

Lesson 16: Review of Matthew 11:20-30: "The Pleasure of God"

Imagine watching Jesus as He performed miraculous signs and wonders and preached like no one else regarding the Kingdom of God. Imagine the mood of the crowd swaying toward amazement in one moment and then toward hostility to the message in the next. Jesus' message was never intended to flatter His audience, and He never coddled his listeners. His message was straight forward as He spoke of condemnation for all who reject Him, and salvation for all who receive Him. He put Himself forward as both the Judge of the rebellious and the Revelation of God for the salvation of all who believe in Him.

Therefore, in Matthew 11:20-30 Jesus addresses two groups of people. To the first group, He preaches a message of lament and "woe" upon all who reject Him as Messiah (11:20-24). He is preaching to Israelis who have been taught to expect Messiah. But these are the same people who rejected Him and whose hearts were hardened and their eyes are blinded. They had no room for the message of Moses or of the Prophets or of the Writings. These are they who had heard and rejected the preaching of John the Baptist as he called them to repent. The people here in our Matthew passage are not unlike people in our own time who have heard the message in many different ways and through many different people. They have rejected the testimony of God in the Scriptures. They have rejected the testimony of godly parents, of godly grandparents and friends and Sunday School teachers and preachers. They count themselves worthy of heaven based on their own merits and yet have missed the grace of God completely to their own destruction. Woe to those who hear the message today and yet refuse to repent and believe in Jesus!

To the second group He addresses all who see, hear, and receive Him as Messiah. They hear His voice and His voice awakens them to Him as God's good Shepherd and Savior King of all who believe (11:25-30). In the same way as Christ is portrayed before people today some will hear the Lord Jesus beckoning them to come! So it happens that when the message is preached, to be sure, their ears hear the voice of a man, but their hearts hear the voice of the Living Christ calling to them to come, and they come! Rather than retreating in to the darkness they spring forth like a calf out of the stall leaping for joy! This happens to all who receive Christ by faith! How blessed are they who have heard His voice and believed!

Matthew 11:20-24 Jesus Condemns Unbelief. Imagine if you were listening to Jesus that day. You would wonder if Jesus was really inferring that judgment for the sin of rejection of Him as the Savior King would really be more severe than the judgment that came on the cities of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom. How could that be? Did He really mean to say that those cities, known for their gross immorality, their godlessness, and their hatred of Israel and Israel's God would have repented if they would have seen the very same things that you were seeing Jesus do and hearing what He was saying (see 11:21,23)? But indeed that is what Jesus meant! By juxtaposing these infamous Old Testament cities with cities in which Jesus ministered, Jesus clearly distinguished the sin of rejecting Him as the uttermost act of depravity known to mankind! Therefore, this sin of unbelief and of rejection of Him would be judged most severely.

We can learn at least two things from this passage. One, that Jesus possessed perfect knowledge of what would have happened "if"... . We learn this by His statements, "If the miracles performed in you had been performed in...they would have repented/remained (11:21,23)." For reasons known only unto God the miracles were not performed in the OT cities but were performed in these NT cities. That should give us courage as well as comfort because Jesus allows or disallows all events for His glory. And, as Christians we have the added confidence in knowing that He allows or disallows all things for our good (Romans 8:28). Two, it is the most serious of transgressions against God to refuse to believe in and receive Jesus Christ as God's Savior King. In our country there is an abundance of the light of God's testimony in Christ available to our families, friends, and fellow citizens to either bring them to salvation or to condemn them. Pray for your loved ones and keep on pointing them to Jesus.

Matthew 11:25-30, Jesus Rewards Faith. This passage of Scripture reveals the pleasure of God and the harmony between the Father and the Son in that pleasure. In 11:25-26 Jesus praises His Father for manifesting His pleasure through the revelation of Christ to the "little children". In 11:27 Jesus explains that the "little children" are those to whom Jesus has been delighted to reveal the Father! This means that if you have believed in God through faith in Jesus Christ, it is because God the Father and God the Son was acting upon you according to their good will and pleasure (Eph. 1:5-9)! Rejoice in the Lord!

Finally, this passage demonstrates the pleasure of God in providing perfect rest and peace to those who, by faith, have received Jesus as their Savior King! This salvation we have been given in Christ reveals an all-sufficient Savior who brings us into His Kingdom in which He sovereignly assigns His "little children" rest from their striving against God through unbelief (11:28b). He instructs His "little children" in the knowledge of God (11:29a). He makes relationship with Him pleasant and satisfying (11:29b). This is the pleasure of God: To bring His "little children" into Himself forever and forever! Amen!

Questions for Matthew 12:1-21: "When Truth Interrupts Tradition"

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** Explain "A".

Introduction to Matthew 12:1-21: In these verses two portraits emerge. The first portrait is of the seriously religious (Pharisees) whose souls seemed to ever be contracting and shrinking. The second portrait is of the Lord Jesus Christ whose wisdom and power and grace and beauty shines despite the hardness and unbelief of the religiously serious. What made the religiously serious shrink? What makes people shrink spiritually today? Contrariwise, what makes those who follow after Jesus expand in their souls? Is it not Jesus Himself living in each one of those who trust and follow Him? How about you? Are you expanding or contracting?

2. Read Matthew 12:1-14. "Men With Contracting and Shrinking Souls". **A)** Was Jesus' actions really unlawful? See Dt. 23:25 **B)** Do you think that the Pharisees based their regulation on Scripture? Why or why not? **C)** Read John 12:3-8. What two things did Jesus say He was greater than (vv6 & 8)? **D)** Jesus cites an event in David's life. Presumably it occurred on the Sabbath. Read I Sam. 21:1-6. Was David guilty of sinning? Why or why not? What do you learn about doing or not doing *good* on the Sabbath? (See also 12:12) **E)** Read 12:7-14. What is wrong with the position taken by the Pharisees in view of Jesus' words? Explain using His words! **F)** What do you think the disciples learned from Jesus through His words to the Pharisees and through His actions? (Think: "expanding souls" and greater love for Him.)

3. Read Matthew 12:15-16. "Men with Contracting and Shrinking Souls, pt. 2". **A)** In 12:1-14 Jesus released people from a rigid obedience to the law and demonstrated the spirit of the law. How would you describe the "spirit of the law" based on 12:1-14? **B)** Looking at 12:14, then, why would the religious people want to kill Him? **C)** Read 12:15-16 along with 11:25-26 Why didn't the seriously religious not see Him for who He is? And why did Jesus warn people not to tell who He was? **D)** Think of the seriously religious as men with contracting or shrinking souls. How does John 3:19 help you to understand their thinking and actions? **E)** Read Romans 8:6-8. How do these verses help you understand the sinful mind of people?

4. Read Matthew 12:15-21. "The Beauty and Glory of Christ the Servant King". **A)** What does verse 15 say Jesus did? **B)** Look up Ezekiel 10. What happened to the Temple? How could you connect the event in Ezekiel 10 with what happened in Matthew 12:15? What is your reaction as you think of this? **C)** What reasons can you give for Jesus' words in 12:16? **D)** Read carefully 12:18-21. Which two verses describe His greatness and majesty? Which two verses describe His humility and gentleness? **E)** Before Jesus could be exalted as king what did He have to do first? (**Hint:** Compare the word "servant" in v.18 with the suffering servant of Isaiah 53:4-6). **F)** List all the "unique" qualities about Jesus described in vv.15-21. For example: Servant chosen by God (v18a), etc.

