

Jesus the Messiah

Matthew 11:7-19

Re-cap of Last week:

- We pick up our text this morning at the end of an Interaction between John the Baptist Disciples and Jesus
 - Last week we studied the previous 6 verses (*Matthew 11:1-6*)
 - In a nutshell here's what happened...

John the Baptist was in Prison

- He had heard of the countless miracles, teachings, etc. that were happening by Jesus
- John was questioning the manner in which Jesus was doing things...
 - See John (Israel) had an idea and had expectations of how Jesus (the promised Messiah) would usher in the Kingdom of God

Their expectations were;

- That the messiah would come to judge & to free Israel from Roman rule & from political & religious oppression of that time
- Instead, we see that Jesus came in a very different way
 - Instead of bring judgment and fixing everything that was wrong...
 - Jesus was meeting with & ministering to the lowly, the outcasts & was meeting individual needs rather than meeting the larger climate of the time...

John was confused, discouraged and sent his disciples for answers

- Jesus responded to his question with a list of messianic miracles
- Proving that even though it looked different than John had thought...
 - that Jesus was truly the Messiah and He was fulfilling OT prophecy of His coming.

We pick up our text this morning right after this Interaction:

Verse 7

- *As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John,*

Jesus opens up a conversation to calm the crowd's concerns

- The crowd hearing the questions brought up by John & his disciples would have most likely stirred up doubt or questions themselves
- Largely, If JTB is doubting anything about the Messiah, then it really would have shaken everyone

- Jesus address' them

The first section of his address is:

Verses 7b-10

- “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?^{8 [a]} But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings’^[b] palaces! ^{9 [c]} But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it ^[d] is written, ‘BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER ^[e] AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.’

The Purpose of these verses are to show/remind and ground them that John is:

1. Not alone a prophet, but the greatest of all prophets
2. He truly is the forerunner of Christ

The Rhetorical Questions Jesus asks them...

- **(1)** If you expected to see a reed that was blowing in the wind
 - The illustration here is one of weakness
 - In ancient times, river reeds were remarkably strong and used as building materials for all kinds of different things.
 - In this Question, Jesus said you make think by these questions you heard that John is untrustworthy, frail, weak and blows here and there in the wind (*A reed shaken*)
 - But that is not what he is...
 - John is steadfast in his message of “repentance due to the Kingdom of God being at hand”
 - He had strong convictions and his life backed up his words
- **(2)** Are you thrown off because when you saw John he wasn’t like other religious, powerful leaders that are held up in fine palaces.

The Point Jesus is making is; The reason you traveled into the wilderness was to see a Prophet!

- IMP note, there had not been a prophet for hundreds of years previously
- No one living, no parent or grandparent had ever first hand experienced a prophet
 - A prophet had not been seen in many, many generations

And if you notice in *Verse 9*, Jesus answers YES to this question

- Proving John to be a prophet (One who proclaimed and told of the Messiahs coming)
 - More than a prophet...
 - John was not just a mere prophet, he was the greatest of all prophets.
 - This is because previously, prophets were those that would warn or tell people of an act, attribute or a future move of God.

- But these prophets had never seen God in the flesh...
- You see John wasn't merely warning or prophesying about a certain act or judgement of God
 - John was prophesying about actually God coming!
 - John was the only prophet to see God in the flesh!!

If they still had any doubt of what John's prophetic purpose was; Jesus quotes a prophecy about John from *Malachi 3:1*

• **Verse 10**

- 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER ^[e]AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'

Without saying it directly, Jesus was once again presenting to the crowds that He Himself was the Messiah.

- He's affirming who John is to everyone around him, and in doing so is affirming to them that He (Jesus) is the Messiah.

The Second section of our text this morning is

11-15

- *¹¹ Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. ¹³ For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴ And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who ^[w]was to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, ^[l]let him hear.*

John is used to explain how the Kingdom of God has come.

- The first way in which He does so, is that he sets the record straight...
 - That despite how John looks, despite that he is in prison, despite John had some doubting & discouraging questions
 - That even with those things, John the Baptist is the greatest among all of humanity
 - Greatest born among women is exactly what it means
 - The Greatest human that has ever lived is JTB.
- And think about who is saying this! Jesus!!
 - God is giving John the greatest of honors.

But then Jesus makes an interesting statement (*11b*)

- He's then describes how position & status in the Kingdom of God works.
 - Now that the Kingdom of God is here, those that believe & trust in it and become a part of it...
 - Even the least of those in the Kingdom of God is greater than he (JTB)
- What does this mean?
 - He wasn't tearing down John or what He just said...

- God's Kingdom is very different than the worlds
 - The least is the greatest, the first will be last, the last will be first
 - In a nutshell, in this new Kingdom (Gods Kingdom) He sees even the lowliest, broken, hurting person that believes, of greater importance than even the greatest person that is in this broken fallen world.

Verse 12

¹² *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.*

- All that this means, is that the Kingdom of God, Gods rule, Gods reign and Gods truths have in general NOT been received well
 - They have been met with opposition & violence.
 - They have not been openly received or been welcomed
 - Example: John being in person for being a herald of this gospel (good news of Jesus Christ)

Verse 13

¹³ *For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John.*

- Every prophet had led up to this point
- Every prophet has been pointing Israel (Greater humanity) to God
 - That God would come, that he would come to save
 - **Illustration:**
 - Previously the prophets of the OT were like road signs telling which way that humanity should go or not go, do or not do...
 - They were telling Israel that Jesus was this way.
 - John is the one who gets to open the door for Jesus.
 - He's the one who like medieval ball, announces the guest that the entire party has been waiting for.
 - Pretty incredible!!

