

Series: A GREAT WORK

Text: Matthew 16:18, 22:18-40

Title: "You Can't Trick Jesus"

Introduction: WELCOME, BMZ! Glad you are with us TODAY as we CONTINUE our 2022 LEAD Series ... "A GREAT WORK!" We attempt to USE the FIRST SERIES of the YEAR to LAY GROUNDWORK for the ENTIRE YEAR as CHURCH. SO, we BEGIN the YEAR with a REMINDER we EACH have a GREAT WORK to DO ... in 2022!

Rom KICKED us OFF last week USING NEHEMIAH 6. It will be FOUNDATIONAL for this SERIES ... and 2022. GO BACK and LISTEN ... BUT we learned NEHEMIAH was CALLED by GOD to DO a GREAT WORK. The HOLY CITY of JERUSALEM was in RUINS, which SAID SOMETHING about the GOD of the HEBREW PEOPLE. The CITY was a DISGRACE to GOD, and SOMEBODY needed to DO SOMETHING to BRING GLORY to GOD. NEHEMIAH realized HE was "SOMEBODY"!

Shortening the STORY, NEHEMIAH goes to JERUSALEM and begins to REBUILD the WALLS of the CITY for PROTECTION / SAFETY, AND to bring GLORY to GOD. Nehemiah was CALLED BY GOD to DO a GREAT WORK! Nehemiah was OBEDIENT to God.

Hear me ... ANYTIME we are CALLED by GOD to DO ANYTHING, and we are OBEDIENT, there will be a FIGHT. There is EVIL and SATAN does NOT want GOD to ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING ... ESPECIALLY through MERE HUMANS!

Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem attempt to DISTRACT NEHEMIAH ... they are likely BLACK-MARKET DEALERS who KNOW IF the WALLS are BUILT BACK UP, their BUSINESS will SUFFER. They are GREEDY / SELFISH and DON'T want to LOSE MONEY!

NEHEMIAH'S RESPONSE? **"I CAN'T COME. I have a GREAT WORK to DO."** Nehemiah DECLARES he will NOT be DISTRACTED from being OBEDIENT to GOD. Nehemiah was DETERMINED / PERSISTENT in PURSUING OBEDIENCE to GOD.

As ROM REMINDED last week, we ALL have THINGS which DISTRACT US from GROWING in our FAITH / RELATIONSHIP / CHRIST-LIKENESS / NORMALCY. SO, as you SET GOALS for 2022 ... WRITE out RESOLUTIONS ... do NOT LEAVE OFF your FAITH LIFE. In 2022, HOW will you GROW in your FAITH RELATIONSHIP with JESUS?

What is the ONE THING you KNOW is NOT in LINE with what GOD WANTS for YOU? From WHEREVER you are COMING FROM TODAY (FTG to Long-Time Attender ... True Follower to Cultural Christian ... Personal Relationship with Jesus or RELIGIOUSLY RITUALISTIC ... what do YOU need to CHANGE to get to a SAVING FAITH in JESUS and making JESUS LORD of your LIFE ... BETTER? What is the BARRIER? Is it an ADDICTION? Alcohol, Pornography, WORK, SOCIAL MEDIA, drug related, etc. WHAT is the ONE THING you KNOW you need to CHANGE in 2022?

Another way of SCRATCHING at THIS is the 80/20 we APPLY to SO MUCH in LIFE. Maybe you do NOT have any ADDICTIONS, but you have some PRIDE / ARROGANCE CAUSING YOU to LIVE 80/20 with JESUS. ***"Jesus, I'll give you 80% of my LIFE, but I'm keeping 20% for MYSELF. God, I'll TRUST you in 80% of the AREAS of my LIFE, but I'm KEEPING 20% so I can KEEP being GREEDY with MONEY and SELFISH with my SEXUALITY. GOD, I'll trust 80% of YOUR WORD, but there is about 20% I do NOT LIKE!"***

As we THINK AHEAD to 2022, I HOPE YOU will CONSIDER that WHEN we do the 80/20 THING, we are ATTEMPTING to DICTATE to JESUS HOW we will be in RELATIONSHIP with HIM ... WHAT we will BELIEVE about HIM. We ATTEMPT to SET the PARAMETERS for the RELATIONSHIP ... we ATTEMPT to TELL JESUS what we would LIKE HIM to BE LIKE. That's ARROGANCE. ***"JESUS, I understand YOU are the CREATOR of the UNIVERSE and EVERYTHING in it, and YOU are the SAVIOR of the WORLD by LOVING ME ENOUGH to COME as a HUMAN to BECOME a HUMAN SACRIFICE by SUFFERING and DYING on a CROSS in MY PLACE. I understand YOU will COME AGAIN and then JUDGE US according to YOUR DEFINITION of 'SIN', BUT I STILL THINK You need to LISTEN to ME and MY OPINION about a FEW THINGS that PERTAIN to ME!"*** IGNORANT ARROGANCE. We THINK we can TRICK JESUS!

