## ***>>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 28 <<<<<<<***

1) Moving into chapter 11, Jesus has finished the teachings and has now sent them out.

### ***Matthew 11:1–6 (ESV)***

#### ***Messengers from John the Baptist***

**11** 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."

2) Until I really got into this study this time John's question had always troubled me somewhat.
   a) John knew at one point exactly who Jesus was so what troubled me was why he asks the question. **Or** **Did he really know?**
   b) When we look at John's encounter with Jesus, we can see clearly that he should have had no problems… **Or** **Should he have had?**

### ***Matthew 3:11–17 (ESV)***

[11] "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [12] His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

#### ***The Baptism of Jesus***

[13] Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. [14] John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" [15] But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. [16] And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

3) Bruce Barton, along with several other commentators I read, have a similar opinion regarding John's question.
   a) Barton says:

This statement provides a glimpse of John's human side. He had baptized Jesus, had seen the heavens open, and had heard the voice of God (3:13–17), yet he was experiencing periods of doubt and questioning. Perhaps John was wondering why Jesus brought blessing but little judgment, for John had preached that Jesus would baptize with fire and separate the "wheat" from the "chaff" (3:11–12). Jesus'

peaceful teaching and healing ministry may not have seemed to measure up. Perhaps John was wondering about the veiled terms in which Jesus was giving his teachings.[29]

4) Now, I have to agree that that is a plausible explanation to John's question.
5) However, let's talk for a minute about what John said in the first part of the passage:
   a) One coming that is mightier than I.
   b) He will baptize with Holy Spirit and fire.
   c) Clear the threshing floor – harks to judgement, right?
   d) Burn the chaff with unquenchable fire – also judgement.
6) The second part of the passage:
   a) We assume that John saw the heavens open and heard God speak.

"This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."

***Based on all this, what do you think John's idea might have been about what Jesus should have been doing? Perhaps more to the point did he, by his question, say that he did not understand the true timeline or purpose of what Jesus was doing?***

   b) One possibility is that John was expecting a "white horse" Messiah – and he does not see that in Jesus' actions.
7) So, to address John's question, Jesus simply lays out what he has been doing before everyone.
8) Jesus custom frames his response to Isaiah 35:5-6.

***Isaiah 35:5–6 (ESV)***

**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.

9) He knew that once John heard this his doubts would go away.
   a) The signs were still being accomplished, they just were not finished.
   b) John may not get the big picture of the death, burial, resurrection, and the coming kingdom any more than the disciples did but again, he probably just needed reassurance.

1) Jesus then turns and addresses the crowds regarding his cousin …

***Matthew 11:7–15 (ESV)***

**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

[29] Bruce B. Barton, *Matthew*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 218–220.

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.

2) Jesus begins by asking what to us may seem a strange question – the people who went to see John – did they go out to see reed shaken by the wind?
   a) A "reed" is cane-like grass that grows on the banks of the Jordan River.
   b) To compare a person to a reed was to say that the person was without moral fiber or courage, easily tossed about by various opinions, never taking a stand on anything.
   c) The answer here would be obvious – no, they did not.
      i) John's fiery preaching was the opposite of what the comparison said.
      ii) If they went to see John it was that fiery preaching and decisive rhetoric they went to see and hear.
3) Next, Jesus asked if they had gone out to see someone *dressed in* soft robes.
   a) Again, John's rough attire (clothes made of camel's hair, 3:4) hardly qualified as "soft robes."
   b) If the people wanted to go look at someone dressed like that, they should go to the royal palaces (such as Herod the Tetrarch occupied), not to the wilderness.
   c) The people who went out to see John appreciated his prophetic power.[30]
4) Finally, with a question he answers himself he tells them exactly what they went to see – a prophet.
   a) Many believed the age of the Messiah had come.
   b) They went out to see a prophet and had seen one, in fact, more *than a* prophet.
   c) John heralded the messianic age and had announced the coming kingdom of God.
   d) Indeed, he was the prophet prophesied by Malachi.
5) Jesus completes his picture of John by elevating him even further:

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.

1) Jesus goes on to explain what he thinks is their true reaction to both he and John.

[30] Bruce B. Barton, *Matthew*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 221.

***Matthew 11:16–19 (ESV)***

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."

2) The phrase "to what shall I liken" was a common rabbinic introduction to a metaphor.
3) Matthew uses the word generation to represent those Jews who rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus.
4) The metaphor here regarding the children at play condemns the attitude of these folks who are represented by the generation word.
   a) They were unresponsive to the calls issued by John the Baptist and by Jesus and so were like the children in the square who were unresponsive to their playmates.
5) In these last two verses, Jesus is simply saying that he and John had obviously different lifestyles but that those who rejected them both were simply not satisfied with either.
   a) We have all known people who could find something wrong no matter what – sometimes even to the extent of contradicting themselves in their evaluations.
   b) This is the case here. Regardless of the message, there is something wrong with the messenger so we will not listen.