

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 23RD-24TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

DOUBTS (MATTHEW 11:1-6)

FROM TEACHING TO PREACHING

After Jesus gave His disciples a crash course on the cost of ministry in ch. 10, He “moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.” As they to spread the gospel around Israel, some of John the Baptist’s disciples came to verify Jesus’ identity because John was having doubts.

JOHN WAS IN PRISON AWAITING EXECUTION

In Mt. 4:12 we learn that John was imprisoned by Herod, the same man that would inspect Jesus before His crucifixion. John knew he was about to be killed and some doubt over if his endeavors were worth it surfaced.

- John wanted to be reassured that he was about to lose his head for the Messiah.

JESUS ASSURED THEM HE WAS THE SAVIOR

Jesus told John’s followers to go back and assure him that Jesus was fulfilling all the prophecies of the OT: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are healed, deaf hear, dead are raised, and the poor hear the good news. **This was the mission of the Savior: to heal, liberate through salvation, and bring justice to the oppressed.**

BUT, MANY WEREN'T LOOKING FOR A BIBLICAL SAVIOR

Though the Jews had access to the OT, their preconceptions of the coming Savior weren't in alignment with the Bible. And because of this, Jesus became a stumbling block to many.

- **Similar to Matthew's time, we tend to want a Savior suited to our preference. So, we manufacture a God in our image vs. the true God of the Bible.**

A GREAT MAN (MATTHEW 11:7-15)

A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT MAN

After John’s disciples left, Jesus turned to the crowd and told them how important John was.

- John was a contradiction to the religion that had become so tainted over the centuries. He drew crowds because he **was genuine and strong in his faith. He wasn't looking for money or fame, just to educate people about Jesus.**

HE WAS ALSO A PROPHESED PROPHET

Malachi 3 mentions John 400 years before he was born. He was the prophesied final prophet that would pave the way for the Savior. Jesus said, “among those born...no greater than John the Baptist has appeared.” This means John’s role was the greatest in human history besides Jesus.

BUT THE GREATEST HAD DOUBTS?

John was a weird zealot that had doubts once put in prison for his faith. By society’s standards, not the best example of a great person.

- **God's gauge of greatness isn't like ours. God looks past the unrefined edges to see the state of the heart. It's the pursuit of holiness that makes one great in God's eyes.**

“...THE VIOLENT HAVE BEEN SEIZING IT BY FORCE.”

V12 is tough to interpret, but more than likely this means Christ’s advancing kingdom would be met by hostile opposition that would increase as time passes.

- There have always been waves of this, but social and even physical threats continue to escalate against Christianity.

JOHN WAS THE LAST GREAT BIBLICAL PROPHET

In v13-15 Jesus points out that John was the end cap of a long line of prophets. John was the “Elijah who is to come” prophesied centuries earlier, but the question was **if the people had “ears” willing to “listen.” Here we find the key to salvation: being willing to pursue what the Word says about the Savior and eternity.**

UNRESPONSIVE (MATTHEW 11:16-24)

“TO WHAT SHOULD I COMPARE THIS GENERATION?”

Jesus’ frustration starts to show because the path has been clearly laid in front of humanity **by the Word, prophets, and now Jesus Himself**, but many people still selfishly don’t believe. Jesus said people are like children that only want attention and for others to play by their rules.

TOO SERIOUS, NOT SERIOUS ENOUGH

Jesus reminded the people that John came “not eating or drinking,” and people rejected him for not being fun enough. Then Jesus came “eating and drinking” and the people thought He showed grace and was too fun. **The problem wasn't the message or messenger, it was the lack of desire to follow God and His Word.**

PEOPLE HAVE NOT CHANGED MUCH!

Most of us have a tendency to make excuses for the lack of commitment to God in our lives and we often play the blame game.

- **The Holy Spirit empowers us to change!** The bottom line is this, **regardless of environmental factors, at the end of the day we have to give an account for how we have lived.**

“YET, WISDOM IS VINDICATED BY HER DEEDS.”

This means the proof is in the pudding. The ways of the world continually fail while the ways of the Word always work when put into practice.

- Jesus assures us that the fruit of the Christian life will vindicate itself. **We have nothing to prove to people that are unwilling to search for truth.**

JESUS GIVES A STERN WARNING

Jesus said, “Woe to you...” to the towns where miracles were performed but they still refused to believe. Woe can be translated to catastrophe.

- Jesus was telling them that **without repentance they'd face judgment, and no amount of good works can earn heaven. It is only by God's grace.**

A BETTER WAY (MATTHEW 11:25-30)

“...REVEALED THEM TO INFANTS.”

Jesus’ righteous anger toward people that believe they’re “wise and intelligent” and above belief in a Savior shifts to an appreciation for the “infants” who are willing to learn.

- **There is nothing wrong with wisdom and intelligence, but a line crossed when we believe there is no power higher than humanity.**

IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO HUMILITY

A truly intelligent and wise person pursues truth regardless of what they may find. To seek the truth takes humility and the willingness to learn.

- This is why Jesus tells us to have “ears to hear” and that all who “seek the truth will find it.”

“ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED TO ME.”

Jesus makes another reference to His divinity and that He is the pathway to a relationship with our Creator.

- This is Jesus saying in another manner that He is the way and the truth. That the only truly productive life is one dedicated to Him.

YOUR WAYS AREN'T WORKING, TRY ME.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” is a shot at the burden of religion and the ways of the world. **The pursuit of religion or self will always leave us disappointed and tired.**

- Notice Jesus didn't say come to my teachings or miracles, but “come to Me.”

EASY AND LIGHT?

We will all carry a burden in this life, but the question is if we will carry one that is within our capacity or heavier than what we are designed for.

- The “easy” yoke of Jesus doesn't mean not challenging, but that we have help living in a way we are created to live, close to our Creator.

VINDICATED FRUIT?

We all gravitate towards selfishness and wanting to do things our way. The question is, has that given us the contentment and fulfillment we've desired? Have the ways of the world made us better people? Have we gained more clarity and substance?

OBJECTIVELY SEEKING THE TRUTH

Are we searching for the answers to this life? Do we want to be deeper people? When we search, are we looking objectively or subjectively? Will we pursue the truth even if it says uncomfortable things?

Are we trying to fashion a God in our image?

RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE

When we discover truth, do we faithfully respond to it? In other words, do we live out the gospel we hear? Do we understand that ultimately our choices and actions belong to us? Regardless of environment, we will be held responsible for what we do.

TAKING ON A LIGHTER YOKE

It is impossible to keep up with the constant changing of values in society. It is also impossible to meet man-made religious standards. Are we tired of this burden yet? Jesus offers another way. It is challenging, but it is also fulfilling, joyful, and it brings us a true sense of value.