

The Challenge of Changing Our Minds

Have you ever had your mind changed? I'm referring to the experience of being completely convinced you're right about something—only to encounter a perspective so compelling that it causes you to rethink your stance entirely. For many of us who have had such experiences, we've learned, matured, and grown significantly. Yet, if we're honest, there have also been times when we've stubbornly held our ground, refusing to reconsider even when faced with overwhelming evidence against us.

Learning from Blockbuster's Mistake- [\(Image of Blockbuster\)](#)

This exact scenario played out in the once-great establishment known as Blockbuster. At one point, Blockbuster executives had the opportunity to acquire Netflix for \$50 million. To be fair, that sounds like a lot of money—but convinced that brick-and-mortar stores were the future, they passed on the chance to adapt. As a result, if you're a millennial like me, Blockbuster is little more than a distant memory—and some of you might not even know the glory that was Blockbuster. Meanwhile, Netflix has become ubiquitous and, as of March, is valued at approximately \$400 billion.

This story illustrates what happens when we refuse to embrace change. The series we're in right now is all about change—about shifting our minds away from the kingdom of this world, which is temporary, toward the Kingdom of God, which will last forever. With this shift comes an entirely new way of thinking and living. Fortunately, as we've been discussing, we have an incredible teacher who guides us through this transformation—and He just so happens to be the King of this Kingdom. His name is Jesus.

Jesus, the Servant King- [\(Back to Series Slide\)](#)

Last week, Pastor Tim spoke of how Jesus, the King of the Kingdom, is unlike any other kings who has ever existed. Jesus is a servant king, who has come to give us rest and describes himself as gentle and lowly of heart. Between the passage we examined last week and this week's passage, we encountered two brief glimpses into the spiritual condition of Israel. [One account describes Jesus' disciples "illegally" harvesting grain to eat on the Sabbath, while the other portrays Jesus performing medical treatment, considered work, by healing a man with a withered hand, also on the Sabbath. \(image\)](#) These incidents set the stage for our passage today, which, on the surface, most of us might readily agree with. Yet, as we explore its deeper significance, if we are honest, some aspects may cause us discomfort and require us to shift our thinking.

Understanding Jesus' Withdrawal

As we approach today's passage, coming on the heels of these two encounters, we find our teacher withdrawing from the religious leaders—specifically, the Pharisees—because they were

conspiring about how they might destroy him. It's important that we don't interpret Jesus' withdrawal as a retreat. Instead, we should see it as an example for us, his disciples, to follow.

Although Jesus withdrew from the religious leaders, the crowds continued to follow him, and we are told he went on to heal all who were sick. Jesus' withdrawal enabled him to carry on his important work of establishing his Kingdom away from the watchful eyes of religious leaders who sought to cut his ministry short. As we will see later in the text, Jesus' decision to withdraw was not a retreat, but rather part of his methodology. He wasn't interested in engaging in arguments with those whose minds were already made up and unwilling to change. I can not help but think that once again as disciples observing our teacher we might want to adopt his methodology as well.

Jesus' Mindset- *"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him," v.18*

It's important, at least in my mind, that we don't interpret Jesus' withdrawal as a retreat—simply because Jesus had nothing to prove. In fact, he already had the approval of his Heavenly Father. He knew exactly what he had come to do and how he intended to accomplish it. Perhaps by sitting at the feet of our teacher, we can begin learning from him, starting with observing his unwavering confidence in his Father's approval.

Jesus as the Fulfillment of Prophecy

At this point in Matthew's gospel, we're taken back to Isaiah's prophecy about God's suffering servant. Matthew helps us connect the dots by interpreting Jesus in light of this prophecy. Isaiah's passage begins by stating, "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased." This language closely mirrors the words spoken by the Father at Jesus' baptism: *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,"*(Matthew 3:17) and again at Jesus' transfiguration, when the Father declares, *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."* Matthew 17:5

Jesus' Mission: Justice for the Nations- *"He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles"*
v.18

Regarding the authority of our teacher, Jesus, there is no one who possesses authority like him. In light of his divine approval and secure identity, when we observe Jesus withdrawing, we understand that it's not due to any uncertainty about who he is. Rather, we're learning from him how we, as his disciples, are meant to live. It is only because of the certainty that we have in our Father's approval that we can afford to be despised by the world. Interesting isn't it, that Jesus' secure identity stands in stark contrast to the insecurity and jealousy of the Pharisees who were conspiring to kill him.

