

Pleading of the King

by Ken Baird

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness to God and the consequences of rejecting His ministry.

Duration: 36:19

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:2-3, Matthew 11:7, Matthew 11:16-19, Matthew 11:28, Luke 7:24-25

Topics: "Jesus Teachings", "Spiritual Rest"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the unresponsiveness of the Jewish people to the witness of John the Baptist and Jesus. He uses the analogy of children in the market calling to their friends, but receiving no response. The speaker then highlights four pleas made by Jesus in this chapter: a plea to John the Baptist, a plea to the nation of Israel, a plea to the wise and prudent, and a plea to all who are burdened and weary. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus as the revealer of the Father and the one who offers rest to those who are weary.

Transcript

With your Bibles open to the 11th chapter of Matthew, I would like to mention the fact that the lesson today is entitled, The Pleading of the King. The Pleading of the King. And there are four pleas in this chapter.

There is a plea, first of all, to John the Baptist. Then there is a plea to the nation as a whole. He refers to it in verse 16, Well, now this generation would have to encompass the whole nation of Israel.

And so there was a plea to the nation as a whole. Then there is a plea to specific cities. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

Then lastly, there is a plea to the individual. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. So we have four pleas of the king in this chapter.

Now it would not seem at first that he made a plea to John the Baptist, but I believe he did. Let's read a little of that if you please, verse 2 of this 11th chapter of Matthew. Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be

offended in me.

Now some have given John the Baptist the place of just failing faith. But I don't believe that John's faith has failed. Now I know that the question would seem to indicate that John had thought perhaps he had been espousing the cause of the wrong man.

But I don't believe that is the case. I think that what John said to the Lord Jesus by sending his disciples to him. In the first place, I wonder why he had any disciples.

He sent two of his disciples when he said he must increase but I must decrease. Why did he have two disciples that he could even send? I don't know. But he had two disciples that he sent to the Lord Jesus and he asked the question, Are thou he that should come or do we look for another? Now you'll notice, please, that in verse 2 it says, Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ.

He'd heard all about it. He knew what was happening. He said, then he sent two of his disciples and they said, Now you're to say are thou he that should come or look we for another.

Now the Lord distinctly says in one instance that the works that he did bore witness of him. And John had heard of those. This leads me to believe that John was a little bit nipped, if I may use that term, because he was in prison.

I think this was a kind of a barbed accusation. If you're the Messiah, why are you allowing me to be in prison? Now the reason that I think this, really, is for this reason. The Lord sent a special message back to John.

He pleaded with him in this message, And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. He had read the thoughts of John, and John was just a little disturbed by the fact that he was in prison. This has been called the forgotten beatitudes.

This is a beatitude just the same as the beatitudes mentioned in the fifth chapter of Matthew, which are the introduction, the beatitudes are the introduction to the firmament of the mount. This is the beatitude. Same word, same word in the Greek.

Blessed, extremely happy, supremely happy, is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. This has been the forgotten beatitude. People forget that it's here.

But it is a beatitude. There is a blessedness in associating to submitting to the will of God. Now, someone has said, well, was it the will of God that John be in prison, and eventually lose his life? Well, it had to be done with God's permission, that's for sure.

Now, John got himself into that position by being a prophet, which he was, and rebuking Herod. And Herod put him in prison. But John was chasing.

He was chasing unto this. He wanted to be out of there. But Christ said, I could get you out if I wanted to.

Now, he didn't say that in so many words, that's not a quote. But it's hidden in these words. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Now, I think that we need this message today. Because there are adverse circumstances that come upon you and me. And I, with my own ears, have had some Christians confess.

And I know their faith. That they were bitter against God. Because of the circumstances that He had permitted.

We've got to be careful. This is the forgotten beatitude. I hope we don't have occasion to have it rebuked us.

Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. John was. The Lord knew it.

And he sends him a little personal message. This message can come to you and to me. Now, instead of being offended at the Lord, in some of the circumstances in which we find ourselves, perhaps we could better examine our own hearts as to why those circumstances came about.

And how God would use those circumstances to shape our character. Because He does use circumstances to shape our character. He brings upon us those things with which we cannot cope.

So that we will go to Him and let Him be our strength. Now, if you and I were to pray and expect God to answer all our prayers. This thought came to me one day.

I prayed for a man and he died. And I thought, well, now maybe I better quit praying for people. And this thought came to me one day.

If your prayers and all of your prayers and all of my prayers were answered. Nobody would ever be sick. Nobody would ever die.

Nobody would ever do anything that was wrong. Nobody would ever have any adverse circumstances. Do you think that's going to happen? Not in a world like this that has been disrupted by sin.