Verse 14

- This is very significant
 - This statement would have blown Jews away.
 - JTB is in this sense Elijah when its coming to the prophecy of *Malachi 4:5*
 - See Jews expected that Elijah would need to come first before the Messiah did
 - And so because Elijah hadn't come, people didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah even though all these things were sad and miracles had been performed.

*Jesus is saying that John is a form of Elijah when it comes to that prophecy,,,
Proving that HE is this Messiah!*

Verse 15

- If I lost you, if your questioning, if for whatever reason you're not getting it...

- LISTEN UP!

The Final section of our text this morning is:

16-19

“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other *children*, ¹⁷and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

Jesus addresses specifically the crowds (humanity’s) response to Himself & John.

(Verse 16-17)

- But what shall I compare this Generation?
 - He uses an illustration of children playing in the marketplace singing songs/playing games to prove his point
 - At different joyful events (weddings) or sorrowful events (funerals), children would play music/sing accordingly
 - At a funeral, a dirge would be sung to properly mourn
 - At a wedding it would have been a flute that would promote dancing & celebration
 - The Meanings of these illustrations were...
 - John came with the dirge
 - He came preaching repentance, He came acknowledging your depravity, your sinfulness and your need to repent and turn from wickedness & evil deeds
 - Jesus came with the flute
 - With hope, salvation, to heal, redeem & save

Despite John coming declaring repentance, and Jesus bringing hope. This wicked & perverse generation didn’t not respond or receive the gospel thru either of them.

Verse 18-19

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

We see again that when that current culture encountered John

- Living in the wilderness, fasting, not eating much (locusts & honey) they thought he was crazy & demon possessed

And when Jesus came and dined with Tax collectors & prostitutes

- When he shared a meal and drank wine with the social outcasts of society
- They labeled him a glutton & a drunkard

- Certainly NOT God

To sum this text up, to bring it home...Jesus explains & proves John is the forerunner of Christ

- In doing that, Jesus affirms that He is who John said HE was (The Messiah)
- Exposes and address humanity's response to Jesus
 - Calls out and speaks to unbelief

For us: We are in the crowd this morning....

We have heard the words of Jesus and hopefully understand the significance of His claims...

The obvious question is how have we received Jesus?

What is our opinion of him?

Do we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the savior of the World?

Or do we not see him in that way?

I'm thinking there's 3 groups in this room or in the crowd this morning

- 1. You believe Jesus is who he said He was*
 - Church goers, Christians, Followers of Jesus
 - You would not be who Jesus was addressing our text
- 2. You are unsure, undecided of what you really think*
 - Haven't made a decision, your curious & you're interested
- 3. You don't believe that Jesus is God, the messiah, Lord & Savior*
 - Don't care, too many questions, jaded, etc.
 - Much like the generation or crowd Jesus was speaking too in our text this am.

Whatever category you fall into. I believe that you have to for yourself really examine the life & claims of Jesus in His word. And have to deal with who you think Jesus is.

I have to confess, I trapped all of us this morning. But it's for your own good.

- You have now been told that Jesus's claimed to be God
- In addition...I'll tell you..
 - That he died and rose again to save you
 - That were sinners in need of a savior
 - Jesus is that only way to God

You have heard the gospel (good news of Jesus Christ)

With this information. You cannot say you haven't heard it or brush it to the side.

The stakes that Jesus spoke of, was the fate of Eternity. Much more than life & death.

- What Jesus said & did, is just TOO important to not deal with!
 - It's on all of us to determine what we truly believe Jesus to be.
 - We can't just say oh that doesn't matter
 - He's just a good guy
 - Or that's just a Christian thing

All of us are making a decision whether we think we are or not

- You either believe in Jesus is God or you don't
- For me or against me
 - I'm sorry there's no maybe, middle, or option C.

For those of you that are unsure or don't believe.

- It's ok to have questions
- The Bible, Christianity and this whole Jesus thing can be confusing
 - Not weird, abnormal or question that things don't line up...
 - There's a lot in here, a lot going on...

And please let me get this out of the way...(Needs to be said)

- But I'm genuinely so sorry how we (Christians) have portrayed Jesus
- I'm so sorry for being a hypocrite, and being a bible basher, and having a holier than thou mentality
 - I'm sorry that the way in which we've lived have actually turned you away from Jesus
 - If all of us Christians were humble & honest, we would admit that we too are works in progress, make a bunch of mistakes and we've screwed up in our witness to you about Jesus
 - Please don't let us have gotten in the way of you and Jesus

For those that fall into the skeptical or the disbelieving crowd...

- I'm begging with you to dig deep for yourself and really wrestle with the truths that have been presented here.
- I'm begging you to read the words that are in this book (Bible – Book of John) and listen to the claims of Jesus alongside the historical accounts of what He did
 - Miracles; The blind regained sight, the deaf could hear, sickness' & disease were healed
 - Jesus died but then rose again, there 500 eyewitness accounts of this....

Everyone that is a Christian in this room had to do this same thing...(Wrestle with these things)

- For many of us it took a long time to believe
- For myself, When I finally came to believe

- Even after believing, the very first question, was “Does this mean that I need to go to church, because I don’t want too.”
- How ironic is that now I’m starting a church, ha!

We want to talk more, give you a bible, ask questions, give you an opportunity to receive Jesus as the Son of God (Messiah) savior of the World & Lord of our lives.

For the Christians (followers of Christ) in this room.

- You’re not off the hook
 - You all have stories or testimonies of you doing this. (Believing that Jesus is who he said he was)

My question is:

- Would others know that about you?
- Does your life speak to that truth if you never tell me with words?

If Jesus truly is your God, savior & Lord...

Then our life should be in subjection to his rule & reign

- Our life no longer own...
- We’ve been crucified with Christ...