

Matthew 11:1-19

- **REVIEW...**

- o **FIRST** - The Presentation of the King – **Matthew 1-7**
- o **SECOND** – The Ministry of the King – **Matthew 8-18**
- o Sending the Twelve...
 - Jesus had just finished saying - PRAY the Lord sends workers into His HARVEST...
 - And the very next thing He did - was PRAY who to send to reach the LOST...
 - He chose TWELVE men - the APOSTLES - and SENT them out to preach the Gospel!
- o Count the Cost...
 - There were only TWO options to those the APOSTLES shared the GOSPEL with...
 - If people CONFESSED Jesus - then He would CONFESS them before the Father...
 - If people DENIED Jesus - then He would DENY them before the Father!
- o Make the Choice...
 - Jesus did NOT come to bring PEACE - He came with a SWORD...
 - The Gospel would even divide FAMILIES - the ENEMY would be in our house...
 - Therefore to FOLLOW Jesus we must LOVE him more than FAMILY - more than our LIFE...
 - Because if we seek to FIND life we will LOSE it - but if we LOSE our life for Him we FIND it!

- **1ST – LAPSE OF FAITH... vs. 1-6 [LUKE 7:18-35]**

- o 1st - Not alone... vs. 1
 - Now it came to pass - when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples.
 - That He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities!
 - When Jesus FINISHED [τελέω] giving the INSTRUCTIONS to the TWELVE...
 - He did not just SEND [ἀποστέλλω] them out - He went with them...
 - He went TEACHING [present] and PREACHING [present] in the same CITIES He sent them to!
 - Jesus calls us to go out and to SHARE the Gospel – KNOWING there will be challenges...
 - But He does NOT ask us to go alone – He is ALWAYS there with us!
 - **Hebrews 13:5** - “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
- o 2nd - Doubting... vs. 2-3
 - In Prison... vs. 2
 - When John had heard in prison about the works of Christ!
 - This is the same John [cousin of Jesus] - who baptized Jesus - **Matthew 3:16**
 - But John could no longer watch Jesus himself - He had been thrown into PRISON...
 - So His DISCIPLES reported to him everything Jesus was doing - **Luke 7:18**
 - John was imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus [near Dead Sea] by Herod Antipas...
 - John was arrested when He rebuked Herod for his marriage to Herodias...
 - Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great [the NIECE of Herod Antipas]
 - The problem - she divorced her UNCLE Philip to marry her UNCLE Antipas!
 - The Question... vs. 2-3
 - [John] sent two of his disciples [to Jesus] - Are You the Coming One or do we look for another?
 - He QUESTIONED if Jesus was the MESSIAH - or were they to LOOK for someone ELSE [ἕτερος]
 - John had CONFIDENCE in Jesus - when things were going the way that he PLANNED...
 - John had been absolutely certain Jesus was the promised MESSIAH!
 - **John 1:29-34** – “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”
 - It is EASY to BELIEVE in Jesus when everything is going great...
 - When there is LOTS of money - LOTS of people - everyone is HAPPY...

