

Sermon Notes 03/19/2023

Matt 11:16-19 Wisdom will be vindicated

- 16 *“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:*
- 17 *“We played the pipe 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, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”*

This is the conclusion of Jesus’ sermon about John’s question as to Jesus’ identity as the Messiah. And in many ways it served as an altar call then and now. The ministry of John and Jesus inspired baptisms, fascination, curiosity, and numbers, better put, spectators. But John was disappointed so Jesus encouraged him, expressed himself and challenged others.

All these results aforementioned did not reflect, for both men, an appropriate level of response that one would expect given that the Messiah and His forerunner had appeared, one living an ascetic life, the other, a more social one.

To me, there is a tone of Jesus’ sermon that has the feeling of regret, even lament that so many would not respond unless John and Jesus met their expectations and not visa-versa. Creatively, Jesus likens the gospel message and lackluster response to children in the marketplace pouting, because if John and Jesus don’t play their way - nobody plays.

Those kids on the curbside of the marketplace, unwilling to play since they can find no leader that suits their liking, are as vocal as they are non-participatory. They have chosen, sadly, to sit, pout and critique.

John’s is too serious - “ashes to ashes, we all fall down!”
Jesus’ is not serious enough “Skip. skip. skip to my lou.”

Both John and Jesus played, sang, and danced to a divine game, medley and waltz. Their playground was all encompassing, their song was that of the angels and the celestial dance was to bring together two estranged parties - God and humanity, once alienated, but now, by grace, moving in

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rhythm. The words, the works, the personalities and the anointing, you would think, would have stirred robust and sincere interaction.

Remarkably - Relatively few embraced the opportunity in earnest to join in!

John would react to the indifference by having doubts. (vss. 2-3)
Jesus would react to the indifference with a sermon and a kind of ultimatum.

Fleetwood Mac- "Say you Will"

"Say you will, say you will give me one more chance - At least give me time to change your mind - That always seems to heal the wounds - If I can get you to dance."

Back to the altar call:

Jesus concludes, "But wisdom is proved right by her deeds." God's wisdom isn't dependent on attendance records or editorial comments. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not threatened by critiques of onlookers that He and his followers are too much of this or not enough of that. Here, clearly, is the gospel invitation:

Then look, with faith to the person and works of Jesus Christ and follow Him. Listen and learn from Jesus and get in the game! In so doing, adds Luke, your involvement, in Christ, by faith and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit gives glory to God and draws others off the sidelines. "And wisdom has already been justified by its children" (Luke 7:35 and later Mss of Matthew)