From this place of divine approval and secure identity, we gain clarity about Jesus' mission. We are told that He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

The Remarkable Impact of Jesus' Mission

I cannot emphasize enough how remarkable this statement is. Although its significance can easily be lost on us today, it is precisely because of this statement that any of us are here right now. God promised Eve that one day she would have an offspring who would crush the serpent's head. He promised Abraham that through his offspring, all the nations of the world would be blessed. And He promised David that the throne would never depart from his family.

Jesus is the fulfillment of all these promises: He is the one who crushed the serpent's head, He is the one through whom all the nations of the world are blessed, and He is the King whose kingdom we belong to today. As citizens of this kingdom, we are learning from our Servant King what it truly means to live as His people.

The True Meaning of Justice

Furthermore, when Isaiah says that he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles, it's important to understand exactly what that means. It does not mean Jesus came to make people comfortable in their sin. Rather, it means he came to help people suffering under the weight of their sin recognize their need for a Savior, offering them the opportunity to believe in him for salvation and to be restored into a right relationship with the Father. For us Gentiles, ignorance may have felt like bliss, but in reality, we were completely dead in our sins and trespasses, unknowingly living in opposition to the Lord and heading toward eternal condemnation. Yet, the Father sent his Son to reveal our spiritual poverty and the futility of our sin so that we could become new creations—indeed, Jesus' masterpiece—created in him for good works that he prepared for us long before we ever considered him.

Jesus' Methods- *"He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets..." v.19*

Now is where the rubber meets the road. As we consider Jesus' divine approval and clear mission from the Father, we begin to see people questioning his methods. Despite his divine authority, Jesus never abused or misused his power. Instead, through the image of the suffering servant, he demonstrated mercy, compassion, and gentleness toward those who were hopelessly lost. Isaiah prophesied about him, saying, "He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets..."

From this verse, I want to show you how Jesus exposes the true heart of the **Pharisees (image)**, which I believe strikingly resembles aspects of our culture today. To understand this better, let's take a closer look at who the Pharisees were. They represented a demographic similar to contemporary American conservative ideals—private property owners, blue-collar workers, business owners, and self-reliant individuals. Their primary conflict with Jesus arose from his interpretation of the Law, especially his emphasis on mercy. This directly challenged the Pharisees' self-righteousness, provoking anger because it revealed their deeper, hidden spiritual brokenness and their desperate need for a Savior.

The Pharisees' intense reaction—conspiring to destroy Jesus for healing a man's withered hand on the Sabbath—highlights their sinful pride and envy. Their extreme response reveals underlying motivations much deeper than mere legal disagreements about Sabbath observance; it was driven by jealousy and fear. Living under Roman rule, the Pharisees experienced significant socio-political anxiety, and Jesus' unconventional approach threatened their carefully maintained systems of control and influence. Ironically, it was precisely Jesus' gentle and merciful methods that further exposed their deep-seated insecurity and envy.

As Matthew presents Jesus as the Servant King prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 42), his gentle demeanor and withdrawal from public acclaim sharply contrasted with the Pharisees' desire for power and control. This distinction underscores Jesus' identity as the suffering servant. Consequently, Jesus' example becomes instructive, compelling his followers to adopt methods characterized by humility, gentleness, and mercy.

So far, we've discussed the who, the what, and the how of Jesus. Now, I want to explore the why. In reality, the Pharisees fundamentally misunderstood Jesus. His actions toward the sick and needy exposed the spiritual sickness and need within the Pharisees themselves. The effectiveness of Jesus' approach—captured in Isaiah's description, 'a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench' (image of reeds)—stems from the fact that Jesus always had the cross before him. He knew he would be broken and his life extinguished, ironically by the very people who desperately needed him. Yet, he embraced this path willingly, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy to 'bring justice to victory.'

Compassion Not Weakness

In closing, we must not mistake Jesus' compassion for weakness or interpret his gentleness as tolerance of sin. Rather, we must recognize that Jesus intended to satisfy divine justice by sacrificing his own life. Our wonderful Savior understood exactly who he was—the beloved Son of God. He knew precisely what he came to accomplish—to proclaim justice to the world. He was clear about how he would achieve this—by demonstrating mercy. And the reason he was able to fulfill this mission was his willingness to bring justice to ultimate victory through his death in our place. It is within this profound truth that unbelievers can find hope in his name.