

Matthew ch. 11 Vs 20-30

I'd like to invite you this morning to turn in your bibles to Matt ch. 11. We've been gleaning some insight so far in Ch. 11 into some of the different qualities of the person of John the Baptist and It's interesting that even though in Jesus' estimation (which obviously would be an accurate one) John was the greatest individual ever born of women; we've still seen the fact that John was human. That he had some struggles, and he needed some encouragement now and then just like any of the rest of us do. And we seen that Jesus was right there to give it to him, even as He's there for you and for me in our moment of need to strengthen and encourage us. And last week we seen just exactly what Jesus thought of John the Baptist He commended John for being an unwavering individual, one who knew the truth, preached the truth, asserted the truth with conviction, and his lifestyle backed up the words he taught. His walk matched his talk. John was a kingdom minded individual, he wasn't concerned with making sure he was up with the latest fashions and fads, he was concerned about 1 thing, and that was where people were at with God and encouraging them to repent so that they might not perish but have everlasting life.

John was the 1st prophet that Israel had seen in 400 yrs. and He came on the scene like a storm prophesying of the coming Messiah and the urgent need for repentance, and that they would bear fruits worthy of repentance, the bible says he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Dressed in camel's hair and leather belt, he ate locust and wild honey, was an ascetic and austere individual and was very serious and dedicated to the cause that he had been called to as unto the Lord.

John wasn't a man pleaser he was a God pleaser and he had a good testimony before the Lord, one that Jesus stood up and testified of and may God strengthen us to have such a testimony. But because of the way that John presented himself, many of the people thought the guy was crazy. In Vs.18 Jesus said (read) in other words man this guy is out of his mind, he lives out in the wilderness, wears camels hair and eats grasshoppers. He's gone off the deep end; "he has a demon." They rejected him and his message of repentance as far as the big picture is concerned. Many people repented, but overall they thought he was nuts, at least that was the pharasytical view.

But then on the other hand you've got Jesus, He was laid back, a social kind of a guy, always hanging out at the feasts and banquets and as far as personalities go, He probably couldn't have been more opposite than John the Baptist But what was the people's overall conclusion of Him. Vs 19 John was fasting and serious and so he was rejected, Jesus was feasting and social, so they rejected Him. (And last week I said that as far as we know Jesus never fasted but I wanted to clear up the fact that I'm aware of His 40 day fast but that was prior to His public ministry beginning.)

After that, as far as I know there is no record that Jesus ever fasted again either by neither Himself nor with His disciples. John and his disciples fasted, Jesus and His disciples feasted. But the people wouldn't repent with John, or rejoice with Jesus. But rather they rejected both. Why? Because of unbelief. From 1 extreme to the other they were rejecting those that God had sent and ultimately both John and Jesus was put to death.

Unbelief leads to death. Heb 3:12-19 *"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."* The fruit of unbelief is death, but wisdom Jesus said is justified by her children, in other words both He and John would ultimately be vindicated as coming from God and having godly ministry by the out come of their ministry. Which is everlasting life for all who believe. Unbelief leads to eternal death and torment, belief in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior leads to life and that everlasting.

Now remember Matt's Gospel presents the Kingship of Jesus, and so far Jesus has revealed His person (ch 1-4), His principals, (ch5-7), and His power (ch 8-10), now it's time for the nation to make a choice. and In ch 11-12 we see that the people didn't receive their King, but rather they rejected their King. Jesus just said John came, you rejected him, I came you've rejected Me. And the Lord will not force Himself upon you, you can choose to receive Him or reject Him but you need to know that there are eternal consequences to rejecting Jesus Christ because He will honor the position of your heart. And if you don't want to be with Him He won't force you to be, and if you reject Him now, (in the temporal) He'll reject you then, (in the eternal).

Now that these people have seen Jesus and have rejected Him, He now begins to pronounce judgment on them, which again testifies of His authority. And reveals His deity, because who but God is worthy to be the judge of mankind and who but God really knows the heart of man. So even in the judgments of Jesus it should be telling these people who it is that is in their midst.

Vs.20

So Jesus begins to rebuke these cities who have rejected Him. These cities in which most of His “mighty works” or miraculous deeds have been done, why, because even though they had been witness to the fact that God moving in their very midst, the miracles testifying of that, they didn’t repent. Jesus wasn’t looking for fame or admiration; He was looking for repentance. Right when Jesus 1st came onto the scene that was the 1st chord He struck; He called people to repentance and that remained a constant in His ministry. He was calling for people to turn from sin unto the living God. Because repentance means more than feeling sorry that you sinned or that you got caught in your sin. To repent is to turn from your sin, it’s a change of the lifestyle, and a turn of direction from one thing (in this case being sin) to another, (again in this case, that being God).

