

Matthew 11:1-24 What do we really want from Jesus?

I have titled this message, What do we really want from Jesus?

- ‡ Because we are going to see in this chapter that no matter what Jesus did it simply wasn't good enough for the Jews of His day.
- ‡ Unfortunately people want it their way instead of God's way.
- ‡ And that will always result in not living the correct and fruitful life!

In Matthew 10 Jesus spoke about all that would come against us in laboring for the Kingdom.

- And now in chapters 11 and 12 Matthew is going to focus on some of the opposition that is coming against Jesus and the Kingdom.
- Jesus told us in chapter 10 all that we would experience in laboring for Him and we are going to see that He experienced some of the very same things.

As I have been reading through the OT this year I have seen that there is a constant pattern. And that is no matter what God does for His people it just never seems to be enough for them.

We see in the book of Exodus that God delivers the people out of bondage and all the people continue to do is complain about how it was better for them in Egypt.

- As you read about the Children of Israel reminiscing about the onions and leeks in Egypt, yet they somehow seem to forget about their slavery.

Also after God brought the children of Israel back from Babylon we see they never really fall into line with what God wants to do with them.

- After God speaks through the Prophet Malachi we have four hundred years of silence.
- Someone said that God was so mad He did not speak to anyone for those four hundred years.

Myself: What's even more unfortunate is that I find myself to often right in the same place as the children of Israel. It's like God what have You done for Me lately?

But I so don't want to be that way!

- And the only way for me to be faithful to God is to desire and accept His will for my life!

Jesus does desire to give us things, but He wants us to be obedient and to know there is an ultimate goal in mind!

✠ God's ultimate goal for us is to be conformed to the image of His Son!

Conversation; in preparation for this message I was talking to someone about their view of God. And they said they had a good view of God. And during our conversation he received some news that was not very good, so I again pursued the issue of God and he ended up saying something like well what is God going to do for me?

So this morning I ask what do we really want from Jesus? Is it who He truly is and His will and goal for our lives? Or is it our will for our life?

Key: There is a key for us in this section and it is the same key Jesus gives to the seven churches in the book of revelation.

- The key is found right in the middle of the chapter and its verse 15. **Read!**
- In other words, lets all have the desire to hear what God has for us. Amen!

V1-3 read-slow;

Jesus has finished teaching the twelve Apostles and now He sends them out and He goes out and continues to teach and preach as well.

- I know I have pointed this out before but please take note that Jesus was a preacher and a teacher.

Go Therefore: sometimes when we think about the great commission we focus so much on the fact that Jesus said, Go therefore!

- But He also told us to be teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

John: Matthew tells us that while John the Baptist is in prison he hears about some of the things that Jesus is doing so he send two of his disciples to Jesus with some specific questions.

We are going to hear more about John the Baptist later but we are simply told here that John is in prison. And the reason he is in prison is because he called Herod Antipas on the carpet for taking his brothers wife.

It is believed that John has been in prison for about a year now.

- And as John sits in prison some questions start to come into his mind.

As we look at this we think that John is having doubts now, but that's not fully what is John is addressing.

- Did John have doubt? Most likely, yes. He was still human and he was in prison for a year now because he stood up for righteousness sake.
 - ✠ Even Elijah the person John came in the spirit of had some issues of doubt when he found out Jezebel was coming to get him.

But what John is really struggling with is confusion.

- He thought that Jesus would be doing something other than what He was doing!

John is in prison and his disciples are bringing back reports about peace, love, forgiveness, and healings.

But if we remember John's ministry had a lot to do with judgment.

- In Matthew 3 we get John's first description of Jesus and he said.
- He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

So here is John in prison and he is probably wondering about what happened to that winnowing fan that was in His hand that is ready to strike.

- John might have thought that Jesus was going to judge the people especially Herod and set him free.
- In other words Jesus did not seem to meet his expectation.

Us; the same thing that happened to John often happens to us. We have received Jesus as our Savior because we believe He did on the cross for our sins. And we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are different inside because of the Holy Spirit.

