Are You the Expected One?

Zanesville, OH | January 13, 2019 | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Matt. 11:2-11

**Intro**:

* John the Baptist is a prominent figure in each of the gospel accounts. He is presented similarly in all four gospels with each offering unique details concerning his life, his mission and his ultimate outcome. In Matthew and Luke, we are given a lengthy and interesting story where John asks a rather striking and unexpected question that catches most, if not all, readers off-guard. John himself proclaims Jesus as the Messiah and the Lamb of God in the gospel narratives (See John 1:19-36) and he is present when God Himself declares Jesus as His Son (See Matt. 3:16-17) but after some time he seems to express doubt when he asks: ***“Are you the Expected One?”***
1. **The Misunderstood Jesus: Matt. 11:2-5**
	1. Why did John ask this question? The context tells us that John is in prison (For more info. See Matt. 14:1-12) and like most people, he is not in the best of circumstances. John, being a prophet, probably expected as much since many prophets before him suffered the same fate or even worse (Matt. 23:37).
	2. There was undoubtedly more behind his question however. His disciples have been keeping him informed about Jesus and His interaction with the world (Lk. 7:18-19) and what did he hear?
		1. Preaching and associating with sinners and tax collectors (Matt. 9:10-13)
		2. Casting out demons, healing and curing many that came to Him (Matt. 4:23-25)
		3. Teaching enriched with grace, mercy, love and peace (Matt. 5-7)
	3. From John’s perspective, he may have been wondering why Jesus wasn’t bringing down His thunderous judgment on the wicked instead of associating with them. Why not throw all the wicked in prison instead of eating with them? Why were a majority of the Jews not accepting of Him? Why is He not making an effort to get me out of prison?
	4. Frankly, John’s questions seem to indicate depression, missed expectations and what he was hearing was just not adding up in his mind. Why? It could be that John like many Jews simply misunderstood Jesus’ role and Messiahship.
	5. Yes, He gave the blind sight, He made the lame walk, lepers were cleansed, the deaf were able to hear again, the dead were raised, and many heard the gospel. It’s not what He was doing per se but how He was doing it.
2. ***“Blessed is he who does not take offense:”* Matt. 11:6**
	1. Jesus’ follow up statement to His answer is the key to this entire story. Jesus was misunderstood and rejected as the Messiah because He wasn’t what they expected. He did not fit the résumé of what they were looking for (handsome, strong, physically overwhelming, dominant, possessive, military leader, politically motivated etc.).
	2. Jesus’ ministry wasn’t exactly dominant and ostentatious as one might expect of a man of His caliber and nature. It was the exact opposite. Jesus was low-key and humble, and He explicitly told many not to spread the news about who He was for His *“time”* had not yet come (See Matt. 8:4; 16:20; 17:9; Mk. 1:44; Lk. 9:36).
	3. Jesus was a poor nobody who grew up in a little village outside Jerusalem. He was the son of a carpenter and He himself was a carpenter. He did not eat the best food, have the house, or wore the best clothes. His friends were tax collectors and fishermen to name a few. Would this be the Messiah? Could this be the One who would take away the sin of the world?
	4. John was starting to think that may not be the case, but Jesus’ response encouraged him otherwise. Furthermore, Jesus says that those who would accept that this is who He is would be blessed. Why? Isaiah 53:1-3 gives us the answer. Many people don’t want a leader and a Savior like that but that’s exactly who Jesus was! The proof was in the pudding (All the things He did; Matt. 11:5). Are we willing to accept that?
3. **The Least in the Kingdom is the Greatest: Matt. 11:7-11**
	1. As the men leave, Jesus offers a strong commendation to John and his ministry. Most people, after a question such as John’s, would probably snark or even rebuke Him. Jesus does the opposite. He offers high praise to John!
	2. John was a prophet, but Jesus says he was more than a prophet. He was the one who prepared the way for Him (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:2; Jn. 1:23). Jesus says of him he is the greatest among those born of women yet there was more.
	3. Even though John received such high praise from the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world, Jesus says the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than He. How could this be?
	4. John would die before the New Covenant would take effect. Under the Old Covenant, John did his job and he was named the greatest by Jesus. But those who are willing to accept Jesus for who He is and what He has done would receive innumerable blessings under the new covenant incomparable to what the Old covenant provided (Ep. 2:11-22).