

Jesus – The King of the Jews #29
Message to a Childish Generation
Matt 11:16-27

Introduction:

1. Every generation has its privileges.
 - a. The privileges are used by some and ignored and abused by others.
 - b. Since the coming of Christ the greatest privilege in all the world has been the privilege of knowing Him personally, for it is Christ who makes us acceptable to God.
 - c. And there is no greater privilege than the privilege of knowing God face to face.
2. However, the vast majority have ignored and abused Christ; therefore, most do not know God, not personally.
 - a. They turned away from that which was right and good to that which was corruptible.
 - b. They acted contrary to the evidence.
 - c. They were opposed to that which was right, reasonable, and acceptable; and they were obstinate in their opposition.
3. They were just wrong-headed, mindless, and contrary. They did not want the truth, so they made excuses for not receiving the truth.
4. Jesus' words in [verse 15](#) were a warning to the people to take seriously what He had just said about responding to John the Baptist: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
5. A fundamental teaching of Scripture is that God's truth demands response.
6. In the present passage Jesus continues to deal with various responses of men to Himself.
7. John's questioning had reflected honest doubt.
 - a. He came to have some misgivings; but his primary attitude was not doubt but faith, because even when doubts came he looked to Jesus to resolve them.
8. Now Jesus mentions two negative responses—criticism / indifference
 - a. These were much more serious than John's, because they reflect basic rejection of Christ.
 - b. As is John's case, honest doubt can come even to a believer.
 - c. But the criticism and indifference Jesus mentions here came from unbelief.

I. Childishness of That Generation – vs 16-19

A. Contrary, Mindless, Playful Faultfinders Who Could Not Be Pleased – vs 16-19a

1. A Childish Generation

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

 - a) *Children are playing in the market place.*
 - b) *Weddings and funerals were the two main social events and children would mimic the adults*
 - c) *A few begin to play wedding music on their pipes and cry out to others, "Let's march and play 'wedding'."*
 - d) *The others shout back, "No. We don't want to dance around today."*
 - e) *So the first group, still wanting to play, begin to play funeral music and shout back, "Well, let's play 'funeral'."*
 - f) *"No. We don't want to play funeral either. We don't feel like acting sad."*
 - g) *They find fault with whatever is suggested.*
 - h) *They just cannot accept and be pleased with anything that puts restrictions upon their loose play.*

BYZ **Matthew 11:16** Τίτι δὲ ὁμοιώσω τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην; Ὁμοία ἐστὶν παιδίῳ ἐν ἀγοραῖς καθημένῳ, καὶ προσφωνοῦσιν τοῖς ἐταίροις αὐτῶν,

From ageiro, to assemble - The primary conception in the Greek word has nothing to do with buying and selling. Agora is an assembly; then the place of assembly. The idea of a place of trade comes in afterward, and naturally, since trade plants itself where people habitually gather. The idea of trade gradually becomes the dominant one in the word. In Eastern cities the markets are held in bazaars and streets, rather than in squares. In these public places the children would be found playing. Compare Zechariah 8:5.

BYZ **Matthew 11:17** καὶ λέγουσιν, Ἠυλήσαμεν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ὤρχησασθε· ἐθρηνήσαμεν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἐκόψασθε.

Mourn (ekopsasthe) means to beat the heart, direct middle, after the fashion of eastern funeral lamentations.

ἠυλήσαμεν verb ind aor act 1pp from **αὐλέω** - *play the flute or pipe* (αὐλός), *pipe* (a tune) (MT 11.17)

ὤρχησασθε verb ind aor mid dep 2pp from **ὀρχέομαι**
dance

2. Accused John of Separation – vs 18

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

- a) *John's message and way of life were in the funeral mode, so to speak.*
- b) *John came neither eating nor drinking.*
- c) *He was a separatist.*
- d) *He was from the desert and lived a strict, austere life, being highly disciplined. He did not associate with people or make friends.*
- e) *He just isolated himself and cut himself off from everyone. He withdrew from society.*
- f) *His message was a gospel of repentance and separation from the things of the world.*
- g) *Therefore, he was accused of having a devil, that is, of being mad and insane for choosing to live that way.*