And because somebody dies for whom we have prayed. It doesn't mean that God is not still on His throne. Because somebody has suffered an illness with which they would be so happy to be without.

It doesn't mean that God has left His throne. It didn't mean that the Lord Jesus was insensitive to John's predicament at this time. Do you know why? John died a martyr.

And there is a particular reward in being a martyr. Martyrs have special places. It isn't everybody that God permits to die in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John was a martyr. And he purchased for himself glory. Why was he a martyr? Because he was faithful to the Word of God.

Not because he was a prophet. All right. If we're faithful and things don't go well, can't we take a little consolation in the fact that we were faithful to the Lord? That He permits us to suffer for Him? This, I think, this forgotten beatitude.

Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in need. I think we do well to remember that God does permit circumstances to come into our lives which we don't care for, we don't like. But let's turn it into a blessing.

Let's turn it into a blessing and let it draw us closer to our Lord Himself. Now, to go on further, there is a pleading to the nation. We go down to verse 16.

Oh, I must not pass over the verses that we have just left until we get to verse 16. I want to read it to you. Verse 7. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitude concerning John, What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses.

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.

Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Greater in position, not greater morally. The kingdom of heaven, believe me, is greater than anything that can happen to us on this earth.

For all the prophets in the law prophesied unto John, And if ye will receive it, this is Elias. Which was for to come. Now, Elijah is still coming.

And he's going to still fulfill that scripture written of him in Malachi chapter 4. But for all practical purposes, John came in the purpose, And in the tenor of Elijah's ministry, He came rebuking, he was a prophet. And he, believe me, he used his office. He spoke unscathingly to those that came to his baptism.

He called them vipers. I've never yet called anybody a snake in the platform that he did. He called them snakes and vipers.

Now, he was indeed the mightiest prophet. But notice please, The Lord Jesus did not speak these words until after the disciples of John had left. The Lord knew what John could take and what he couldn't take.

He had a good word for John. He praised John. But you'll notice please in verse 7, And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitude concerning John, You know, the Lord has to be careful with you and me, Lest we get the big head.

He has to be careful in our spiritual accomplishments That we don't become occupied with them. There is a day coming when every man shall receive praise of God. And that's at the judgment seat of Christ.

That we'll be able to take it then. He has to hide from us now our effectiveness and what we do for his glory. But I'd like to think that we're all doing a little more sometimes than we think we're doing.

I'd like to think that. But the Lord is too wise. All his wisdom is in connection with John.

He sent him to rebuke and then praise him in the absence of his disciples. And the Lord I'm sure is dealing wisely with you and with me. How wonderful.

I couldn't pass over that before we go to verse 16. But whereinto shall I liken this generation? Now this applies to the whole house of Israel. Those to whom he administers.

This is his pleading with them. It is like unto children sitting in the market and calling unto their fellows and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not dent. We have borne unto you, and ye have not lamented.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man blessed. And the wine-giver came to public in concern.

But with him is justified of her children. This portion of Scripture, verses 16 to 19 included, tells us how unresponsive the Jewish people really were. They had two kinds, two kinds of witness.

The witness of John, where he drug them over the coals. He applied the lash. His words were singing.

He was a prophet indeed. And he called them vipers. They had that kind of witness, but they didn't witness to John.

They didn't rather yield to the witness of John. And we find that out later in the public ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. On one occasion they came to him, and they said to the Lord, By what authority do you do these things? And the Lord says, I've got a question for you.

If you answer my question, I'll answer yours. They said, fair enough. They didn't say that in so many words that they had to go ahead.

And he says, the baptism of John. Was it of God or was it of men? They had a little conference. They said, now if we say that it was from heaven, then he'll say, why didn't you believe me? And if we say that it was from men, or of men, we'll get stoned because the people all accept John as a prophet indeed.

So they said, we can't tell. And the Lord says, neither do I tell you by what authority I believe. Now here they had the witness of John the Baptist.

And they would not admit that his ministry was from heaven. They didn't want it. They were totally unresponsive.

And the Lord gives one of the mightiest illustrations, one of the most touching telling illustrations that you could possibly give. He said, you're like the children sitting in the market, calling to their fellows and saying, we have pipes unto you, and you have not vamped. We have morn unto you, and you have not lamented.

Children are so responsive. I had an occasion once to visit with a lady years and years ago. She was burdened down with trouble.

And I talked with her. She wanted to talk with me, and I talked with her. And she just laid her troubles out on the table.

And she began to cry. She had a little daughter that was there listening to all of this, three and four years old. And when her mother began to cry, she began to cry.

And she cried like her heart would break. Just because her mother was crying. She was responsive.

