

## TRUE OR FALSE

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Matthew 12:33-50

1. The opposition of the Jewish leaders was intensifying.
2. They had gone from questioning Jesus' words and actions to accusing Him of being controlled and empowered by the Devil.
3. You can tell a lot about a person by the tactics they use to try and advance their agenda.  
NOTE: God is a God of truth, and those who represent Him in truth will be truthful.
4. Jesus responded to their charge by declaring that their position could not be defended and that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven; either in this age, or in the age to come.
5. In the remainder of this chapter the Lord dealt with three characteristics of true religion; true religion being a right relationship with God through repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **I. True religion is internal rather than external. 33-37**

A. Jesus pointed out that you can evaluate a tree by its fruit.

NOTE: The Jewish leaders demonstrated what kind of trees they were by their determined opposition directed against Him.

B. In calling them a "brood of vipers" Jesus labeled them as deadly, deceptive, and hard to spot.

1. Many people today would call Jesus' words unchristian.

NOTE: We need to remember that Jesus was constantly led by, and empowered by, the Holy Spirit and never said or did anything that was wrong, inappropriate, or sinful. John 8:28-29

2. Love for God and the truth demands that we take a stand against all who distort truth and subsequently mislead others.

C. Jesus put people in two categories:

1. The good man.

a. Brings out of his good treasure what is good.

(1) He is a new creature (creation) in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

(2) He is filled with the Holy Spirit. John 7:37-39

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

(3) He will manifest the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

b. His speech is wholesome rather than unwholesome. Ephesians 4:29-32

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

c. He prays with the Psalmist, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."

2. The evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.

NOTE: In verse 34 Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can you, being evil, speak what is good? Then He stated, "**For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.**"

a. People are very adept at concealing negative feelings and emotions, but those controlled by the human spirit, rather than the Holy Spirit, will eventually manifest their true nature.

b. A person's words, deeds, and priorities provide objective, observable evidence as to where they are spiritually.

D. Verses 36 and 37 state a very sobering reality.

"But I tell you that every careless (useless, barren, unproductive, worthless) word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

## **II. True religion is based on faith rather than sight. 38-42**

A. Those who are truly Christians are Christians because they have believed and responded to the Word of God.

B. The scribes and the Pharisees wanted a sign or visible evidence.

NOTE: Jesus labeled them an evil and adulterous generation because of their craving for a sign.

C. Jesus stated that the only sign they would receive would be His death, burial and resurrection.

D. These pretenders already had the Word of God, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and the message and ministry of Jesus, yet they persisted in their unbelief.

E. In contrast Jesus stated that the people of Nineveh, who repented in response to the preaching of Jonah, and the Queen of the South (Sheba), who sought out Solomon and his wisdom, would actually condemn the current generation for their unbelief because someone greater than either of them was currently present.

## **III. True religion involves re-creation rather than reformation. 43-45**

A. We may reform our lives, but only God can transform our lives.

B. Jesus told Nicodemus, "You must be born again."

C. The scribes and the Pharisees were religious and outwardly moral individuals, but inwardly they were evil and controlled by the evil one.

### **APPLICATION:**

1. This chapter ends with an incident that reveals the true nature of our relationship with Jesus Christ; we are family.

2. We are children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ.

3. That is how we will relate to each other in eternity as opposed to current relationships.

(See Luke 20:27-40)