And again we’ll see woven in these next few vs. the thread of Luke 12:48 *“to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”*

Vs 21

Now this phrase “woe to you”, don’t misunderstand is not a pronunciation of anger as if His pride was hurt because the people didn’t receive Him so I’m going to smite you. This is a term in this context of grief and warning mixed with compassion. He’s not mad or angry with them, He’s grieved that they didn’t respond to Him with repentance because He knows the alternative and He’s not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But those who refuse to repent will in fact perish in their sin, and Jesus doesn’t take pleasure in the fact that they’ll suffer the fate of rejecting His love and grace and mercy. Ezek 33:11 *"Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!'"* God paid a price greater than we will ever know to make away of escape from the penalty of our own sin. It cost the life of His only begotten Son to bridge the Gap between sinful mankind and a holy and righteous God.

Do you think He takes pleasure in seeing people say hey, as far as I’m concerned that was just a waste of Your time because I don’t want anything to do with You? He takes no pleasure in that, but rather it grieves Him. God didn’t allow His only begotten Son to suffer and die on the cross because He wanted to see people condemn themselves to hell. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

Jesus says “woe to you” Chorazin because you’ve rejected the One whom God has sent to bring you salvation. Don’t reject the One whom God has sent to bring you salvation this morning, Jesus said where 2 or more gather in My name there I am in the midst of them. He’s here this morning, and He holds salvation in His hand. and He’s willing to impart it to *any* who will receive and it doesn’t matter where you’ve been or what you’ve done Jesus loves you and wants to make Himself real to you this morning. Jesus said *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.”* Don’t reject that call.

Now this vs. also gives us insight into exactly how little we actually know about Jesus. Because here the 1st city on His list of rebukes is this city of Chorazin and yet this is the only mention of this city in the entire bible (minus it’s parallel passage in Luke 10:13). But according to this, this is one of the places where most of His mighty works were done. And this is the kind of thing the apostle John was in reference to when he said *“And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”* In other words there’s a lot about Jesus we just don’t know. He also speaks of Bethsaida, and by that we can know that when He says that these cities didn’t repent it doesn’t mean that absolutely no one turned to Him out of these cities.

Because not only can we assume fairly safely that those who he healed or cleansed of whatever probably followed Him. (For the most part) But the city of Bethsaida rendered 3 of His 12 apostles. Peter, Andrew, and Philip was all from the town of Bethsaida. So there were those who turned to the Lord from these cities but overall He was rejected. Today I would say that we would qualify or could be classified as a godless society. Now there are those with in this society that love the Lord with all their heart, mind, and soul, but overall we live in a Christ rejecting society and world, and because of that judgment is coming. Right now grace is available but judgment is coming just as sure as I stand here you. Now those of us who are believers won’t be subjected to that but that’s another topic that we don’t have the time to get into this morning.

My point is, is that Jesus is declaring judgment on these cities overall for their overall rejection of Him due to their unbelief and callused hearts, and unbelief mingled with a callused heart makes for a nonrepentant individual. John 3:36 *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”* Jesus compares these cities to gentile cities. Cities that were notorious for being heathenistic. Tyre and Sidon were coastal cities on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea and they were denounced vigorously by the prophets, multiple times for their wickedness.

(Isaiah 23, Ezek 26 Amos ch 1 vs 9-10) Read those references sometime and then you'll get the emphasis that Jesus is making here when He says even these cities would've repented in sack cloth and ashes. (Which in that culture was the traditional sign of grief and mourning over ones misdeeds), but even they would have repented if they would've seen what you seen and yet you didn't repent so who's really the greater of the 2 evils? (If you'll allow me that term) But that's the basic thrust of what Jesus is saying here.

Vs 22

Why? Because they've been given a greater light, or a greater opportunity to respond to the works of God because Jesus was right there in their midst doing these miraculous deeds. and Yet they didn't repent, they didn't allow what was going on to really sink in and change their lives as a result of being with Jesus. Instead they hardened their hearts toward the Lord and as a result judgment is eminent. According to this there are various degrees of judgment because to whom much is given much more is required. and You'd be better off on judgment day to have never sat a day in church in your life but just lived life your own way doing whatever you wanted, than to have sat in church all your life and never really responded to Jesus Christ in your heart.

Why? Because week after week you come into a greater light of understanding of the love and grace of Jesus and have opportunity after opportunity to respond but your unwillingness to humble yourself and repent keeps you from truly giving your life over to Him in anything more than lip service and all that, that will result in is a greater or harsher judgment upon your life.

VS 23

Why, or how was Capernaum exalted to heaven? Because that was where Jesus lived at that time, the very headquarters of His ministry was in Capernaum. (Finish) Again Sodom being a gentile city known for it's proverbial wickedness. and You can read of Sodom in Genesis 18-19. Our word sodomy comes from Sodom, the city was just over ran with sexual perversion and homosexuality and God ultimately judged that city by raining down fire and brimstone upon it erasing it permanently from the map. And Jesus tells Capernaum that if they would've seen the things that they've seen, then it'd still be here today because they would've repented of their lifestyles and gotten right with God.