Children are that way. Now, he says, you are like children. What would be wrong with a child that wouldn't be grieved if his parents were grieved? That wouldn't be happy if his parents were happy? What would be wrong with that child? He says, that's the way you are.

John came with a certain type of ministry. Now, this sounds more like a rebuke than pleading. But actually he was pleading.

He's trying to put before them the unreasonableness of their attitude. And he's trying to put it before them with the thought in mind that they would receive him. It's a plea.

It's really a plea to be accepted on the part of the Lord. He wanted to be accepted. They wouldn't have you.

Now, they say of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he came, well, they said of John, he's got a devil. John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil.

Now, somebody said that. The Bible says they said it. Then they say of the Lord.

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-dipper, of friends of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of all her children. Those that knew the Lord received the ministry of John the Baptist, and then in turn received the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ because they were wise.

Wisdom is justified of all her children. But you know, there are some people in the world today, nothing is right when it comes to God. Absolutely nothing.

The time is never right. The occasion is never right. His dealings are never right.

They can find absolutely nothing in which they can take comfort in God. They are completely alienated from him, and that was true of the Jewish race at this time. And I think of the unreasonableness of this.

Never a convenient time for God. Never a convenient time for God. Somehow it just doesn't fit into our circumstance.

This was the generation to whom he was addressing these things. How unreasonable can men be? When the Lord came and his gracious ministry healed their sick, gave sight to the blind, raised their dead. Ate republicans and sinners.

Not because he was condoning their sins. Not at all. He wanted to make a contact with them.

They accused him. This man received the sinners and needed wisdom. They accused him.

Now I think there's really an attitude betrayed in that statement. I think they were really saying, now maybe I'm imputing a lot of wrong things to these scribes and Pharisees, these religious Jewish people. Maybe I am, but I don't think I am.

I think they're really saying, why does he associate with these people when he could be associating with us? I've got that feeling. They said, this man received the sinners and needed wisdom. Now, he didn't receive them because he condoned their sins.

He wanted to take them out of their sin. And that was the occasion, you remember, when the Lord said, David, behold, had no need of the physician of David. I'm here to help you.

I'm glad. I'm glad that the woman at Samaria's wayside well felt at home, felt at ease in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was so approachable.

He was so accessible. And he still is today. The Lord Jesus is still as accessible today as he ever has been.

And his love is great. I think he is really pleading with his generation, showing them their unreasonableness. Nothing could touch them.

Nothing was right. They did no wrong. Then he goes on and he upbraids these cities.

Then he began to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Chorazin, Bethsaida. He says, if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago.

In fact, Law of Ananias. These cities evidently were noted for their worldliness, whereas Capernaum is likened to Sodom, which was noted for its wickedness. Tyre and Sidon in the Scripture.

Tyre, as far as I'm concerned. When we read the goings-on in Tyre, when we read of the king of Tyre and its glory, its commerce with the world, it was a tremendous city. When we read of that, all I can think of is children's progress.

Vanity there. That's Tyre and Sidon. Now, the Lord said, you cities, wherein my... And I suppose that he was addressing this to some of the inhabitants of those cities.

He says, you cities, Chorazin, or Chorazin, perhaps, and Bethsaida, if the mighty works that have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a long time ago. In fact, Law of Ananias. How hard were they? Their responsibility was great.

I think we have to read into these verses, and the reduce of the cities, I think we have to read into this portion of Scripture that light rejected brings night. The greater your responsibility, the greater the judgment. Now, actually, I think that these cities were meriting these reduce because of the fact, who was it that was in their midst? Was it just simply a prophet? No, it was more than a prophet.

It was the prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was in their midst. Their responsibility was so great.

How tremendous their responsibility. And he said Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago if they'd seen the things that you've seen. They didn't repent.

God had to bring judgment in on them. And Tyre was totally destroyed right down to the bedrock to the degree that in later years, fishermen spread their nets out on the very rock that supported the city of Tyre so they could mend their nets. God said it would come.

It did come. It came, just like he said it would. But what do you think of those that would reject our Lord Jesus Christ and his gracious ministry? Oh, how great their judgment.

How terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God. And then there was Capernaum. Capernaum had a special place of privilege.

Capernaum on the northwest shores of the Sea of Galilee was the adopted city of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now he wanted to go down to Capernaum. He wanted to take residence near the Sea of Galilee because that's where the people were.

That Nazareth was an isolated small town. And it had no reputation. But he went and dwelt in Capernaum moved into Capernaum and dwelt there as his adopted city.

Now, in our day and age if a notable comes from a certain city he imparts a certain nobility to that city. A certain privilege. Now, for instance, Norfolk, Nebraska is very proud of the fact that Johnny Carson grew up there.

