



The King in Conflict Pt 2: Stay Focused!

June 23, 2019

Holy Text: Matthew 12:14-21

1. As the narrative continues, one quick observation jumps out: our LORD's **response** to His enemies. In Matthew 12:14 and the corresponding verse in Mark 3:6, we read:

Matthew 12:14 (KJV) Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

Mark 3:6 (KJV) And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

2. The Pharisees hated Jesus so much they actually joined forces with the Herodians (the royal house of King Herod), people for whom they also had little love because they saw them as complicit in Israel's oppression by the Romans.
3. Luke gives us a detail about the Pharisees' state of mind (that we mentioned previously):

*Luke 6:11 (KJV) And they were filled with **madness**; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.*

4. Essentially, the "church" and the "state" joined forces against our LORD for His destruction.
5. So what did Jesus do? He stayed on **mission!** (Matt 12:15)

Jesus, the Father's Chosen Servant, would not complete His mission by the normal means of "being known" as a political leader or cultural icon. He would not "win" by stirring up the people to revolt. He would not "trample on the dispossessed or underprivileged (bruised reeds) in order to reach His goals. He would encourage and strengthen the broken-hearted, oppressed person. He would fan even a spark of faith into a flame (smoking flax). His humble, loving care for others would not be extinguished by the hate and ingratitude of men." -William MacDonald

6. Therefore, let us be **encouraged** by the LORD's response to conflict!
 - First, He knew there was a plot underway. I'm sure He also knew BEFORE He healed the man that conflict would arise.
 - Did He become depressed and give up?
 - Did He strategize a counter-offensive against the Pharisees?
 - Did He wilt and roll up into the fetal position like Elijah when Jezebel was hunting him? (1 Kings 19:1-8)
 - No! Scripture says essentially that He "withdrew" or left the area...
 - ...and went right on healing and blessing people!

- He **stayed focused** on what His Father called Him to do. He departed from their midst, not out of fear, but we believe for the desire to keep doing His Father's will!

Suggestions/applications for greater focus on the things of God:

1. Know your **limits**. (1 Cor 1:17) Realize that most of us can't do but a few things well at the same time.
2. Seek the LORD. (Acts 2) Getting before God and understanding your mission(s) is very important.
3. At some point, be able to **articulate** your mission. (Luke 4:18)
4. **Cultivate** your gifts. Study! Be diligent! (2 Tim 1:6, 2:15)
5. Set **Boundaries**/Prioritize. (Acts 18:6) Don't be afraid to cut a few things out of your life to focus on better things.
6. Love everyone but select close **friends** carefully. (2 Tim 1:13-18; 2:22) Pray for friends who will honor what God has called you to do, hold you accountable, and encourage and "refresh" you when times get tough.
7. Keep the main things the **main things!**
 - Stay focused on your relationship with Jesus
 - Stay focused on sharing the Gospel of Jesus
 - Stay focused on protecting and discipling your family
 - Stay focused on the mission the role of the local church
 - Stay focused on bringing your best to your place of work every day

Amen! Stay Focused CRCC!