Vs24

Again the sin of apathy or indifference, being brought into an understanding of who Jesus is and how much He loves you and then just acting indifferent or blowing it off, not responding to it or allowing it to change your heart and life. I can't imagine the thought of Sodom and Gomorra getting a lessor judgment than myself. Again I just encourage you not to take the chance, but rather turn to Jesus Christ while there's still hope.

Vs25-26

Paul writes in 1st Cor ch 1 *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, **“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD”**”*

Now this vs. isn't implying that you can't know the Lord if you're an intellectual type of an individual. But what it is saying is that the knowledge of God doesn't depend on human wisdom and education. I've told you before that a lot of people are going to miss heaven by about 18" which is the distance between the brain and the heart. It's not head knowledge that's going to save you, it's simple trust in Jesus for the remission of our sins, Salvation comes by faith not by intellectual skill and knowledge, but simple trust, which is open to the humblest of individuals, even the babes. But the proud and self-sufficient individuals who think that they don't need God won't have these truths revealed to them but rather the bible says that they'll be given over to the lie. Why? Because if you don't believe the truth that only leaves 1 alternative and that's to believe a lie.

Vs27

What's Jesus telling us here? That He has absolute authority. And that there's only one mediator between man and God and that's the Man Christ Jesus, you can't come to know the Father except through Him. The way that you get to know what the Father is like is by getting to know Him. He's the express image of God Col 1:15. And He's saying that you can't even come to know the Father unless He wills to reveal Him to you. Remember Jesus said you didn't choose Me but I chose you. Thus we have the paradox of the doctrine of election vs. freewill choice. And I'm probably guilty of oversimplifying things but seeing as how God's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Whosoever will may come, It seems to me that if your willing to respond to His drawing you by being willing to come to Him, He'll reveal Himself to you. But now that these Jewish cities have rejected Him and He's denounced them He turns now and gives this Evangelical call to repentance to not the elect, who's Jesus willing to reveal Himself to.

Vs28

Since Jesus is the exclusive way to the Father and all authority has been given to Him that's why the call is given to come to Him. But it's not a call that's only open to a certain few; it's open to all. Jesus said come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden. Is that you this morning? Are you laboring under the bondage and oppression of sin? Like the Egyptians who made the Israelites serve with rigor, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage.

You feel afflicted and burdened down, heavy laden; like a heavy load is weighing down on you that you just can't cast off no matter what you do. and Yet with each every step you find yourself getting weaker and weaker; and the load just gets more and more oppressive.

and You know where you've been, you know what you've done and your conscious is just eating at you "burdening you" down and you've got no peace.

Jesus says, "come to Me" and I will give you rest, rest for your soul. And when Jesus said this He was saying that true rest, true peace can't be found anywhere else but Him. I will give you rest. No one or nothing else will; and no one and nothing else can, you won't find rest in the bottom of a bottle, there's no rest at the end of a joint. There's no rest at the top of the corporate ladder, there's no rest in losing yourself in sexual relationships. with all of those things there's only more pain, more heartache, more emptiness, more questions; it's like a temporary fix to a permanent problem and when you need open heart surgery you can't take Ibuprofen and all your problems go away. Now if you're lucky it might ease the pain for a moment but if the problems not dealt with you're going to die. and Yet how many people try to go around doing different things to ease the pain and yet they never deal with the root of that pain, which is called sin, and as a result, they leave the planet with out hope, with out peace and go on to experience eternal separation from God.

Yet the whole time Jesus is right there with open arms saying come to Me, I bore your burden and your oppression and your pain so that you wouldn't have to. And yet people reject His love and His grace and His willingness to bear their burdens for them, to their own demise. The bible says, cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. He cares for you.

Ps 55:22 *"Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved"*

Vs29

Like a cool drink of water on a hot summer day Jesus will relieve the agony of your soul. And again the invitation is open to who so ever will come. Rev 22:16-17 *"And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."*

It's free, no strings attached and Jesus said that whoever drinks of the water that He gives will never thirst again. But you have to take it for yourself, your friend or your husband or your wife can't take it for you. Your mom or dad can't take it for you, it's a personal choice, it's between you and God.

Here we see the autobiographical statement that Jesus gives concerning Himself, gentle and lowly of heart, an example in humility and servitude. Jesus said if you want to be the greatest in the kingdom of God you have to be the servant of all. and That's exactly the example that Jesus gave; He said He didn't come to be served; but to serve.

Vs30

In other words He's not going to call you to a difficult and burdensome life, but one that's good, one that's pleasant. and I'm not saying that you'll never go through difficult times as a Christian because that's simply not true. But I'm in regards to spiritual peace and being at ease knowing in whom you believe and that God is in control and has a plan for your life. Isa 32:17 *"The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."* If you're struggling this morning under the burden and yoke of sin I urge you; come to Jesus and receive new life, new hope and rest for your soul.