3. Accused Jesus of Worldliness – vs 19a

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

- a) *They accused Jesus of worldliness.*
 - (1) Jesus was the very opposite of John.
 - (2) Jesus lived and preached a gospel of liberty.
 - (3) He ate and associated with the people and shared in their social affairs.
 - (4) He moved among all sorts of people, mixing and making Himself accessible to all no matter how terrible they were thought to be.
 - (5) Therefore, He was accused of being a sinner Himself: a glutton, a winebibber, and an immoral friend of sinners.
 - (6) It must be remembered that when Jesus moved about in the social functions of society it was for the purpose of witnessing to them, not to be a part of the worldly fellowship.
- b) *Most people reject any attempt to restrict their own play.*
 - (1) They wish to continue doing their own thing—whether it be seeking pleasure, intellectual pursuit, secular interest, or religious commitment.
 - (2) Most are willing to go only so far in restricting their own desires, will, and way. Few are willing to deny self completely
- c) *They were like many people today who find fault with whatever the preacher and other church leaders do.*
 - (1) No matter what is said or done, such people pick it apart and use the objection—whether real or imagined, justified or unjustified—as an excuse for rejection.
 - (2) Because they have no saving relationship to Christ, they refuse to receive His truth or serve in His church.
 - (3) But they love to harp against both.
- d) *The plain fact is that when people do not want to listen to the truth, they will easily enough find an excuse for not listening.*
 - (1) They do not even try to be consistent in their criticism.
 - (2) They will criticize the same person and the same institution from quite opposite grounds and reasons.
 - (3) If people are determined to make no response, they will remain stubbornly and sullenly unresponsive no matter what invitation is made to them

BYZ **Matthew 11:18** Ἦλθεν γὰρ Ἰωάννης μήτε ἐσθίων μήτε πίνων, καὶ λέγουσιν, Δαιμόνιον ἔχει.

BYZ **Matthew 11:19** Ἦλθεν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων, καὶ λέγουσιν, Ἴδοὺ, ἄνθρωπος φάγος καὶ οἰνοπότης, τελωνῶν φίλος καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν. Καὶ ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς. **φάγος** noun nms from **φάγος** - as one who habitually eats too much *glutton*

B. Justified Their Own Inconsistencies – vs 19b

19b ...But wisdom is justified of her children.

1. The childish generation justifies its inconsistencies.
2. John lived and preached a gospel of repentance and separation.
3. Jesus lived and preached a gospel of liberty.
4. The people were like children: they found fault with both and accepted neither.
5. They just wanted to do their own thing. The final act of childishness was that they justified their inconsistency
6. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" ([Eph 4:14](#))

II. Judgment of That Generation – vs 20-24

A. Judgment of Two Privileged Cities – vs 20-22

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, 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 unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

- The three cities mentioned here—which typified all the places where **His miracles were done**—did not take any direct action against Jesus.
 - They simply ignored Him.
 - While the Son of God preached, taught, and performed unprecedented **miracles** in their midst, they carried on their business and their lives as usual, seemingly unaffected.
1. Because They were Privileged – vs 21a
 - a) *They were privileged to have the gospel available.*
 - b) *They had the presence of Christ, of believers and of the gospel.*
 - c) *Such exposure condemns a person if he does not respond.*
 - d) *Why? Because he has the opportunity to know Christ.*
 - e) *They personally witnessed Jesus' miracles, but did not respond in faith believing*
 2. Because They Did Not Repent – vs 21b
 - a) *They refused to repent.*
 - b) *A person who continues to live as he wills and refuses to turn to God condemns himself.*
 - c) *God demands repentance.*
 3. Because They Ignored Christ – vs 21c
 - a) *They ignored and neglected Christ.*
 - b) *Even in Jesus' day most people paid no attention to Him.*
 - c) *Judgment is to be based not only upon doing wrong, but upon not doing right.*
 - d) *Just sitting around doing nothing [no gross or public sin] does not free a person from judgment.*
 - e) *God expects commitment and diligence in serving Christ.*
 4. Degree of Their Judgment – vs 22
 - a) *The degree of judgment for the two cities is to be greater than for most.*
 - b) *The judgment upon the two cities will be much greater than for Tyre and Sidon.*
 - c) *To the Jews, Tyre and Sidon epitomized pagan, Gentile corruption and worthlessness*
 - d) *Tyre and Sidon never had the opportunity of Christ's ministry.*
 - e) *Chorazin and Bethsaida did, and they neglected and rejected Christ.*
 - f) *Therefore their judgment shall be much more severe.*

B. Judgment of the Most Privilege City – vs 23-24

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

1. It Had the Greatest Opportunity – vs 23a
 - a) *Because it was the very center of the Lord's ministry and the people still neglected and rejected Christ.*
 - b) *Jesus preached more sermons and performed more miracles in the area of Capernaum than anywhere else*
 - (1) In Capernaum Jesus raised Jairus' daughter
 - (2) Healed the nobleman's son
 - (3) Healed the demoniac
 - (4) Healed Peter's mother-in-law
 - (5) Healed the woman with the hemorrhage
 - (6) Gave sight to the two blind men etc

20 Τότε ἤρξατο ὀνειδίζειν τὰς πόλεις ἐν αἷς ἐγένοντο αἱ πλεῖσται δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οὐ μετενόησαν
Mighty works dunameis - The supernatural works of Christ and his apostles are denoted by six different words in the New Testament, exhibiting these works under different aspects and from different points of view.

BYZ Matthew 11:21 Οὐαὶ σοι, Χοραζὶν, οὐαὶ σοι, Βηθσαιδᾶ, ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γεγόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῷ μετενόησαν.