- But that is NOT the LIFE that Jesus promised us - life takes unexpected turns!
- Hard Times...
 - But John did NOT expect to end up in PRISON - and now he had DOUBTS!
 - It can be really HARD to TRUST in God when life falls apart...
 - When our plans CRUMBLE - and do NOT understand what God is doing...
 - But the PROBLEM is our perspective – we are looking at CIRCUMSTANCES and NOT at Jesus...
 - The SOLUTION is to get our eyes back on the SOLUTION!
 - **II Corinthians 4:18** – “Do NOT look at the troubles we can see right now - rather we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.” [NLT]
- o 3rd - The Evidence... vs. 4-5
 - Transformed lives... vs. 4
 - Jesus answered and said to them - Go and tell John the things which you hear and see!
 - The ANSWER from Jesus: GO [imperative] and give this MESSAGE [ἄγγελος] to John...
 - FIRST - they were to TELL him EVERYTHING they had SEEN and HEARD!
 - Many years ago - when I first came on staff at the church...
 - I was attending a STAFF meeting - and the Pastor had everyone introduce themselves...
 - By the time we got around to me - everyone was LAUGHING...
 - We ALL had STORIES - we were a bunch of SINNERS that God has saved by His GRACE!
 - There are a LOT of RELIGIONS in the world - how can people know Jesus is the TRUTH...
 - The answer is SIMPLE - look and see what He does to the people who put their faith in Him...
 - ONLY the Gospel can take SINNERS and transform them into SAINTS!
 - Fulfilled Prophecy... vs. 5
 - The blind see and the lame walk. The lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear.
 - The dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them!
 - SECOND - they were to tell him about the PROPHECIES He had fulfilled...
 - The miracles Jesus was doing were the PROOF He was the MESSIAH!
 - The Messiah would open the eyes of the BLIND - and ears of the DEAF - **Isaiah 42:7**
 - Lepers would be HEALED - **Leviticus 14:11**
 - The dead would be raised to LIFE - **Psalms 16:10**
 - And the message of the Gospel [good news] would be given to the POOR - **Isaiah 61:1**
 - Laws of Probability...
 - If I have TEN cards - only ONE is a heart - the chances of picking the HEART = 1/10
 - To REPEAT that becomes 1/100 - and a THIRD time 1/1000 [compound probability]
 - The CHANCES of Jesus fulfilling just EIGHT* of the prophecies in the Bible = 1/10¹⁷
 - To grasp how BIG a number that is - fill the Philippines over a METER deep in Peso coins...
 - Paint ONE coin black - then randomly pick a coin - if it is BLACK that = 1/10¹⁷
 - That is for just EIGHT of the over 300 PROPHECIES Jesus fulfilled in His life and MINISTRY!
 - God is the only one who sees the end from the beginning [outside time] – **Isaiah 46:9**
 - Prophecy [probability] is how He validates His Word – proves He is the Author...
 - And by fulfilling the PROPHECIES about the Messiah - Jesus proved He is the Christ!
- o 4th - Not Stumbled... vs. 6
 - Blessed is he who is not [stumbled] because of Me!
 - In light of the EVIDENCE - transformed LIFE and fulfilled PROPHECY...
 - There should be NO reason to DOUBT Jesus - everyone should receive Him with JOY [μακάριος]
 - But John was STUMBLING [σκανδαλίζω] - he was NOT sure about Jesus...
 - Because Jesus did NOT meet his EXPECTATIONS - causing him to DOUBT!
 - The Gospel is not a MESSAGE about a better LIFE - it is about ETERNAL life..

- And if we come with the wrong EXPECTATIONS - we are going to STUMBLE!
- 2ND - END OF THE OLD COVENANT... vs. 7-15
 - 1st - Who was John... vs. 7-9
 - Question... vs. 7
 - As they departed - Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John!
 - As the DISCIPLES of John were [present] leaving [participle] - so they could HEAR...
 - Jesus began to question the CROWD about John the Baptist...
 - MANY of them had gone out to see John in the WILDERNESS - **Matthew 3:5**
 - Jesus gives them THREE possible MOTIVES for their CURIOSITY!
 - No one... vs. 7
 - What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?
 - Reeds [grass] are ALWAYS shaken by the wind - NOTHING special...
 - Obviously they did NOT travel into the wilderness to see something COMMON!
 - A rich man... vs. 8
 - What did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments?
 - Indeed - those who wear soft clothing are in kings houses!
 - Did the people go to see someone wearing EXPENSIVE [μαλακός] clothing...
 - People will TRAVEL a long ways to see MOVIE stars - POLITICIANS...
 - But FAMOUS people - who wear EXPENSIVE clothes - live in NICE houses [not the desert]
 - John was famous for his simple CAMEL clothes - **Matthew 3:4**
 - A Prophet... vs. 9
 - What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes - I say to you - and more than a prophet!
 - The people went to see John - because he was a PROPHET...
 - And there had NOT been a PROPHET in Israel for over FOUR hundred years [since Malachi]
 - Because after years of sending PROPHETS to try and CORRECT His wayward people...
 - God finally had ENOUGH - and gave them what they wanted - SILENCE!
 - **Amos 8:11** - "I will send a famine on the land... of hearing the words of the LORD."
 - We all know what it feels like to miss a MEAL - we get HANGRY...
 - The same is true for the WORD of the LORD - we need SPIRITUAL food [Rice of Life]
 - Those who do NOT regularly get into the WORD - are STARVING for the TRUTH!
 - 2nd - Greatest Prophet... vs. 10-14
 - Prepared the way... vs. 10
 - For this is he of whom it is written:
 - Behold - I send My messenger before Your face who will prepare Your way before You!
 - John the Baptist was NOT just any PROPHET - he was MORE...
 - FIRST - because he was SENT [ἀποστέλλω] to prepare the WAY - **Malachi 3:1**
 - He prepared the HEARTS of the people to RECEIVE Jesus - by telling them to REPENT...
 - So when the Lord came - they would see their NEED to be SAVED!
 - Jen and I were hesitating to get a physical - because we did NOT want bad news...
 - We chose to be willfully IGNORANT - rather than find out the TRUTH!
 - The problem with the world today - is they refuse to admit they are SICK [sinners]
 - They PRETEND like everything is OK - willfully IGNORANT of the danger they are in ...
 - God sends us to remind them - they are SINNERS - and they need to be HEALED!
 - Greatest man... vs. 11
 - Assuredly - I say to you - among those born of women...
 - There has not risen one greater than John the Baptist.
 - But he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he!

