

**Reading:** Matthew 12:1-21

**Theme:** Behold the gloriously majestic Servant.

We sometimes say “*Appearances can be deceiving.*” It means we are not to judge something or somebody by looks only. During WW2 a man was travelling back from London on a train and dressed in civilian clothes, when someone opened the door of the carriage and gave him a white feather i.e. calling him a coward. He smiled for he was on his way home, coming back from the Palace after receiving a further medal for bravery for his part in the Dambuster raids! The other person had been totally mistaken!

The Pharisees were deceived by Jesus’ appearance. They were looking for a great king, a glorious conqueror, one to rule and drive out the Romans. Yet Jesus did not fit their ideas, plans or view and they disliked all He stood for, didn’t bother listening to Him and did not look at their own ideas again to see if their expectations were in agreement with what God’s word taught.

In v14 we read of their reaction to Jesus’ healing the man with the shrivelled hand - the Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus. They hated Him and wanted Him out of the way. To them, He was a nobody, they were appalled that He associated with nobodies - the rabble, the ordinary people, sinners and even tax collectors! They were deceived by His appearance and were completely wrong in their estimation of Him.

How do we view Jesus? What is our estimation of Him? We may have our own ideas, opinions, but the question is do they correspond to what God says and agree with what is true about Jesus? The passage in v15-21 teaches us amazing things about Jesus, things we may not have realised or appreciated, but things we need to realise and know. Let’s see 6 things about Jesus:

## **1. His knowledge.**

The Pharisees went and plotted how to kill Jesus, but Jesus knew it, was aware of their secret schemes and plans. Because of that He leaves that place. He had other work to do, it was not His time to die and so He wisely and rightly moved on. Let's think about this knowledge - for Jesus was not told, He wasn't given inside information by spies, so how did He know? The Bible teaches us that Jesus is God in a human body - He is the God-man. As such, He was at all times completely God and yet that God part was hidden out of sight in a real body, but at times His being God revealed itself - as here in His knowing all things (*omniscience*)! He knew what was going on and being planned - for He is God. As God He could have stopped them literally dead in their tracks, but He uses ordinary means and withdraws from that area.

We are to realise that at this moment Jesus knows exactly what is going on in our lives, minds and hearts. He knows all about us - wrong thoughts, actions, words, our past and present – future even. We cannot hide anything from Him. Yet He also knows those things that worry us, hurt, upset, cause us fears and anxieties. His knowledge is not only awesome, but also a great comfort as He cares minutely for those who have trusted Him as their Saviour. What a glimpse of His great knowledge, but now see:

## **2. His power.**

Many followed Him and He healed them completely - healed all their sick ones. Such is His power and it shows He is God in human body and terrible diseases and sicknesses were healed and dealt with. We do realise that even in a human body He was still Almighty God and had all power (*omnipotent*)! The healing of the man in the synagogue showed this as his shrivelled flesh could be given life, blood vessels, nerves, flesh, muscles etc. and restored. Only God could do such a thing, but the Pharisees ignored the evidence and went on in their deliberate ignorance. Have we considered Jesus' power? Look around at Creation, look at our own bodies, see how wonderfully and

fearfully made they are; look at the lives God has changed in this church, as we have evidence of Jesus' power in our days. Yet in contrast to that we see:

### **3. His humility.**

Incredibly Jesus told those who were healed not to tell about what He had done! As people were healed, they realised something of His power and person and so as not to generate undue excitement, or to be known as the worker of miracles or to draw attention to Himself and His ministry, Jesus instructed them to keep quiet. Jesus did not want pomp, vain displays, He was not wanting fame. He had rightly as God, ultimate supreme glory, but His time on earth had a far higher purpose than getting the applause and acceptance of men and women. It was for this reason that Jesus was humble and did not want news of what He had done broadcast around.