Well, that's their problem. Ordinarily the city of a president receives a lot of attention. A lot of notoriety.

But this is the town that the God of heaven and earth chose for God. Now, I think Sodom was worse off than Tyre in time. And I think that the Lord used this comparison very wisely.

Capernaum was so bad in the rejection of our Lord Jesus Christ that the only thing that they could be likened to was this Sodom. That wicked, wicked city that God destroyed in which there is no trace today. Destroyed down to the ground with fire and brimstone.

Now, he said, if Sodom had had your chance they would be on this earth to this day. It would have remained them to this day. Then he says, I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.

Now, I think we have to remember that these things were written for our learning and admonition upon the ends of the ages to come. What about us? Are we responsible to the Lord? We certainly are. Radio programs, on the air, programs on the TV, you can buy a Bible and a dime for it.

The word of God all around us. Christian people in this land, this so-called Christian land. I think, I think of the judgment that is due to this nation.

Now, there are many, many nations that don't have our privilege. Many, many nations where Islam is the national religion. They've been cut off from the word of God, cut off.

And I think those people are going to fare better than people in this nation who will not have our Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. Oh, it is such a serious thing. And then the Lord goes on.

And then he says in verse 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 the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babe, even forefather, for so it seems good in thy sight. All things, now this is a tremendous verse, verse 27, a verse of revelation All things are delivered unto me of my Father. And no man knoweth a son but the father, neither knoweth any man the father.

Save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him. Now, to further impress upon them the importance of what he just said, he goes on. Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Now, I ask you the question. What man would have the audacity to make a statement like this? Do you think that I could stand up here or any place else and say, now all of you people bring your troubles and your trials to me, and I'll set your minds at rest. Now, this was to any individual.

No troubles to bring. Just come to me. That's the pleading of the Lord.

He didn't have any hearing in Israel. The cities had rejected him. But thank God, when that collective testimony failed, then he goes to the individual.

And thank God that he does. You and I as individuals have access to our Lord Jesus Christ. And we may come with all our troubles and our trials.

I would like you to think, I would like the force of this invitation, the force of this pleading to just break in upon the soul. Come unto me, all ye that labor, Jew and Gentile, that are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest. Isn't that a statement? Isn't that a statement? I couldn't do it.

Nobody else can do it but the Son of God. But this is a promise. I will give you rest.

And God has never gone back on a promise yet. If we'll come to the Lord with our troubles and our trials, if we will come, we will get rest. I've had it happen.

I've had it happen. And I've come and laid out my troubles before the Lord. And God sent a relief that I rebuke myself.

And I said, why didn't you do that before? Coming to the Lord and just laying out before Him that one who listens so patiently to what we have to say and has the power to do something for us. Oh, why don't we lay hold of it in faith and claim the promise. I will give you rest.

Now you and I have that privilege. Now this is real and it's current. And we can lay hold upon it at all times.

Now actually, in this regard of the individual, he talks about the two classes. Although he doesn't mention the word two. All ye that labor under heavy laden are.

Our Lord Jesus continually had to remind the Jewish people that they didn't have a corner on the grace of God. I suppose that he told one of the most noted lawyers, Nicodemus. I suppose that Nicodemus stood head and shoulders above all the lawyers of Israel.

And yet it was to Nicodemus that God said, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. But whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That verse was given to Nicodemus.

I know we lay claim to it. Thank God we can. But that verse was given to Nicodemus by way of a rebuke.

He was rebuking the bigotry in the heart of Nicodemus. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Thank God for John 3.16. I'm glad I'm in.

I'm glad I'm included. How wonderful that He included me. And then it's given to the unsaved.

First of all, I think verse 28 belongs to the unsaved. I know it does because I got saved through it. And I think verse 29 belongs to the Christian because he says in verse 29, Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Now this is the invitation, the pleading to take upon us the service of the Lord. His yoke. And when we do, we will find rest.

Now I think that we will find rest because at last we have submitted to the calling that God has made to us. And that calling is that we might serve Him. That we might witness Him.

And when we submit to it, when we take up that yoke upon us, there is that rest that comes at the end of our resistance. I'm going to do what the Lord wants me to do. I'm going to go where He wants me to go.

I want to say what He wants me to say. Father, we thank Thee this morning for the pleadings of our Lord Jesus. We pray that they may reach our hearts.

That we might come to Him. That we might do His service. And that we might bring every child that we have to Him.

And He will give that rest that He has promised. Lord, may we prove this experimentally in our lives. We ask that we give thanks in our Savior's precious name.

Amen.

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