



Sermon The Root Cause of Misinformation

Preached 5/22/22 at Cloverdale Baptist

Matthew 12:22-28

Our society today is invaded by false and misleading information. All you need to do is get on social media or watch the TV political campaign commercials and you can quickly become confused over what is truth and what is misleading.

Misinformation – incorrect or misleading information presented as fact. Disinformation – false information deliberately spread to deceive people. Both provide bad information or fake news.

Science indicates the impact of fake news on the human mind it invades our working memory. It is there in our mind, and you can't unthink them. Lead to snap judgements.

- Calls into question the credibility of sources
- Provides false information upon which decisions are made
- Confirms your biases. Information that you agree with might not be real
- Lead to lack of belief or trust in scientific facts or even biblical truths

An example of disinformation in the word.

²² Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. ²³ And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

Jesus performs a miracle and delivers a man from a devil, opened his eyes, and opened his mouth so that they can function again. The people are amazed at what they witnessed in the physical manifestation.

As a result of Jesus' ministry to this man, "all" the people start to believe as referenced in the question in the form of a statement that Jesus must be the Messiah. The miracle reveals two perspectives, those who see the Kingdom and welcome it; those who don't see it and deny the truth. Believers versus haters.

Make sure you apply God's perspective to your situation rather than the world's perspective.

- ❖ People – see a miracle, see Jesus as Christ, experience God and the truth.
- ❖ Pharisees - see a miracle, see a fellow rather than the Christ, see the devil and a lie.

The people see the truth and speak the truth. The Pharisees see the truth, they hear the truth but feel the need to turn the truth into a lie. They make false accusations not based upon facts, to attack and discredit Christ as a person and his recent accomplishment and works.

It still happens today. People, groups, organizations, political parties, leaders, governments, churches, nations, etc., may all do the same thing.....make false accusations to attack and discredit others.

The question – why?

It wasn't the miracles that set off the Pharisees, it was the comment/question referring Jesus as the Messiah that set them off. So rather than celebrating Christ as the Messiah, they instead try to discredit him. Notice they do not attack the obvious facts or parts of the miracles....sight and speech. Instead, they raise doubt as to the method by which the miracles occur. Their counter argument is that Jesus can only cast out the devils through the power of Beelzebub (another name for satan) the leader of devils.

But their jealousy and pride and desire to remain in power prompt this illogical response or today what we would call misinformation. We see misinformation and conspiracy theories today. It is easy to see that such misinformation is fueled by fear of losing power, position, etc. Such misinformation can distract and keep you from the truth of God and miss the Kingdom.

²⁵ And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: ²⁶ And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

Jesus' response to their accusations is a comparison and questions. Addressing in the natural through the parable.

Important Note: Jesus doesn't defend himself, instead he focuses on the greater matter of them denying the power of the Holy Spirit. There is important application here. Often we will first defend ourselves and our name/position while this can be a distraction to focusing on the greater more important issue. God is our defense so don't be distracted.

It is a principle that any kingdom that is divided or fights against itself will fail. We clearly see that in the natural. Jesus then takes this known natural truth and makes a spiritual connection by stating the same natural principle applies. Satan's kingdom will likewise fail if he fights against himself. Jesus then asks that question for the hearers to consider and answer....if satan is divided, how can his kingdom survive. The answer is it can't. So, logically, their argument doesn't make any sense.

Next response is the question, if it is true that I (Jesus) cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub, then by what power do their children cast them out? The answer must show that Jesus can't cast them out by the power of satan and neither can their children or disciples; so, they will be judged for their false accusations.

²⁸ But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Jesus now counters the misinformation of the Pharisees with the truth. If it doesn't make sense that he would cast out devils through the power of satan, then he must cast them out using the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, if it is through the power of the Holy Ghost, then the Kingdom of God has arrived. That means our deliverance has arrived through Christ.

Application for today – why should we care and how can we use this? Depends on perspective.

The Jesus perspective

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can do great things for the Kingdom.....still.

Some people will see the results of God working in your life through how you minister to others.

Don't be discouraged, not everyone will celebrate your walk with Christ. Some may not respect you and spread misinformation about you.

Don't be distracted by trying to defend yourself, turn the focus back on what is important....the miracle.

Use a parable or natural example to help them to understand the spiritual aspects and ask questions that will prompt them to better understand their errors and repent.

The Believers perspective

If I see God evidence of God working miracles and change, if I'm seeing amazing things, then the Kingdom of God must be in the neighborhood.

Your future looks bright.

Don't be surprised or discouraged if someone else looks at the same situation you are in and tells you it isn't from God. Don't be surprised if someone tries to get you to stop believing in the miracle.

Respond the same way Christ does. Put questions on them.

Important: do not believe the fake news. Test the source through the Holy Spirit. How can you tell? Follow the steps. If you stray from the truth and believe the lie, you may find yourself working against the kingdom and God's plan.

The Self-Righteous Perspective

Don't let your bias, your fear; fear of losing power, fear of losing your place or position, and please don't let your pride or fear of change cause you to miss what God is doing and about to do.

Pharisees loved the temple, loved their order of worship, loved how things were, loved God, but loved themselves more. They really didn't want the Christ like that.

Be careful and fear not. Stay humble and don't lead others astray or cause others to not believe in what God is trying to do. Follow the steps and be led by the Spirit and not the flesh.



Don't be a hater when people start to believe that the Kingdom has come.

- ❖ What phase of the seven steps maturity model do you think the Pharisees are at? They certainly are not at Level 1 where humility and recognizing the need for God starts. We know from these levels that one cannot be saved and repent unless they are first humble.
- ❖ Don't fall for misinformation; test the source using the steps to see if the information brings God glory.

Remember, they worshipped and were often in the temple serving God. You can be religious and still miss the Spirit of God. Follow the steps!