

## Week 11

### Matthew series: We are Christian

#### Matthew 11: **what we see in Christ**

In some ways, I feel that Matthew 11:7 is Christianity in a nutshell. **“What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?”** I feel it’s ironic and intentional that wilderness is mentioned. Moses found God in the wilderness. Israel was born in the wilderness. John preached in the wilderness, and the crowds came to him in that deserted place. When we read the Bible, what are we looking for: redemption, answers, salvation or something else. Matthew seems to be planned out like a book or movie. Did Matthew have this all organized and laid out before he recorded it? Or, as he wrote, did he see the ministry life of Jesus playing itself out in those three years. Did Moses, the Prophets, and Jesus ministry suddenly come crashing together in a violent revelation: who are we looking for in religion? What are you seeking in religion?

Matthew 11:2 **“When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”**

Exodus 3:13 **“Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"**

---



---



---



---

At the end of verse 19 Jesus says **“yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”** I find this astounding. I looked up all the wisdom mentions in the Old Testament (there are a ton). It’s not surprising to me that Jesus made a quote like this. Wisdom played a huge role in historical teaching and in the landscape of modern Rome. Greek philosophy was as big as political correctness is big in this era. Some manuscripts have deeds replaced with children. I think children is even more astounding. If God would have a child, would that child vindicate God and his character? Matthew 21 has a parable that says **“Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said”**. Matthew is written very smartly. The question remains “who are we looking for”? There is another concept in the Bible called the refiners fire. The point was to see perfection when the impurities are smelted out. Does God see Jesus in you?

Matthew 11:11 **“Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”**

Exodus 3:12 **“God answered, “I will be with you, and when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship me on this mountain. That will be the proof that I have sent you.”**

The question has been for over 2000 years “Is Jesus the son of God.” In a manner of speaking John, the Baptist was asking the same thing. John was expecting a ruler that would crush the Romans, they all were. They heard the teachings and they had witnessed the miracles, but they wanted to get to the good stuff. They wanted the Christ to take over. Jesus reply to John is a reply to us as well. Who are you looking for. Is what you hear and see good enough or do you want more. Maybe Matthew is asking us to reevaluate how we look at the kingdom of God. Verse 12 is the lynch pin **“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”** The kingdom has received violence but it does not act by violence to achieve its goal. Far too often we expect God to act in ungodly ways to achieve our hearts desires.

Matthew 11:25 **“At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.”**

John 14:1 **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.”**

Read Matthew 11 and John 14 this week.

1. Matthew 11:1-15 is a stern warning to those who say they believe. Why are you here? I read a book called *The Time Machine* by H.G Wells. He built the machine to prove a point that humans will eventually find peace. He called it utopia. He traveled far into the future to see humans in their glory. What he found was the same old same old. Are you seeking peace? Is Jesus the answer as long as he provides? There are two things I want to point out. One is that Jesus did amazing things. Miracles don't grow on trees. Yet, we seem blind because we are looking for something different. Did you know that the kingdom of God should imprint on you and not the other way around? Secondly, Jesus makes a point of saying we might be following soft robes in royal palaces. Are we impressed by glitz and glamour? The fake leaders will give you plenty. The kingdom will give you none of that on earth. The treasure and majesty are in heaven.

Matthew 11:15 **“let anyone with ears listen.”**

Job 19:6 **“then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me.”**

2. Matthew 11:16-24 is scary stuff. The kiss principle is so prevalent in the kingdom of God. Keep it simple stupid. Jesus says this generation is like “children saying.” I feel that is a shot at people. We hear the simple stuff but never react. We should dance, morn, or laugh, but we always have our intentions and minds on other things. J Vernon McGee says we need the board of education applied to the seat of knowledge. Sometimes we need a swift kick because we are in our own world. I think Jesus uses Sodom and Gomorrah because they were the worst. I also believe he

used it because they were consumed with themselves. Has the kingdom been playing a song and a role in your life all along and you have ignored the whole tune?

**Matthew 11:21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."**

**Judges 16:20 "Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him."**

3. Matthew 11:25-27 again begins with the use of the word infants. Adults think far too much. I was astounded at university that the more I learned the more I realized how stupid I was. There is always more to know. Jesus says wisdom is hidden from the wise and revealed to the infants. The wise are so because they think they are. Saying you have arrived is a very dangerous thing. A true Christian will always be seeking, learning, and growing. Why is there eternity? I believe it's because the depths of God would take more than a lifetime to discover. It seems I'm pounding the same drum but this chapter is screaming it. Why are you here as a Christian?

As a side note, we have verses 26-27. They are so important to Christian theology. Did we create theology? How do we know that Jesus is the son of God? I suppose it could be the miracles or his resurrection. Yet, the word of God tells us plainly. Jesus says he is in the father and the father is in him. Our definition of the trinity is formed through verses like these. In John 14 Jesus repeats much of what he said in Matthew 11. However, Jesus adds that God and Jesus will send the Spirit to be within us. We don't get the word trinity in the Bible but Jesus teaches trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 11:27 "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."**

**John 14:15-17 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth."**

4. The last part of this chapter is really good. To hear about the kingdom is tough listening. The talk of Jesus dying and sin is a heavy topic. To have people persecute you because you say you are Christian is a tough place. Yes, we claim to love God, but down here on earth is hell at times. The world is awful. It's really hard to live Holy in an unholy world. I find it also really hard to believe that some claim to be pure down here. I'm not so sure it is possible. Yet, Jesus said the best man John was accused of being impure. He shows us that good guys like Peter will fall. Even Jesus was accused of acting unholy several times. What we see in Christ is perfection. Jesus tried to tell the people it was not about showing holiness or perfection. It was about earnestly coming to the Lord as children eager to learn. To living simple lives that are devoted to helping this world rather than hindering it. The expectations of people are far too high. That goes for our expectations too.

Matthew 11:28 **“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”**

Hosea 6:6 **“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”**

### **What it all means?**

There are several religions. There are several denominations within these religions. How can different Muslim, Jewish, and Christian denominations be the right one? I feel each one is voices. One says my view is the most important. Another retorts that their way is correct. They all say one God, but all interpret that God differently. It's a confusing mess. Matthew 11 is asking us to remember why we're here. Interpretation is best left to God alone. The reason we go down denominational rabbit trails is our pride. We have to be valuable and right.

Matthew 11 points to the simple answers. The children receive simple instructions and treat them at face value. Adults want to dissect, analyze, and interpret. How can I say this plainly? The kingdom of God is not about us. It is for us but not about us. It's Gods heaven not our utopia. It's Gods instructions and word. His meaning not ours. Far too often we say “come to our church.” People boast this version of the Bible is right. This denomination is the true church. We have made Christian living about us.

What it all means is children. That has always been the key. Children grow. They learn. They are disciplined. Children want to be wowed. They want to be taken care of. Adults think they know and they think they can take care of themselves. Matthew 11 is trying to slowly move us forward. Now you know. Now you have heard. What will we do with what has been given? Will we box it, sell, it, market it? Luke 19 has a parable of the gold coin. What you do with what is given is important. I think most of the time we forget that the most important part is that the coin was given. It's not about us.

Matthew 11:25 **“At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.”**

Proverbs 25:2 **“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.”**