesus or against? Are we w/Him in the work He is doing & has called us to do, gathering people into the folds of God? Or are we working against Him, scattering, pointing people away from God? The key to working w/Christ is acknowledging & submitting to & following the leading of the Holy Spirit, who is the power of the kingdom. It’s a beautiful design – Jesus operated by the power of the Holy Spirit while He ministered on earth, then He ascended into heaven & sent that same Holy Spirit who empowered Him to empower us, so that we can carry on the work of the kingdom. Make no mistake about it. The Holy Spirit is not simply in you as a believer to comfort you in your distresses, when you suffer loss or people hurt your feelings, or to direct you regarding your choice of a spouse or job. Those things are true & imp & good, but somewhat incidental in the scheme of the big picture. The Holy Spirit is in you/me to enable us to carry out the work of the kingdom. So don’t you think we should be about the work of the kingdom? Shouldn’t we get on w/it? We need to think differently, bro/sis (talking to myself as well). We need to be kingdom minded & King Jesus focused. We need to think about making disciples & being laborers in the harvest & gathering in those who are lost w/out Christ. The King is coming! The time is short! Finally, Jesus issues a strong warning in vs31-32. To blaspheme is to “slander or distract” (could be anyone), but in this context it is to utter “impious & reproachful speech, injurious to divine majesty” (Strong’s). Jesus is saying, “You can be forgiven any sin, even blasphemy against someone, except for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. You can speak

ill of Me, against Me, but if you speak against the Holy Spirit, you will never be forgiven.” Wow! That’s scary, isn’t it? I’m sure you may be asking yourself now, “Have I done that?” Here’s what I think: to speak against or otherwise blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to deny His power, which these Pharisees were doing, and/or rejecting His testimony – about Jesus. The miracle of this man’s deliverance by the power of the Holy Spirit testified to Jesus being the Messiah of God. The religious leaders didn’t buy it, because they didn’t want to. They wanted to maintain their hold on the temple & their power over the people. As much as they might have said they were looking for the Messiah, they didn’t want Him to come – not then & there. They were denying what the Holy Spirit was doing thru Jesus & therefore what He was saying about Jesus. The Holy Spirit always points to Jesus. His job is to make Jesus known, thereby leading people to the way of salvation, to the King who is our Savior/Lord, to relationship w/God. Jesus Himself said in John 16:13-14, “*When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is mine & declare it to you.*” So, if you will not listen to what the Holy Spirit has said thru Scripture or what He speaks to your heart about Jesus, leading to your faith in Christ & commitment to Him, then there’s no salvation for you, no forgiveness, no eternal life. Instead of denying the Holy Spirit’s power & not listening to His testimony, let us come in faith to the One He points to. Let us give way to the Holy Spirit’s leading in our lives as Christians & understand that His aim is to empower us to do kingdom work. You may think you are unworthy or unable, & left to yourself that’s certainly true, no offense intended, but we aren’t left to ourselves. If we are in Christ, we are indwelt by the One who is the power of the kingdom! We can do all things thru Christ who strengthens us (by the Holy Spirit). We can reach the lost & share the truth of the gospel w/them; we can teach our children & each other the truths of Scripture,

making disciples. We can pray w/power & see lives transformed. We can say no to sin & yes to obedience to Christ. We can overcome by the blood of the Lamb & by His power, in us by the Holy Spirit. Bro/sis, changes have come upon us & will come. How will we navigate them? By the leading & power of the Holy Spirit w/in us! We need not be afraid or disheartened – the Holy Spirit is about His work. May one of the changes that come upon us be that we become a church of pray-ers & harvest laborers thrust forth by God into His harvest. Bro/sis, we are kingdom bound! Let us be kingdom minded, King Jesus focused, & Holy Spirit filled!