- SECOND - because John was the GREATEST of ALL the PROPHETS...
- [ἄμην] John - was the GREATER than any man BORN to a woman [everyone]
- Because while ALL the other PROPHETS had spoken about the coming of the Messiah...
- John the Baptist was the one who actually got to SEE Jesus!
- The writer of Hebrews listed all of the GREAT men of the Bible...
- But he does on to say they did NOT receive the PROMISE of the MESSIAH - **Hebrews 11:39**
- Because God wanted to give something BETTER to us
- We have Jesus living in our hearts – we have a personal relationship with Him...
- So the LEAST [μικρός] of us is more blessed than John the Baptist!
- Last Prophet... vs. 12-13
 - From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence.
 - And the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John!
 - THIRD - because people REALLY wanted to HEAR John speak...
 - From the days [ἡμέρα] of John - the Kingdom of Heaven had VIOLENCE...
 - VIOLENCE [βιάζω] - 2x in NT - describing large crowds rushing in to HEAR...
 - Great MULTITUDES came to LISTEN John - then Jesus after him...
 - And those who were DETERMINED [βιάζω] - were able to ENTER [εἰσέρχω] the Kingdom...
 - Because John marked the END of the Old Testament [Law and Prophets] - **Luke 16:16**
 - The Old Testament did NOT stop with Malachi – it ENDED with John the Baptist...
 - John marked the END of an Era – the END of the Old Covenant...
 - Because the Old Covenant could NOT make anyone RIGHTEOUS - **Romans 3:20**
 - But those who were DETERMINED to hear the TRUTH stuck around...
 - And heard Jesus give something BETTER - the NEW Covenant of Grace!
- Elisha to come... vs. 14-15
 - If you are willing to receive it - he is Elijah who is to come.
 - He who has ears to hear - let him hear!
 - FOURTH - for those WILLING [present] to RECEIVE - John the Baptist is ELIJAH!
 - The very last verse of the Old Testament promised the return of Elijah - **Malachi 4:5**
 - Elijah was one of only TWO men in the OT who never died [also Enoch] - **II Kings 2:11**
 - And Elijah would return and prepare the hearts of the people to receive the MESSIAH...
 - John the Baptist would DENY he was Elijah - **John 1:21**
 - But Jesus confirmed he came in the POWER of Elijah for BELIEVERS – **Matthew 11:14**
 - For UNBELIEVERS - Elijah will RETURN as one of the TWO witnesses – **Revelation 11:3**
 - Therefore anyone with EARS that can HEAR - LISTEN [imperative]
 - Almost identical command to what is given to each of the SEVEN churches - **Revelation 2-3**
 - Because God is SPEAKING - trying to get our ATTENTION...
 - He sent John - the last Old Testament prophet - calling on people to REPENT...
 - He sent Jesus - with the NEW Covenant of Grace - to take away our SIN...
 - The only question is - are we willing to LISTEN when God speaks!

