

Gospel of Matthew “Clarifying Confusion”
Matthew 11:1-19
March 19, 2023

Matthew 11:1-19

When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” 4 And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’

11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one 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 has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

17 “‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

Managing expectations.

“Are you the one?”

Matthew 11:4-6

4 And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

Isaiah 35:4-6

4 Say to those who have an anxious heart,
"Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.

He will come and save you."

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;[b]

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

Jesus makes clear that we shouldn't overlook John's significance.

Matthew 11:7-8

"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses."

The oak and the reed.

Matthew 11:10-11

10 This is he of whom it is written,
"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.'

11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.

He is the one that comes before the One.

Matthew 11:12-15

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence.

Matthew 11:16-19

16 “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

17 “‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

The gospel is a wisdom that in the end will be seen for its truth.

Grow Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you during our Sunday gathering?
- Can you share a moment in which you expected one thing and got something very different? Why do you think life is filled with moments managing expectations? What does this say about us?
- What are your thoughts as it relates to the role of doubt in the Christian life?
- John is beginning to wonder if Jesus is the Messiah because he doesn't seem to be addressing certain issues. How might John's concerns reveal our own concerns? How have you questioned God's activity during hard seasons?
- How are your expectations about the Christian life adjusted by Jesus highlighting that the kingdom suffers violence? What do you think Jesus means?
- As Jesus clarifies John's significance (even as he is in prison), how is he clarifying his own significance? Is there anything new or anything that has recently become more clear to you about Jesus?