- Yet when trouble comes we start to get confused and wonder what is happening!

I cannot even count how many times I have said to God, I just don't understand!

- And that question is even harder to ask when we are really trying to do everything right!

Saint from the past: a saint from the past said, God no wonder you have so few friends, look at how you treat them!

The reason we and John get confused is because we confuse our agenda with God's agenda!

The Jews struggled with Jesus as the Messiah because they wanted Him to come and set up the Kingdom of David and sit on the throne of David, but they did not realize they had a sin problem that must be dealt with first.

- The same thing is true for us. We want all the benefits and blessings of God but we seem to forget that we have many heart issues that must be dealt with first.

Maybe read knowing God quote:

V4-6 read-slow;

Jesus now describes all the things He is doing in fulfillment of prophecy. And these are all prophecies that John would have been well aware of!

- Isaiah 35, 61 and other passages.

It is such an encouraging for us to see that Jesus is always pointing back to the scripture in order to support His ministry!

What's interesting to see is that Jesus doesn't really answer the question. He just tells them to tell John what is taking place. And He is basically saying trust Me!

Beatitude: Jesus also gives this beatitude to John and his disciples in order to help them not get discouraged in the way that Jesus is doing things.

There is no doubt that John wanted to see the Messianic kingdom established in righteousness. And that is a good desire to have.

- Jesus told us to pray Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.

But Jesus does not want us to be offended or stumbled in our faith if He does not seem to be doing things the way we think He should be doing them. Amen!

- So many people have stumbled in their faith because they could not come to grips with what God was doing.
- I would be lying if I said I haven't at times stumbled with what Jesus was doing in my life.
- But I always come back to what Peter said; Lord where else can we go? You have the words of eternal life!

God is in control of what is going in our lives and we need to trust what He is doing.

- We think we know what is best for us but in reality we do not.
- Only God knows what is best for us and what is taking place in our lives is Him working out what is best for us.

Morgan: listen to what G. Campbell Morgan said concerning this: “To all such restless impatience, He utters the same warning. . . . For the most part, the way of the Lord’s service is the way of plodding perseverance in the doing of apparently small things.

- **The history of the Church shows that this is one of the lessons most difficult to learn.”**

V7-8 read-slow;

Jesus is now using this opportunity to teach some vital truths. And He is using John as a contrast to those that will not believe!

There are very few people that Jesus speaks about in such an awesome way as He does here of John.

- Jesus is going to tell us about how faithful and unwavering John was concerning the kingdom of God.
- John may not have known everything but what he did know he obeyed to the T!

Eulogy: John is going to be put to death soon, so as one commentator has said, Jesus could be giving us John’s eulogy.

If anyone wondered what kind of man John was, Jesus is going to set the record straight here.

The best thing any of us can do is to let God speak for us and defend us!

- **Moses:** one of my favorite stories in the bible is when Aaron and Miriam come against Moses.
- And the bible says in **Numbers 12:3** and the Lord heard it. And then we are told that the Lord came down and stood in the door of the Tabernacle and defended Moses. Amen!
- It would absolute bless my heart to have Jesus stick up for Me and defend me.

3times: I love the fact that Jesus asks the people 3times about what they thought when they went to see John.

- And Jesus uses these three questions to demonstrate what type of a man John was.

Reed shaken by the wind: a reed would basically go in any direction that the wind was blowing.

- John stood firm and was a fearless preacher that did not sway to the right or the left.

- **MacDonald** said. John would rather suffer than be silent; he would rather die than lie.
- The thing that got John in trouble was that he stood firm for righteousness.

Are we going to oppose the unrighteousness of our day? Or are we going to be a reed shaken by the wind?

- As Christians we really need to stand firm on what the bible says.