● 3RD - PLAYING GAMES... vs. 16-19

o 1st - Entertained... vs. 16-17

- The Crowds... vs. 16
 - To what shall I liken this generation?
 - This was the QUESTION Jesus challenged the CROWD with...
 - God had SENT out John the BAPTIST - but the people did NOT listen...
 - He SENT out Jesus CHRIST - but they did NOT pay attention...
 - Jesus SENT out the APOSTLES - but the people did NOT care!
- Little Children... vs. 16-17

- It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions.
 - Saying: We played the flute for you - and you did not dance.
 - We mourned to you - and you did not lament!
 - Jesus used the ILLUSTRATION of kids playing in the MARKET [ἀγορά]
 - They played MUSIC - but were upset when the people did not DANCE...
 - Then they MOURNED - but were upset when the people did not CRY...
 - It was all a GAME to them - and they were just looking for others to PLAY along!
 - I have noticed when a new STORE or RESTAURANT opens - everyone shows up...
 - Not because they NEED something - but just because it is NEW...
 - Yet give it a few weeks - and they have moved on to the next NEW thing...
 - Because all they are looking for is to be ENTERTAINED!
 - **Acts 17:21** - [They] spent their time in nothing else but to tell or to hear some new thing."
 - Sadly this mentality has found its way into the church...
 - If there is a NEW bible study - or some NEW ministry - everyone is INTERESTED...
 - But give it a few WEEKS or MONTHS - and the numbers dwindle...
 - The reason - people are not SEEKING the TRUTH - they want to be ENTERTAINED!
- o 2nd - Complaining... vs. 18-19
- John the Baptist... vs. 18
 - For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say - He has a demon!
 - John the Baptist came living by the Old Covenant - FASTING and not DRINKING alcohol...
 - He was trying to show people what it MEANT to live a GODLY life...
 - Because the standard of the LAW is PERFECTION - **Matthew 5:48**
 - But people did NOT want to be HOLY - they did not like CONVICTION...
 - So they spread [present] the LIE that John was POSSESSED [devil]!
 - We do NOT give people the LAW [613 commands] so they can be GOOD...
 - We give people the LAW - so that they know they are BAD...
 - Because the LAW is the STANDARD that defines what is GOOD...
 - But like a MIRROR that tells the TRUTH - the LAW is only able to show us we have FAILED!
 - No one likes to look at themselves in the mirror...
 - When the person who stares back at them is clearly NOT good...
 - They would rather AVOID the mirror - and pretend they are OK!
 - Son of Man... vs. 19
 - The Son of Man came eating and drinking - and they say:
 - Look - a glutton and a winebibber - a friend of tax collectors and sinners!
 - Jesus [Son of Man] came to show the FREEDOM we have in the New Covenant...
 - He was both EATING [present] and DRINKING [present]
 - But the people did NOT want the LAW or the GRACE of God...
 - So they accused Jesus of OVEREATING [glutton] - and a DRUNK [wine drinker]
 - Who LOVED [φίλος] tax collectors and SINNERS!
 - Jesus made it VERY easy to get to HEAVEN - there are no RULES to keep...
 - We do NOT earn our salvation - it is a FREE gift...
 - All we have to do is REPENT and BELIEVE - to receive it - **Romans 10:9-10**
 - But the problem for many - is they do NOT like that FIRST step [repent]!
 - People LOVE to hold to RELIGION - because it makes them feel GOOD...
 - They do NOT have to REPENT - they just have to follow some RULES...
 - To that person - the idea of FREE salvation seems like a joke!
 - Look at the Fruit... vs. 19
 - But wisdom is justified by her children!

- Do NOT listen to what people SAY - they are NEVER happy...
- Instead look at what people DO - because their lives tell the TRUTH...
- WISDOM is knowing we can tell who someone is by their FRUIT [children]!
- People rejected John - people rejected Jesus - and they will reject us...
- Not because what we believe is WRONG - but because they do NOT want the truth...
- They might be SINNERS who live their life trying to DENY their SIN...
- Or they might be RELIGIOUS - attempted to COVER up their SIN...
- But WISDOM tells us ONLY Jesus can change us - and take away our SIN!