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MATTHEW

CHAPTER 11:11-30
HOW TO MAKE LIFE EASIER

I. INTRODUCTION

A. We left off in our study of **Matthew Chapter 11** last week, with **verse 11**.

1. As a recap, Jesus said John the Baptist was one of the greatest men who ever lived under the old covenant!
 - a) Jesus had many things to say about John the Baptist, and we applied a lot of that to men in general.
 - (1) But in all honesty - most of it could be applied to the Christian life in general.
2. Let me be the first to say that being a committed Christian in a world that has rejected Jesus is not always peaceful!
 - a) It takes love, patience, endurance, and a lot of perseverance!
 - b) It is not a job for the weak or the faint of heart, or for those who give up easily.
 - (1) It is sometimes wonderful and sometimes heart breaking.
 - (2) It is sometimes exhilarating and other times you are reminding yourself of God's promises.
 - (3) Sometimes we feel like failures, and at other times we are on the mountain top!
 - (a) But I KNOW from life's experiences that there is an easy way to do it and there is an impossible way to do it!
 - (b) There is a way that leads to a more fulfilled life and another that promises failure.
 - (c) There is one way that brings peace and joy and another where peace and joy are hard to find.

B. Let's finish **Matthew Chapter 11**.

II. **MATTHEW 11:11–15 (NKJV) — 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. 12 AND FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL NOW THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE. 13 FOR ALL THE PROPHETS AND THE LAW PROPHESED UNTIL JOHN. 14 AND IF YOU ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE IT, HE IS ELIJAH WHO IS TO COME. 15 HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!**

- A. This phrase **(12) "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force"** – is difficult to interpret because the **“force”** that Jesus is talking about here, could be internal or external force. And of course that changes the meaning.
1. If it is external – there were surely evil men and evil forces that sought to destroy it!

2. And if it is internal – there were certainly those who sought salvation with considerable desperation and “force” also.
 - a) *The kingdom has come with holy power and magnificent energy that has been pushing back the frontiers of darkness. This is especially manifest in Jesus’ miracles and ties in with Jesus’ response to the Baptist ... The kingdom is making great strides; now is the time for courageous souls, forceful people, to take hold of it.” (Carson)*
 - b) The prophets suffered. John the Baptist suffered. Jesus suffered!
 - (1) We live in a violent world that opposes Jesus and the truth.
 - (2) And every time we offer salvation to anyone, we come again the force of darkness that has them bound!

B. John the Baptist was the fulfillment of **Malachi 3:1 (NKJV) — 1** **“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” Says the LORD of hosts.**

1. John the Baptist is the bridge between the Old and the New Testaments!
 - a) Because of John, and the fact that he fulfilled this prophecy so completely – the people thought John **was** Elijah.
 - (1) And Jesus confirms that (in spirit) John is Elijah, but not in the flesh. Even John denied that. **John 1:21 (NKJV) — 21** **And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”**
 - b) For those who accepted that John was the fulfillment of prophecy – That meant Jesus was the Messiah!
 - (a) But not everyone had the “ears” to hear and understand this.

III. MATTHEW 11:16–19 (NKJV) — 16 “BUT TO WHAT SHALL I LIKEN THIS GENERATION? IT IS LIKE CHILDREN SITTING IN THE MARKETPLACES AND CALLING TO THEIR COMPANIONS, 17 AND SAYING: ‘WE PLAYED THE FLUTE FOR YOU, AND YOU DID NOT DANCE; WE MOURNED TO YOU, AND YOU DID NOT LAMENT.’ 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, A GLUTTON AND A WINEBIBBER, A FRIEND OF TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS!’ BUT WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED BY HER CHILDREN.”

A. Jesus compares the people of His day with children and their games.

1. They imitated what they saw the adults do but didn’t understand the meaning.
 - a) For example, the flute was often played at celebrations like weddings where there was dancing. The dirge was often sung at funerals.
 - (1) So, they would imitate playing the flute but could not understand why the people wouldn’t dance.
 - (2) They would sing a dirge and did not understand why the people wouldn’t mourn.
 - (a) Well, some of the people around Jesus were as mixed up and confused as these children.
 - (i) They accused John of having demon BECAUSE he didn’t eat or drink as the rest of them.

- (ii) They accused Jesus of being a glutton and a drunk because he did the opposite.
 - (a) They were children in their understanding of spiritual issues!

B. Jesus has stated that He is God and now He passes judgment on the cities that have rejected Him.

IV. **MATTHEW 11:20–24 (NKJV) — 20 THEN HE BEGAN TO REBUKE THE CITIES IN WHICH MOST OF HIS MIGHTY WORKS HAD BEEN DONE, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT REPENT: 21 “WOE TO YOU, CHORAZIN! WOE TO YOU, BETHSAIDA! FOR IF THE MIGHTY WORKS WHICH WERE DONE IN YOU HAD BEEN DONE IN TYRE AND SIDON, THEY WOULD HAVE REPENTED LONG AGO IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES. 22 BUT I SAY TO YOU, IT WILL BE MORE TOLERABLE FOR TYRE AND SIDON IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT THAN FOR YOU. 23 AND YOU, CAPERNAUM, WHO ARE EXALTED TO HEAVEN, WILL BE BROUGHT DOWN TO HADES; FOR IF THE MIGHTY WORKS WHICH WERE DONE IN YOU HAD BEEN DONE IN SODOM, IT WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNTIL THIS DAY. 24 BUT I SAY TO YOU THAT IT SHALL BE MORE TOLERABLE FOR THE LAND OF SODOM IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT THAN FOR YOU.”**

- A. Remember I said at the beginning of the teaching there is an “easy” way to do things and an “impossible” way?
 - 1. These cities chose the impossible. And as a result, found themselves fighting against the Lord Himself! Not a smart choice.

V. CONCLUSION

A. **Matthew 11:25–30 (NKJV) — 25 At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

- 1. You have hidden these things from *the* wise and think themselves to be intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Pride and self-importance will cause us to miss the Lord’s best!
 - a) If you come to Jesus He will give you rest, but it is only found in Him.
 - b) If you find yourself without that “rest”, it is because you are carrying a burden that you were not meant to carry by yourself!
 - (1) And I will close with this “picture”. The “yoke” was a device that tied one ox to another so they could “pull the burden” together. It was much easier to pull the weight together than by themselves.
 - (a) He simply never meant for us to do any of this without Him – ever!