We are under no such restrictions; we should try and tell others of the Lord Jesus and all He's done for us and can do for them. His humility is in contrast to who He is. In the quotation that Matthew makes from Isaiah 42:1-4 we learn many more things about Jesus, one such thing touches on His humility - the fact He is known as the Servant. The One who was God, equal with God, had all the full characteristics of God, yet He is known as the Servant - the One who would serve perfectly God the Father and even people like us! People may have considered Him a nobody, a mere Servant because He didn't make a fuss, a commotion or advertise Himself (v19), but this is not the case, for the quotation shows us not only His humility but also:

### **4. His majesty.**

I was not sure which word to use for this heading - glory, splendour, honour, or majesty, but the brief word majesty covers all these and more in this instance. Jesus is revealed as someone special, with great worth, honour and splendour. God the Father shows us in this

quotation from Isaiah 42 that He, the Father, has pleasure and this One is chosen, loved and delighted in (“*well pleased*” says AV). This Servant, this humble Servant was someone with honour and majesty. He would be obedient to God and God knew it - for God the Father had chosen Him, knowing that only this One, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the godhead was the fit and proper person for such a great work which had to be done. Only He could do this, only He was equal to the task. No man or woman, no prophet, no angel, no creature could accomplish the work the Father had set. Only One could do it and He is chosen, set aside for the work. Only He is equipped and able to do it. From before time began the Son had been chosen and had willingly entered into the work.

Yet He is not only the humble Servant chosen, but He is loved, beloved by God. He is not sent us some unknown soldier on a dangerous mission, but is God’s beloved Son. Jesus is the darling of heaven, God’s one and only begotten and loved Son; the One who was daily God’s delight - the Father and Son delighting in each other. Jesus was loved to the uttermost by the infinite love and Being of God. It is one of the mysteries of God that He is 3 in one - one God but 3 persons who are distinct, coequal, of one substance, power and eternity and are revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The reality of the 3 persons in the godhead involves love and relationship. It means there is love in the godhead and His love to us is a true love because He loves and knows love. A single god, with no capacity or opportunity to love another His equal, would not be capable of love and it would mean that He would have a pity, but not love to lesser creatures and beings. The God of the Bible knows and shows love to us because He is the triune God and we catch a glimpse of that love relationship here. What honour and splendour Lord Jesus has as the beloved, the loved One of God! This One is also God’s delight, the One in whom He is well pleased. This was declared in public on 2 occasions in Jesus’ life - at His baptism, at His

transfiguration and these were coupled with confirmation of the Father's love for Jesus.

Amazingly we read that the Father was pleased to do something quite staggering to the One He loved and was well pleased with. We read of this in Isaiah 53:10, AV translates it as "*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him ;*" NIV "*Yet it was the LORD's will to crush Him* " - the word bruise or crush means to grind to dust and was used of grinding grain to make flour. This glorious, splendid, majestic Servant would be ground by the Lord and the Father would be pleased to do so even though Jesus was spotless and sinless, even though Jesus was still His beloved One. Why? It is because of us, for there God commended, demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners and therefore enemies of God, Christ died for us, on our behalf and He, the majestic One, paid the price for our sin and guilt.

We are told more of His majesty - He has been given the Spirit. In His seemingly weak and humble state, though He is God the Son, yet to Him, in His humanity, was also given the Holy Spirit and was given to Him without measure or limit (John 3:34). Jesus was totally and thoroughly equipped for the work that He had to do. This is such a comfort to us all - that if we are called to serve the Lord in some way or the other, He will equip us and fit us for the task, so it will be evident we are called and helped of God. This equipping is by His Spirit - by heightening our natural God given talents, abilities or experiences and also by divine equipping to learn, acquire and develop new talents and gifts. Have no doubt, this one, the Servant, the Lord Jesus has great and glorious majesty, but is not a harsh, hard ogre, for we see:

### **5. His gentleness.**

In v20 we learn of a bruised reed, a smoking wick - realise that such things would have no use, would have been despised as useless. Yet

this Servant would view ones who seemed so useless, or classed as that in their societies, who felt it themselves, knowing their failures before God and man; yet He would not view them with disdain, or look down His majestic nose at them, but He would have time for them. He would not break them, throw them away or snuff them out - as the Pharisees did, as many did then and can do now!