John Chrysostom: listen to the report of the famous 4th Century Christian leader John Chrysostom:

- When the great leader was arrested by the Roman Emperor, the latter sought to make the Greek Christian recant, but without success. So the Emperor discussed with his advisors what could be done to the prisoner. Shall I put him in a dungeon? The Emperor asked. No, one of his counselors replied, for he will be glad to go. He longs for the quietness wherein he can delight in the mercies of his God.
- Then he shall be executed! said, the Emperor. No, was the answer, for he will also be glad to die. He declares that in the event of death he will be in the presence of his God. What shall we do then? The ruler asked.
- There is only one thing that will cause Chrysostom pain, the counselor said.
- To cause him to suffer, make him sin. He is afraid of nothing except sin. Amen!

Soft garments: this truth falls in line with the first one. If John were preaching to please men he would have been rewarded by them and dressed in fine cloths.

- But instead John rebuked the King and his clothing demonstrated he was set apart to God.

V9-11 read-slow;

The last thing Jesus points out about John is that he was a prophet. But not only was John a prophet but he was the last OT prophet and the greatest prophet.

God did not speak to His people for about four hundred years, then John the Baptist came on the scene. And the people knew that he was a prophet of God that is why every one went out to see him.

Jesus quotes the OT book of Malachi here that announces the messenger that would come and prepare the way for the Lord.

John was not the greatest prophet in the sense of his character though as Jesus has just told us he had great character.

- But John was the greatest because he was not only given the privilege of announcing the Messiah who would come, but he also announced that He had arrived!
- Many other prophets spoke about the coming Messiah but he was the one that announced and prepared the way of the Messiah.
- So his greatness was due to his privilege given to him by the grace of God!

Difficult sayings: we now have two very difficult saying back to back here in v11&12.

As great as John is, Jesus tells us that he who is least in the kingdom is greater than he.

John was the greatest in the sense that he was given the privilege of announcing the Messiah.

- Yet everyone in the kingdom knows more than John did at that time. Every believer knows about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. And all of the riches and blessings associated with being a child of God!
- Every believer is greater in the sense that we know and understand more than John did at that time.

V12 read-slow;

Now this verse has two possible interpretations and both can be right and part of both can be right.

Guzick: Jesus' reference to **violence** refers to both the intensity of spiritual warfare surrounding the ministry of Jesus and His herald, and also to the intensity required to persevere in following God and His kingdom

In other words there is going to violence surrounding the kingdom in every way shape and form.

- There is going to violence from those on the outside who want to stop it, there is going to be violence against those on trying to enter it, there is going to violence in trying to further the kingdom in our life and we are going to have to be violent in trying to advance it in the world.

Barclay: it may well be that this saying of Jesus was originally at one and the same time a warning of violence to come and a challenge to produce a devotion **which would be even stronger than the violence. Amen! Repeat!**

Jesus wants us to have a stronger devotion to further then kingdom than the devotion of those who are trying to destroy it.

Spurgeon: Frequently complaints are made and surprise expressed by individuals who have never found a blessing rest upon anything they have attempted to do in the service of God. 'I have been a Sunday-school teacher for years,' says one, 'and I have never seen any of my girls or boys converted.' No, and the reason most likely is you have never been violent about it; you have never been compelled by the Divine Spirit to make up your mind that converted they should be, and no stone should be left unturned until they were. You have never been brought by the Spirit to such a passion, that you have said, 'I cannot live unless God bless me. I cannot exist unless I see some of these children saved.' Then, falling on your knees in agony of prayer, and putting forth afterwards your trust with the same intensity towards heaven, you would never have been disappointed, 'for the violent take it by force.'"

George Washington: there is a story about George Washington and his prayer that captures what Jesus is speaking about here!

"I was riding with (Mr. Potts) in Montgomery County, Penn'a near to the Valley Forge, where the army lay during the war of the Revolution. Mr. Potts was a Senator in our State & a Whig. I told him I was agreeably surprised to find him a friend to his country as the Quakers were mostly Tories. He said, 'It was so and I was a rank Tory once, for I never believed that America c'd proceed against Great Britain whose fleets and armies covered the land and ocean, but something very extraordinary converted me to the Good Faith!'" "What was that," I inquired? 'Do you see that woods, & that plain. It was about a quarter of a mile off from the place we were riding, as it happened.' 'There,' said he, 'laid the army of Washington. It was a most distressing time of the war, and all were for giving up the Ship but that great and good man. In that woods pointing to a close in view, I heard a plaintive sound as, of a man at prayer. I tied my horse to a sapling & went quietly into the woods & to my astonishment I saw the great George Washington on his knees alone, with his sword on one side and his cocked hat on the other. He was at Prayer to the God of the Armies, beseeching to interpose with his Divine aid, as it was the Crisis, & the cause of the country, of humanity & of the world.