σάκκῳ noun dms from **σάκκος** - haircloth, a dark coarse fabric made from hair; by metonymy *sackcloth*, a sacklike garment made from haircloth and worn by mourners, penitents, and prophets; goat-hair was predominately used to make this rough cloth
σποδῷ noun dms from **σποδός** - what is left after something is burned *ash, ashes*

BYZ Matthew 11:22 Πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως, ἢ ὑμῖν.
ἀνεκτότερον adj normal nns comparative from **ἀνεκτός** - bearable, endurable; comparative **ἀνεκτότερος, τέρα, ον** *more tolerable or able to be endured*

BYZ Matthew 11:23 Καὶ σύ, Καπερναοῦμ, ἡ ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθείσα, ἕως Αἶδου καταβιβασθήσῃ· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γεγόμεναι ἐν σοί, ἔμειναν ἂν μέχρι τῆς σήμερον.

BYZ Matthew 11:24 Πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι γῆ Σοδόμων ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως, ἢ σοί.

2. It Did Not Repent – vs 23b
 - a) *Indifference to the Lord will continue in the world until He returns*
 - b) *Lu 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*
3. It Neglected Christ – vs 23c
 - a) *Sodom is a synonym for moral depravity*
 - b) *There is no record of any homosexuality in Capernaum*
 - (1) They were probably law-abiding people
 - (2) They were probably upright and decent
 - (3) They just ignored and rejected the Son of God
 - c) *Jesus said that if Sodom had witnessed all that Capernaum had witnessed, it would still be in existence*
4. Degree of Its Punishment – vs 24
 - a) *There is to be a day of judgment, and Christ says there are to be degrees of judgment.*
 - b) *Some judgment is to be more "intolerable" than other judgments. Note two things.*
 - c) ⇒ *There are degrees of privilege.*
 - (1) There is much more witness for Christ in some areas than in others.
 - (2) People who live in these areas are much more privileged and will be held much more accountable than people who had less witness.
 - (3) Capernaum exceeded Chorazin and Bethsaida in privilege
 - d) ⇒ *There are degrees of judgment.*
 - (1) Our response to the message of Christ determines how severely we will be judged.
 - (2) Sodom exceeded Tyre and Sidon in wickedness
 - (3) Sodom will answer for much in the day of judgment but not for having neglected Christ.
 - (4) How much greater shall our judgment be because we have neglected and rejected Christ!

III. Blindness of That Generation – vs 25-27

A. Blind to God's Truth – vs 25

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

1. God's sovereignty should be the foremost thought in the mind of every witnessing believer.
 - a) *We should remember with confidence that His plan is always on course and that even the most unrepentant, wicked, vindictive, and cynical rejection of our testimony does not alter God's timetable or thwart His purpose.*
 - b) *Our responsibility is simply to make our witness faithful ([1 Cor. 4:2](#)); it is God's responsibility alone to make it effective.*
2. The wise are blind to the Lord of heaven and earth and to the truth.
 - a) *They are wise in their own eyes*
 - b) *They are self-sufficient and don't need the Lord*
 - c) *By their very nature the proud and self-sufficient sense no need for help and refuse to receive help.*
 - d) *They rest in their own ability and achievements.*
3. The babes acknowledge their utter helplessness in themselves
 - a) *It is not a contrast between wise and foolish*
 - b) *It is not a contrast between smart and ignorant*
 - c) *It is not a contrast between educated and non-educated*
 - d) *It is a contrast between those who think that they are ok and those who know that they aren't*
4. Because Jesus had an unyielding trust in His Father's perfect will, He could rest in that will and give Him **praise** no matter what responses people made to Him.

BYZ **Matthew 11:25** Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις.

B. Blind to God's Will and Purpose – vs 26

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

1. The people were blind to the Messiah.
2. Jesus' specific cause for praise is God's sovereign wisdom in hiding these things from the wise and intelligent and instead revealing them to babes.
3. God can hide and reveal as He sees fit

C. Blind to the Messiah – vs 27

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

1. He is God's Own Son – vs 27a
 - a) *Man is blind to the fact that Jesus Christ is of God.*
 - b) *But Christ declares emphatically that He is of God.*
 - c) *Jesus says "my Father" in a way that none of us can say it*
2. He Has Been Given All Things – vs 27b
 - a) *All authority, sovereignty, truth and power had been given to Jesus by the Father*
 - b) *The purpose of Jesus' miracles was to demonstrate His authority over illness, disease, demons, nature, life, death and sin*
3. He Alone Reveals the Character of God – vs 27d
 - a) *Christ declares emphatically that He alone reveals the Father*
 - b) *No one can know God apart from Christ.*
 - c) *A person who wishes to see God must come to Jesus Christ*

BYZ **Matthew 11:26** Ναί, ὁ πατήρ, ὅτι οὕτως ἐγένετο εὐδοκία ἔμπροσθέν σου.

BYZ **Matthew 11:27** Πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱόν, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ· οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει, εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱός, καὶ ᾧ ἐὰν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι.