

Articles and Sermons :: Matthew Chapter 11 - Confusion, Corrections and Comfort! by brother Greg

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Saints,

It was a blessing to teach through this chapter of the bible simply to a small group of people tonight. What blessings in the simplest verses of scripture!

Matthew Chapter 11 - Confusion, Corrections and Comfort!

by brother Greg

Verses 1-6: Confusion - Is Jesus the Messiah?

Verse 1 - Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

This chapter comes in the middle of the Gospel of Matthew. Christ has already gathered his 12 disciples together and has just commissioned them out on their first time preaching and teaching about the gospel of the kingdom of God. But the work was also for Christ to still teach and preach in the cities also.

Verse 2 - And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples

It seems in Scripture that a principle is to be sent out in two's. John sent his disciples in two's and Christ also did the same. You find in Acts Paul travels with other brothers in two's.

Verse 3 - and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

Could John have been confused with the role of the messiah to come? Was he also looking for a political leader to lead them from the captivity of Rome? It seems apparent that the Scriptures were leading men in those days to look for the messiah. We see the wise men looking for the messiah and also Herod and the scribes. Also as Christians we are looking for Christ to come back again. What a good thing it is for the heart of man to be looking to Christ who is our deliverer.

Verse 4 - Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

In most of Christ's ministry he responds to questions with Scripture. In this case he quotes a prophecy of Isaiah about the coming messiah. The works are to testify of the worker of the miracles. So in this way Christ again as other times implores men to believe even for the works sake proving He is the Son of God and Messiah.

Verse 5 - The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Jesus makes clear that the signs of the Messiah to come in Scripture was not a political deliverance but rather freedom from sin, sickness and self.

Verse 6 - And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.

Jesus might have said this here because it would have perhaps been offensive for people to see Him not as a political deliverer of their carnal situation on earth. And the offense would not just be in the signs of the Messiah but the requirements to be His disciple also as we will see later on in this passage. "In some way even the Baptist had found som

the occasion of stumbling in Jesus" (Plummer). Jesus was despised and rejected of all men.

Verses 7-15: Confusion - Was John the forerunner of the Messiah?

Verse 7 - As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"

Jesus addresses possibly the "multitudes" referred to in Matthew 9:36 who were following Him. It was said that All of Judea and the surrounding areas went out to see John so in all probability most of the people Jesus was addressing already heard the testimony of John of the coming Messiah.

Verse 8 - But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

A reed in the wind? clothed in soft garments? Jesus is saying to the masses I know why you went out into the wilderness it was not to see a king or some prominent leader, nor was it to take a walk for enjoyment seeing nature.

Verse 9 - But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

The prophetic word had stopped in Israel for 400 years and people were desperate to hear from God through a prophet. And Jesus states clearly here that John was much more than just a prophet but had a role much more important than all the other prophets. Every prophet from Abraham, Noah, Enoch and others longed to see the day of Christ. And John was present to not only long and preach about it but saw and baptized the very Son of God that was the longing of prophets for thousands of years!

Verse 10 - For this is he of whom it is written: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You."

Just as John preached of the coming Messiah so we are to preach of the coming Messiah who now is King and will reign over all. We have a end-times John the Baptist ministry to preach repentance and the kingdom of God to this world. We have been entrusted with the ministry of "reconciliation" for in our words men and women can be made at peace with the coming King who they are in active rebellion to!

Verse 11 - "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

It is amazing thought he was the climate of the Old Covenant and prophetic voice throughout the Scriptures yet he was not a partaker of the New Covenant on earth. Thus those who are "in Christ" and are a part of the Kingdom of God are greater than John The Baptist in his earthly ministry.

Verse 12 - And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Jesus' reference to "violence" here is referring to the intensity of persecution against his herald John the Baptist and Himself preaching the kingdom of God. And truly throughout the ages there is an enmity between those who are born of flesh and who are of Spirit. And the kingdom of God is not passively obtained but is through death and suffering. The picture of the narrow way being a way that needs to be crouched down to enter into. Luke 16:16.

Verse 13 - For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

There is a sense that John speaks for all the prophets in his forerunner ministry preparing the way for the Messiah. Even the law prophesied of a need for a Messiah to come to deliver from the just penalty of sin.

Verse 14 - And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

John may be seen as Elijah in partial fulfillment of Malachi 4:5 "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." But more likely John was in the spirit and power of Elijah and thus a partial fulfillment of Malachi: Luke 1:17. Jesus states "if you are willing to receive it" because it is in the symbolic sense. Elijah did in fact come during Jesus' earthly ministry on the mount of transfiguration: Matthew 17:3. But he will come again before the second coming of Jesus Christ, very possibly as one of the "two prophets" in Revelation 11. John 1:21 - John himself denies he is the Elijah come in the flesh. Matthew 17:12 Jesus states that Elijah has already come and they did to him what they wished and they would cause the Son of Man also to suffer at their hands.