'Such a prayer I never heard from the lips of man. I left him alone praying.

'I went home & told my wife. I saw a sight and heard today what I never saw or heard before, and just related to her what I had seen & heard & observed. We never thought a man c'd be a soldier & a Christian, but if there is one in the world, it is Washington. She also was astonished. We thought it was the cause of God, & America could prevail.' "He then to me put out his right hand & said 'I turned right about and became a Whig.'

Interpretation: What this man is saying is that George Washington's prayer was so powerful, that they went from believing England would win the war to now believing America would win the war. **The violent take it by force!**

Church plant: I can say that in doing this church plant this verse is literally true. The battles I have faced in trying to get this church established are unbelievable. I have felt at times like my soul and my very being were being torn in two.

- Research has shown that some men that have attempted church plants suffer from Post traumatic stress disorder.

It has very little to do with me, but the last thing the devil wants is a church established that is teaching the word of God and looking to bring glory to Jesus!

The whole language of the NT is fight, wrestle, warfare, strive, endure, battle, put on the whole armor of God!

Warriors: Islam is producing warriors. All of the children see their fathers as warriors and they in-turn want to be warriors.

I want my son to know that I am fighting for his salvation and his life with the Lord. And I want him to know that I will fight for the gospel of Jesus Christ and for those that do not know Him.

Just this week I was thinking about a person I had not seen in a while and I felt like God impressed upon my heart that I need to fight for that person. Not merely say I care but for them but fight for them.

Us: this call now goes out to us! What are we going to do with what we are facing in our day?

- Are we going to sit by and watch the enemy run rough shot over our nation, the church, and our neighborhoods and families or are we going to take them back by force!

V13-14 read-slow;

We are told in **Malachi 4:5** that Elijah would come back and precede the coming of the Messiah. When the Jews celebrate Passover they leave a chair available for Elijah and they open the door looking for him.

Jesus is now telling the people that John the Baptist is the Elijah who is to come.

- Which; also makes Jesus the Messiah!

V15 read-slow: This verse is the key.

Jesus is asking the people if they have ears to hear who He and John truly are.

- Jesus also says in v14, if you are willing to receive it!
- The word willing is so important! Because our will is involved!

The Jews have the scriptures and they have the signs showing the validity of the scriptures, yet they were unwilling to receive Jesus and John because they did not match up with what they thought they should be.

I go back to my original question; what do we really want from Jesus?

- ✠ Do we desire His will for our lives or our own?
- ✠ One person said to me just recently who is really growing in the Lord, I realized God is speaking all the time, but I just wasn't listening.

For one thing its hard to hear if we are always talking. And its hard to hear if we have our own agenda!

- ✠ One of the hardest things to get Christians to understand is that they are listening to God but with their own agenda, instead of listening to hear the Spirits voice!

Jesus is trying to tell these people that the very thing they were intended to receive is available to them, in fact its standing right in front of their very own eyes, but they need to have ears to hear!

Do we see what is taking place hear? Jesus their Messiah and John His forerunner are standing right in front of them and they are going to miss it, simply because they don't have ears to hear.

The same is true for us: Jesus has so much for us, but it may not be the path we want to go down to get it but it is the right path!

V16-19 read-slow:

Jesus is now telling us what these people are like. And what He is basically saying is that no matter what God has done for you, it just wasn't good enough!

In v18 Jesus says John didn't come eating and drinking wouldn't that make you believe?

- But they said no.

In order to solve that problem Jesus says wait a minute, see I came eating and drinking, wouldn't that make you believe? And again they said no.