It is ONLY when we BOW and SURRENDER to JESUS that we are BELIEVERS / FOLLOWERS / CHURCH (movement of people in OBEDIENCE to JESUS). Listen YOU and I can SCREW some STUFF UP, but we CAN'T STOP the CHURCH. If WE are NOT OBEDIENT in our GREAT WORK, JESUS will FIND SOMEONE!

Remember ... Peter DECLARED at Caesarea Philippi Jesus as *"The MESSIAH, the SON of the LIVING GOD."* And Jesus responded ... **MATTHEW 16:18 = ¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.¹**

Jesus will BUILD His CHURCH (a MOVEMENT of PEOPLE), and WE get to DECIDE IF we will be a PART of IT or NOT. WE get to CHOOSE IF we will be OBEDIENT to HIM or CONTINUE to be DISTRACTED by the THINGS of this WORLD.

You get to CHOOSE, but it MUST BE on JESUS' TERMS. You can NOT TRICK JESUS. MANY TRIED, but they've ALL FAILED ...

Let me SET UP the Scripture for today ... Jesus is in JERUSALEM. It's the LAST WEEK of His LIFE. He's entered on the "colt of a donkey", everyone singing praises and waving palm branches and the whole ... *"the rocks themselves will cry out"* thing. Jesus has driven merchants out of the Temple ("not in my Father's house") and NOW He is TEACHING OUTSIDE the TEMPLE in Jerusalem about the KINGDOM of GOD.

The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Leaders of the RELIGION don't like what Jesus is doing. He's gaining FOLLOWERS. They BELIEVE Jesus is the MESSIAH / Son of God. The RELIGIOUS LEADERS do NOT WANT to BELIEVE it, SO, they plot to ARREST Jesus. **They decide they'll TRAP HIM in PUBLIC with TRICK QUESTIONS Jesus CAN'T possibly ANSWER.** They'll make him look FOOLISH. Then the people will QUIT listening to Jesus!

YOU CAN'T TRICK JESUS

#1 = The COIN Trick

The first is a COIN TRICK ... Some PHARISEES and HERODIANS approach Jesus together and ask IF they should PAY TAXES to Caesar. IF Jesus answers "YES", the Pharisees will attack for making Caesar a god (1st Commandment = *No gods before Me*). If Jesus says "NO", the Herodians will have Jesus arrested for speaking against Herod's law to pay taxes to Rome. Either way, Jesus is in trouble! Jesus answers... **MATTHEW 22:18-22 = ¹⁸ But Jesus knew their evil motives. "You hypocrites!" he said. "Why are you trying to trap me?" ¹⁹ Here, show me the coin used for the tax." When they handed him a Roman coin, ²⁰ he asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?" ²¹ "Caesar's," they replied.**

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Mt 16:18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

“Well, then,” he said, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.” ²² *His reply amazed them, and they went away.* ²

“Whose picture is on the coin?” Answer: *“Caesars!”* Jesus: *“Then give to Caesar what is Caesars* (IOW, PAY TAXES under AUTHORITY of Rome). *BUT* (meaning, I’m about to tell you something you need to think about) *“everything belonging to God must be given to God!”* He didn’t say not to pay taxes, so the Herodians couldn’t have him arrested. He reminded the Pharisees they were supposed to be more concerned about their relationship to God and their TITHES ... not TAXES. NEITHER GROUP could ARGUE!

They ATTEMPTED to TRICK JESUS into a POLITICAL DEBATE ... Jesus REMINDED them they have BIGGER FISH to FRY!

#2 = The MARRIAGE Trick

The 2nd TRICK = The SADDUCEES ask a QUESTION to TRAP Jesus. The Sadducees believed in only the first 5 Books of our Old Testament, known as the Books of Moses or the “Pentateuch”. The Sadducees did NOT BELIEVE in LIFE after DEATH. THINK about THIS ... they want LIFE without any ETERNAL REWARDS or CONSEQUENCES. I can LIVE for TODAY and NOT be CONCERNED about HOW my WORDS / ACTIONS / ATTITUDES in THIS LIFE will AFFECT my ETERNITY! There are MANY in 2022 who LIVE like they SINCERELY BELIEVE there will be NO AFTERLIFE / ETERNAL LIFE ... no HELL!

Anyway, they come to Jesus with a QUESTION about RESURRECTION and MARRIAGE. MOSES LAW SAYS if a man DIES W/OUT KIDS, his next oldest brother should marry the widow to produce a family heir ... a next in line. The story they tell is of 7 brothers ... one-by-one die and each brother ends up marrying this woman (I have a bunch of questions...). *THEIR QUESTION is: “Jesus, IF there IS RESURRECTION, whose WIFE is she in HEAVEN?”* They NOD at each other, knowing they’ve TRAPPED HIM. No matter what Jesus says, he can NOT go AGAINST Moses’ LAW! ALL SEVEN married ONE woman. She MUST be someone’s wife in heaven. HOW do you RESOLVE it?