Verse 15 - He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Jesus says this because these statements do not just take a mental understanding of them but a spiritual insight to the fulfillment of prophecies by faith. The "ear of faith" is needed!

Verses 16-24: Corrections - To those that reject the Messiah.

Verse 16 - "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,

Jesus said in other places the whole generation was unbelieving, seeking after a sign. This "generation" is childish, not childlike, and full of whimsical inconsistencies in their faultfinding.

Verse 17 - and saying: "We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament."

Those who have a heart to criticize, will find something to criticize. Many people wouldn't be pleased with either John or Jesus.

Verse 18 - For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon."

John came in fulfilling the old covenant rules and regulations according to man. And he was not accepted.

Verse 19 - The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" But wisdom is justified by her children.

Jesus came in the full liberty of the New Covenant and they accused him of excess and breaking the law.

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Verse 20 - Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

Literally, "His very many mighty works". The son of God had authority to rebuke the entire cities. Just as Jonah was preaching to Ninivah to call the entire city to repentance. In the same way Jesus was calling entire cities to corporately repent.

Verse 21 - "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

This indictment was given in the area of Chorazin. Neither of these cities repented, changed their conduct. In Bethsaida

it was the possible feeding of the multitudes miracle. Matthew 14:13-21. These cities experienced greater light so there was greater accountability.

Verse 22 - But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

Jesus is implying there are different degrees of judgment. Some will be punished more severely in the final judgment day. It is interesting that Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum are desolate for generations upon generations! Jesus's judgment on them is evident!

Verse 23 - And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

These are the miracles that were done in Capernaum: Draught of Fishes (Luke 5:1-11), Demoniac Healed (Mark 1:21-28), Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Peter's mother in law healed (Matthew 8:14-15), Centurion's servant healed (Matthew 8:5-13), Paralytic Healed (Mark 2:1-12), Women with the Issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34), Jairus's daughter raised from the dead (Luke 8:40-56), Two blind men healed (Matthew 9:27-31), Dumb demoniac healed (Matthew 12:22-37), Tribute provided in Fishes mouth (Matthew 17:24-27), Bread of Life discourse (John 6:22-59).

Verse 24 - But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

Sodom rejected God's angels but Capernaum rejected the very Son of God!

Verses 25-29: Comfort - To those that come to the Messiah.

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Verse 25 - At that time Jesus answered and said, "I do thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

God has been pleased to make the message of the Gospel foolish to the wise of the world. Only those of a humble and contrite heart will hear and truly understand the Gospel.

Verse 26 - Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

This way of the Gospel spreading was good in God's sight. Should we try to improve on what God has said is good?

Verse 27 - All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

This passage shows that it is God truly that reveals Himself to man. It is his Spirit that shows Himself to man's heart through the Gospel.

Verse 28 - Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Jesus shows His authority when he says "Come." It is an unthinkable command for anyone else to say then the very Son of God. He does not say come to my Church or to my program or system. We must come to the very person of Jesus Christ Himself! Woe to those that call people to themselves who cannot give life. Only Jesus can truly give us spiritual life. In Christ is true rest! No more living in self-sufficiency. Robertson says: He towers above all men as he challenges

us. "I will refresh you".

Verse 29 - Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

We must come as disciples not just receiving a rest but also a willingness to learn, be taught and led. Jesus Christ does not just take away our yoke of sin so we can enjoy a guilt free life but so we can enter into a yoke with God to bring forth true fruit and righteousness to God by faith.

Verse 30 - For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.â€

Robertson says: Jesus promises that we shall find the yoke kindly and the burden lightened by his help. "Easy" is a poor translation of the greek word. Moffatt puts it "kindly." That is the meaning in the Septuagint for persons. We have no adjective that quite carries the notion of kind and good. The yoke of Christ is useful, good, and kindly

The yoke is light and the burden is easy because He bears it with us. When training a new animal (such as an ox) to plow, ancient farmers would often yoke it to an older, stronger, more experienced animal who would bear the burden and guide the young animal through his learning. If your yoke is hard and your burden is heavy, then it isn't His yoke or burden, and you aren't letting Him bear it with you. Jesus said it plainly: My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Matthew Henry said: "He accepts the willing servant, however imperfect the services. Here we may find rest for our souls, and here only. Nor need we fear his yoke. His commandments are holy, just, and good. It requires self-denial, and exposes to difficulties, but this is abundantly repaid, even in this world, by inward peace and joy. It is a yoke that is lined with love. So powerful are the assistances he gives us, so suitable the encouragements, and so strong the consolations to be found in the way of duty, that we may truly say, it is a yoke of pleasantness. The way of duty is the way of rest.â€