

Matthew 11:16-19 A Critical, Hard to Please People

Introduction: Jesus spoke about the greatness of John the Baptist. John had been a very popular preacher. Many had come to hear John preach. Some had been saved and baptized. But the majority who heard him had not repented and been saved.

Likewise Jesus had become popular. Great crowds came to see Him perform miracles. Some were saved and baptized. But the majority were still unsaved.

Jesus addressed this situation in this text.

I. An illustration: Some hard to please children, Verses 16-17.

A. Some children were trying to play “party.”

1. Some of the children made the music. (They “piped,” probably with their mouths.)

2. The other children were to dance to the music, but they refused to play the game.

B. The game was switched and an attempt was made to play “funeral.”

1. Some of the children sang funeral songs.

2. The others were to pretend to weep and wail, but they still refused to play the game.

C. There was nothing the other children could do to please them.

II. The parallel between the children and the masses of people, Verses 18-19.

A. John had come neither eating nor drinking.

1. John was a Nazarite.

2. Under religious vow, he was not to eat grapes nor product of the grapes.

(Not dried grape cakes, nor drink grape juice either fresh or fermented.)

3. John would not attend any banquet of party. (John was more apt to fast than to feast.)

B. The people thought he had a devil. (demon)

1. They thought John was too strict, too straight laced.

2. They used this as an excuse not to repent and get saved and be baptized.

C. On the other hand Jesus did eat and drink, Verse 19.

1. Jesus was not a Nazarite.

2. Jesus could eat grapes and He did drink the product of grapes.

(There is nothing in the original language that says He ever drank fermented juice.)

3. He did attend wedding parties and banquets.

(He attended a banquet in His honor given by Matthew.)

4. There were a lot of publicans there and a lot of common people (sinners) there.

D. The Pharisees especially thought that Jesus' association with publicans and sinners made Him ceremonially unclean and spiritually unclean.

1. They persuaded the masses to think the same.

2. The masses thought Jesus was too loose. (They accused Him of gluttony, drunkenness, and buddying with publicans and sinners.)

3. To them John was too strict and Jesus was too loose. (There was no pleasing them.)

4. They used this as an excuse not to trust Jesus and be saved.

III. Another parallel even today.

A. Even today there are relatively few who repent of their sins, and trust Jesus to save, follow Jesus in baptism, and get in active service to Christ. (Thank God for that few.)

B. The great majority are too hard to please. (They refuse to play the game.)

C. The preacher cannot please them.

1. If he preaches loud, he is too loud; if he speaks soft, he has no enthusiasm or else they cannot hear him.

2. If he preaches against sin he steps on their toes and meddles where he has no business; if he preaches the love of God he is soft on sin.
 3. If he holds to the old ways he is an old foggy; if he holds doctrinally to the old way but wants to make progress in other ways he is a liberal modernist.
 4. If he tells jokes he is a clown; if he doesn't he is a bore.
 5. They use the preacher as an excuse for not getting saved and following Jesus Christ.
 6. But neither John the Baptist nor Jesus Christ could please such critical, hard to please people. (They couldn't then and they couldn't now.)
- D. Neither can the churches please such people.
1. The building is either too hot or too cold.
 2. The church is too large or too small; too plain or too fancy.
 3. They refuse to go to the plush, well furnished church because they ask for money, but they won't go to the church that does not ask for money because they do not have a fine building, and comfort.
 4. If the people dress up they are snobs; if they don't they are slobs.
- E. Even some people who are professed Christians become overly critical.
1. They cannot attend church long anywhere without becoming dissatisfied.
 2. They become angry at the preacher, the deacons, the choir director, the Sunday School teacher, or somebody in the church.
 3. They use this as an excuse not to attend, not to take part, not to give.

IV. A special lesson.

- A. It is not the church's responsibility to please the community; it is her responsibility to please God.
- B. It is not the preacher's responsibility to please the community.
 1. It is not even his responsibility to please the church he pastors.
 2. It is his responsibility to please God.
- C. It is not God's responsibility to please you with His message, His preacher, or His church, but you had better make sure you please Him.

Conclusion:

1. The only way the unsaved can please God is by faith.
2. ... then be baptized.
3. ...then faithfully serve God.

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