JESUS ANSWERS: *“You don’t know your Scripture and you don’t know the POWER OF GOD!”* Jesus EXPLAINS, in heaven we’re NOT MARRIED. Then, JESUS ATTACKS their CORE BELIEF (no resurrection of the dead) by saying, *“haven’t you read about this in your Scriptures?”* Jesus reminds them, IN the READINGS THEY BELIEVE IN ... 1st 5 Books of the Bible, it says (long after these three men are dead), MATTHEW 22:31-32 = ³¹ *“But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead—haven’t you ever read about this in the Scriptures? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So he is the God of the living, not the dead.”* ³ Where from? Exodus 3:6.

“I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” NOTE, it says, God “AM” the God, NOT “WAS” the God of ... God IS the God of the LIVING, NOT the DEAD. IOW, God already told you, even though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are DEAD; they are still ALIVE! RESURRECTION! They TRIED to TRICK JESUS into BELIEVING what THEY BELIEVED ... are YOU? Their WILL BE RESURRECTION / ETERNITY. According to Jesus...

#3 = The COMMANDMENT Trick

The PHARISEES are BACK, and they’ve BROUGHT a RINGER ... an “EXPERT in RELIGIOUS LAW”. They brought in the PROFESSOR of RELIGION if you will. He ASKS Jesus, *“WHICH COMMANDMENT is the GREATEST...”*

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 22:18–22). Tyndale House Publishers.

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 22:31–32). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

MOSES' Commandments = 10 for Jesus to choose from. NO MATTER WHICH ONE Jesus PICKS, he has NINE MORE to question him about. BUT that's NOT ALL! There are OVER 600 REGULATIONS to the LAW of MOSES CONSIDERED COMMANDMENTS.

He THINKS he has TRICKED JESUS into HIS WAY of THINKING about FAITH ... IF I just FOLLOW ENOUGH RELIGIOUS RITUALS / LAWS, I can EARN my WAY into HEAVEN / GOD'S presence. My BEHAVIOR matters MORE than MY BELIEF!

JESUS did NOT HESITATE. **MATTHEW 22:37-38 = ³⁷ Jesus replied, "‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.**⁴ From DEUT. 6:5.

As the 'expert' takes a BREATH to DISCREDIT what Jesus said, He KEEPS GOING ... **MATTHEW 22:39-40 = ³⁹ A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.**⁵ Jesus took the 10 commandments plus all the Scriptural prophecies and fit them into TWO CATAGORIES: Love GOD and Love PEOPLE!

EVERYTHING we need to KNOW about GOD fits into 2 COMMANDMENTS! They'd NEVER THOUGHT of THIS BEFORE! You can see the PHARISEES going through LISTS in their HEADS ... **"Yep, yep, right ... He's right!"**

Now, WHAT did we LEARN from the GREAT COMMANDMENT? We learned we need to LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE! It is a GREAT WORK!

Love GOD and Love PEOPLE

GOD has CALLED us to a GREAT WORK. It STARTS with THIS COMMANDMENT from JESUS. CONNECT WITH GOD ... GOD'S WAY! I hear people say they're NOT CONNECTING with GOD. God WANTS desperately to CONNECT with US on a PERSONAL LEVEL! God DESIRES to be in a RELATIONSHIP with each of US in 2022.

Our PROBLEM is: WE keep trying to TRICK JESUS into being in a RELATIONSHIP ... OUR WAY! WE DON'T WANT the REAL JESUS. We want JESUS to BE what WE WANT HIM to BE. **WE keep ATTEMPTING to DICTATE to JESUS HOW we will be in RELATIONSHIP with HIM and HOW WE will HANDLE our LIVES and ETERNITY.**

IGNORANT ARROGANCE. So, WHAT is the ONE THING you are being ARROGANT about when it comes to GOD? What is the ONE THING you need to SURRENDER to GOD in 2022? In WHAT WAYS are you ATTEMPTING to TRICK JESUS? WHERE are you 80/20ing the REAL JESUS? Connect with GOD? Obedience.

I feel LED to SPEND some SERIOUS TIME in WORSHIP WITH JESUS in 2022. I feel RESPONSIBLE for LEADING people to FOLLOW HIM AS He TRULY IS. We'll take TIME to DISCOVER WHO JESUS IS ... ACCORDING to HIM ... NOT US. We will LISTEN to HIS WORDS and be OBEDIENT ... IF we want to be ABOUT a GREAT WORK.

I'm INVITING you to COME ALONG in 2022. You TELL whatever (worldly) is DISTRACTING YOU, you CAN'T COME ... You have a GREAT WORK to DO. Let's START with LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE ... Next Week: WE will go AFTER HOW to LOVE GOD!

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize Matthew 16:18*
Read Matthew Chapters 16 and 22
I will Find Ways to Love God and People this week
Pray about who I will invite to worship with me

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 22:37–38). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 22:39–40). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.
It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is **HIT "SEND"** your COMPLETED Connection Card

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As our ushers GET READY to come forward

- I just want to remind you that ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... MATTHEW 22:37-38 = ³⁷ *Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind."*
³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.*⁶
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1st place!
That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART!
Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- Next Week: **HOW do we LOVE GOD?**

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."
Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegram for outlines and ideas for this worship series.