This verse uses a figure of speech known as a “*litotes*” - say something in a negative way to emphasise the positive - of a meal we may say “*That was not bad*” = it was good. At one time young people use the phrase “*Its wicked*” to mean “*Brilliant*” - they may still do! This verse not only shows Jesus will not break or quench, but positively says that He will take such, have time for such, will work and do amazing things with such broken reeds and smoking wicks. He will restore, give strength, encouragement and do wonders in them.

In other words, He is gentle and works to help and sort them out to be useful, to live and function as they never imagined! In His life, Jesus had time for sinners, tax collectors, immoral people, people with problems of health, relationships, morals, identity and religion. Most of these were cast off by the Pharisees and religious rulers of their day, yet Jesus had time for them and did amazing things for their lives and used them to do great things. Do you doubt that He would have care, concern and gentleness for you now? The Lord Jesus does have time for you, will receive you if you go to Him, no matter how bad or useless you feel. I know this because He has shown those things to me. This majestic one will help and care for us - our souls and lives in such a gentle loving way. This majestic gentle servant is still amazing.

## **6. His purpose.**

Why did Jesus come to earth in the way that He did and as God the Son was enveloped in a human body and lived amongst us?

Something of His purpose is revealed to us in these verses. The end of v18 we read of Him coming to proclaim or show justice or judgement to the nations or the Gentiles; at end of v20 we learn He leads justice to victory, or sends forth judgement to victory. The NT uses two different words for our word “judge” - one of the words means primarily the sentence passed and therefore the verdict. The other word means the act of distinguishing and judging between right and wrong and it is this word (κρισις) used here and refers to the act of showing and separating, distinguishing right and wrong.

The Lord Jesus is the One who proclaims justice, judgement – right and true justice and judgement to the nations i.e. non-Jews. He would show the whole world the right way. He would do so by leading, sending forth this right way to and through all the nations. Nations would come to know the right way to live and worship, for it would be proclaimed all over the world. How would this happen? Jesus proclaimed it to near nations in His lifetime as He visited non-Jewish areas and preached the gospel. At His ascension the disciples were commanded by Him to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

The gospel is the means by which the way to God through the Servant, His beloved Son, is proclaimed and in this way, this One’s name i.e. work and character will be fulfilled (v21) - Gentiles, the nations will put their trust and hope in His person, character and completed work.

The purpose of the Servant is to bring people the world over to hear of Him, to trust Him and all He has achieved for people the world over. The chosen One of God was chosen to be crushed for people like us, so that we could know the life, love and forgiveness of God in all it’s amazing wonder. The Lord Jesus didn’t come primarily to sort out marriages, relationships, problems, worries, fears and the like. Yes, He can do and often He does that, as He helps wonderfully in our lives and situations, but His primary work is to save us from

the consequences of all the wrong we have done against God in word, thought, desires and actions as, well as all those times we've neglected doing what is right and good. He did this to bring us to be right with God, so we could be accepted in Jesus, could know and tell the way of just and true forgiveness so that others can trust in Him.

What we learn of Jesus from this passage Matthew quotes is thrilling and amazing – especially when you think that Isaiah wrote those words some 800 years before Jesus was born. In the light of the NT we realise He is God's precious One and yet He is offered in such a weak form as He seems such a frail human being. The Bible tells us He is God the Son in a real human body and He knows exactly how we feel as He's been touched by the feelings of our infirmities. Would we despise God's offer, God's way and reject Him because He is not what we wanted or expected? Jesus came to save us, but He was not revealed in His raw glory and majesty as that would have terrified us, but He was revealed in a way we could bear it - His glory hidden and covered the soft sheath of our humanity. Jesus is more than we could expect or want and is the best and only One God knows can do us true and real good.

The Pharisees rejected Jesus and plotted against Him, hated Him because He did not fit their ideas. I pray that we would never hate Him because He is not who or what we expect, but that we would come willingly to learn of Him and then live to be like Him because we have trusted Him as our own Saviour.