- Whether we eat or don't eat we still can't make you believe.

We see here that the Jews were not satisfied with what Jesus is doing now and they won't be satisfied when He is on the cross.

✠ Because even when Jesus on the cross they will say come down and now we will believe in You!

No matter what God did or did not do, they simply wouldn't believe!

- It is so tragic to see that these people did not have ears to hear!

The only way these Jews would be satisfied is if Jesus and John did things their way!

As I was praying over this it seems it has been this way since the beginning.

- When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt they wanted to go back.
- He told them to go in and possess the land they said there are giants in there..
- They wanted bread He gave them manna, they got tired of manna and they wanted meat so He gave them quail.
- He gave them Judges and Prophets and they wanted a king!

Our marriage: when Jenn and I got married we had no alcohol at our reception.

- Yet we got complaints from people that did not even drink.

L.A. Guns: there is a song by the band L.A. Guns titled its never enough just to hold you!

Wisdom is justified by her children: the way we know John and Jesus were true was that their lifestyle showed they were. Wisdom was justified by their actions.

- People know we are true Christians not only by what we say but by what we do.
- If we want to demonstrate to the world that our belief system is true then our lives must match what we say.

V21-24 read-slow;

Jesus is now telling these cities that they are responsible for what they have seen and heard.

- **Just this week** I told someone that I have witnessed to often that they are responsible for what they have heard from me.
- As I was sharing this with them I could see conviction was going on in their heart and it should be.

- Another person asked me if a singer on the radio would answer for some of the words he sang.
- And I said people will answer for every idol word they utter.

What is very interesting is that Jesus rebukes Chorazin and Bethsaida when we have no written report of any works being done there.

John's gospel: The only reference we have is at the end of the gospel of John where he said that if I wrote all of the things that Jesus did that I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that could be written.

- The works Jesus did in these cities must be some of the unwritten works of Jesus.

3 out of 4: What is also an interesting fact is that Jesus only mentions three of the four major cities from this area. The Sea of Galilee is also called the sea of Tiberias.

- Jesus does not say anything about the city of Tiberias and yet it was a very important city of that time.
- Jesus pronounces curses on these three cities and they all have been essentially whipped of the map.
- Yet He says nothing about Tiberias and it is still in existence today.

Capernaum was the hometown of Jesus in the Galilee area but it did not repent.

- ✠ Most of the miracles that were done in ch 8-9 were done in Capernaum yet it did not repent.

All of these cities are going to receive stricter judgment because of all the works that Jesus did in them.

Just think of all these people who are going to appear before Jesus at the judgment and say I recognize You, You did all those miracles and healings in our town.

- ✠ And He is going to do one more thing for them and that is judgment!

This is a sting to the Jewish leaders because Jesus is telling them that these perverted, pagan gentile nations that God had to judge, because they were so bad, are actually going to do better in the day of judgment than they.

Imagine: some of these Pharisees appearing before Jesus waiting to be judged and all of a sudden some other men come in and these are the men that tried to beat down the door to have their way with the men that came to the house of Lot.

✠ The Pharisees would be like these guys are in deep troubled when to their horror they would receive stricter judgment than them.

Conclusion:

Jesus has told us very clearly that people are responsible for the information they receive.

We have been given so much in our time, and the bible says to whom much is given much is required.

I think it is safe to say that we don't want Jesus to say to us what He is saying to these cities.

✠ I don't want Jesus to say to me, woe is you Bob Hartmann.

Jesus is giving us the same opportunity of response as He was giving these people by asking He who has ears to hear let him hear!

Of all people of all generations we should be living the most for Jesus because we have been given more than anybody else! Amen!

✠ We are virtually inundated with Christian resources and we have two thousand years of Christian history to look back upon and see the faithfulness of God.

We should be like Jesus we know You are the Coming One and we are not going to look for another. And we are going to fight for the Kingdom and take it by force! Amen!

My heart cry to God is: God, please don't let me waste my life!

Read about Girl at 14 in Crazy love!

Let's pray!